Young Drivers and Motor Vehicle Accidents Meeting Kit



Young Drivers And Motor Vehicle Accidents Safety Talk

Motor vehicle accidents cause many injuries and deaths every single year. In total, over 32,000 people die each year in the United States due to motor vehicle crashes. Young drivers, more than any other age group, are most likely to be the victims of motor vehicle crashes.

Crashes are a leading cause of death for teens. An average of six teenagers from the ages of 16 to 19 years old die from motor vehicle crash injuries every single day.

RISK FACTORS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES THAT ARE PARTICULARLY ELEVATED AMONG TEENAGE DRIVERS INCLUDE:

- Inexperience
- Teenage passengers
- Distraction while driving, including from using cell phones and texting
- Driving at excessive speeds, close following, and other risky driving
- Drinking and driving. While drinking and driving is not very high among novices, it causes a disproportionate number of fatal crashes. In the later teen years and young adulthood, drinking and driving increases greatly.
- Driving at night
- Being male. Teenage boys, especially ones with male passengers, are involved in more car crashes than teenage girls. However, the number of females involved in car crashes is increasing.
- Social norms. Risky driving among teenage drivers is higher among teens who report that their friends drive in a risky manner.

A positive factor for teen drivers is the presence of an adult passenger. One study showed that teen crash rates were 75% lower when an adult was in the car.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

Obey the Speed Limit – This is a rule that goes without exception. You might feel “cool” driving fast and zipping in and out of traffic like your favorite actor or t.v. character, but it’s not cool when you cause a wreck and harm yourself or another driver on the road. Obey the posted speed limit; remember,

it is the maximum speed that is allowed under normal conditions. Slow down when it's raining, foggy, snowing, or icy, and keep at least twice the amount of normal stopping distance between you and the person in front of you. Always slow down and drive cautiously in heavy traffic, on curves, and especially in work zones.

Give Driving Your Full Attention – Taking your eyes off the road, even for only one second, can result in a crash, and potentially a fatal accident. Your focus when traveling should be the road and the road only. Program your radio stations or make your CD selections before you get on the road, never read or look at directions when you're traveling, and plan your trip before you leave. You should also avoid putting on makeup, shaving, and eating when you're driving. Most importantly, put the phone down and DO NOT TEXT while you're on the road. Any message can wait at least long enough for you to pull over somewhere safe. No message is worth your life or the life of another!

Use the Lanes Properly – Make sure that you are in a legal passing zone before you pass another vehicle. Never pass on the right side of the road or on the shoulder of a roadway – it's illegal and dangerous for you and other drivers. Remember to use your turn signals about 100 feet before making a turn, and don't cross over into another lane of traffic. Finally, keep your vehicle in the center, and do not pass on hills, curves, or at intersections.

Never Mix Alcohol with Driving – Underage drinking is against the law to begin with, but you must NEVER attempt to drive home if you have alcohol, even if you think that you're okay. Instead, ask a friend who hasn't had any alcohol for a ride home. If no one has abstained from alcohol, call a parent, older sibling, or a cab to take you home, or stay at your friend's home for the night. It is better to be cautious than to gamble with your life or the lives of others on the road. Additionally, if you see a friend of yours stumbling toward their car, take their keys from them and find them a safe way home.

PREVENTION

Parents

There are many things parents can do to make a difference in instilling safe driving behaviors in their children. Some best practices include:

- Ensure they are truly ready to drive alone prior to allowing them to do so. Even if they pass the driving exam to get their license, be sure they are comfortable in other conditions such as nighttime driving or driving on the freeway.
- Set a good example for children early when it comes to driving. If they see you take part in speeding, driving under the influence, not wearing a seatbelt, etc. do you think they will do the same?
- Set rules for young drivers. Rules such as no friends in the car, no night time driving, and not using a cell phone while driving can make the difference in preventing a crash.
- Hold young drivers accountable. If risky behaviors take place, breaking the rules set by you, getting a ticket, etc. occur then take away driving privileges.

FINAL WORD

The stats on teen driving deaths are staggering. It is important to have discussions about driving safely with the young people in your life, whether that is at home or on the job. As the parent, hold teens accountable if it is found out that they are taking part in risky behavior. If you supervise younger employees who drive, ensure all company rules are strictly enforced and they are understood by the employees. Never hesitate to address unsafe behaviors while driving- it can make all the difference in saving a life.