

REDUCING the Risk

A Parent's Guide to Teen Driving



Your influence can make a difference

Driving is a route to independence for many teenagers, a rite of growing up. It's also one of the riskiest activities they will ever undertake. In fact, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. A number of factors put teens at higher risk for a crash than anyone else, including a lack of driving experience combined with a tendency for teens (especially male) to take greater risks and to treat driving as a social activity.

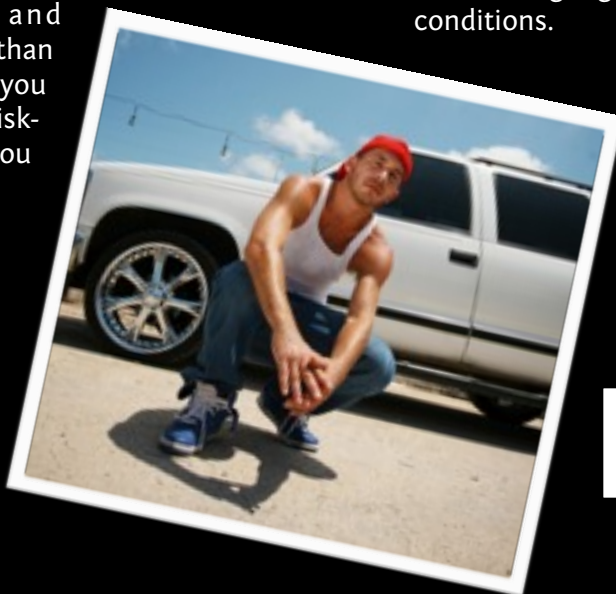


The good news is parental involvement is a key factor in making sure these early years at the wheel are a success. Research points to *parents* as their teenagers' leading source of information and influence on their risk-taking knowledge, attitudes and behaviour – even greater than their peers. Knowing that you can influence your teens' risk-taking behaviour, where do you start?

Choices, not lectures

Many teenagers feel invincible and can't imagine becoming seriously injured or killed. They're not interested in lectures on how to "be safe." Remember that for many teens, they don't aspire to be "safe" drivers but to be "good" drivers. SMARTRISK uses and advises a positive approach to preventing injury: arm teens with the facts and offer concrete ways to take smart risks – ***Buckle Up, Look First, Wear the Gear, Get Trained and Drive Sober.***

Talk to your teens about the risks and how they can be smart about them. Come up with a set of house rules you can both live with – and stick to them. Ensure your teen follows the graduated licensing law in effect in his or her province. These laws are designed to help young people get driving experience in low risk-situations before graduating to more challenging conditions.



The risks

- ◆ While just 17% of Canada's population is 16-24 years old, these young Canadians suffer close to a third of traffic deaths and a third of injuries.
- ◆ Teen drivers are a risk to others, not just themselves: a U.S. study found that one-third of people killed in crashes involving drivers 15-17 are the teen drivers themselves; the other two-thirds are their passengers, occupants of other vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- ◆ Teenagers have the lowest rate of seatbelt use and the highest collision rates. Yet unbelted drivers are nearly 38 times more likely to be killed than belted drivers in similar collisions, according to Ontario data.
- ◆ Unbelted passengers are also a risk to others in the car as they can become high speed projectiles in a crash; the risk of a front-seat passenger being killed rises 75% with an unrestrained passenger in the back seat.
- ◆ Young, inexperienced drivers are more susceptible to driver distraction – which may be one reason why the risk of crashing their car rises with the number of teen passengers they are carrying.

SMARTRISK



SAUVE-QUI-PENSE
preventing injury with smart thinking



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REDUCING the Risk

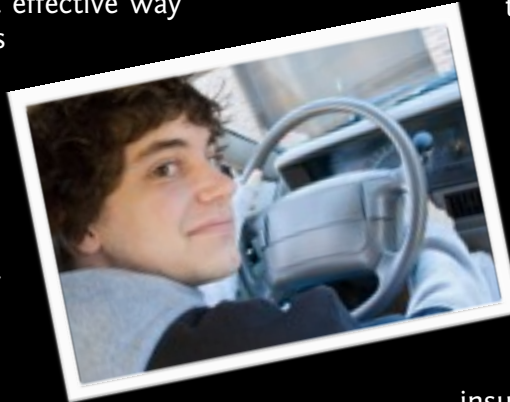
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Taking smart risks

Share these driving tips with your teens:

Buckle Up

- ◆ It's simple, fast, and the most effective way to protect yourself and others in a collision. Make sure your teens always see you wear yours, and that they understand wearing a seatbelt is just as important in a taxicab and the back seat of a friend's car as it is in your car.



Look First

- ◆ Ensure your young drivers know to check weather forecasts before leaving, to regularly inspect whether their tires are properly inflated and fluids topped up, and that they keep their eyes on the road and avoid distractions.

Get Trained

- ◆ Professional driver training will help your teen learn the most up to date information on collision avoidance and smart driving. Take your teen out for lots of supervised practice.



Drive Sober

- ◆ Alcohol and drugs can be a lethal combination for drivers, especially if they are inexperienced. Driving sober also means being focused and avoiding distractions.

About the SMARTRISK - State Farm partnership

SMARTRISK and State Farm Canada are partnering to help young Canadians learn to take smart risks while behind the wheel.

SMARTRISK is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives by helping people to see and manage the risks in their lives through programs it operates across Canada.

State Farm has been serving Canadians since 1938, providing insurance and financial services in Ontario, Alberta and New Brunswick through 500 agents and 1,400 employees.

For more information or to donate to SMARTRISK, visit

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