

JOINT NEWS RELEASE



John R. Kasich, Governor



Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor/Director

National Teen Driving Safety Week: State Officials Provide Parents and Teens Safe Driving and Insurance Tips

Parents encouraged to help educate teen drivers on dangerous, deadly driving behaviors

COLUMBUS - National Teen Driving Safety Week is October 16-22, and state of Ohio officials are reminding parents to talk to their teen drivers about the rules of the roads, including the dangers of distracted driving.

Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor and John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), which includes the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) "5 to Drive" campaign encourage all parents to talk to their teen drivers about the rules of the road when they are behind the wheel as well as the dangers of distracted driving.

"Tragically, unsafe teen driving decisions are causing an alarming rate of teen injuries and fatalities," said Taylor, also director of the Ohio Department of Insurance. "I urge parents to discuss the severe consequences of distracted driving and to create a safe driving contract for their teen to pledge to follow."

According to NHTSA, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in teens, ahead of all other types of injury, disease or violence. In 2014, 2,679 teen (15-19 year old) passenger vehicle drivers were involved in fatal traffic crashes, resulting in 3,004 deaths nationally. An estimated 123,000 teen passenger vehicle drivers were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes.

"It is important that parents speak to their children about safe driving habits and model that behavior this week, and every week," said ODPS Director Born. "If you're distracted, you are not driving."

Parents can play an important role in helping ensure their teen drivers take smart steps to stay safe on the road. The "5 to Drive" campaign gives parents tips on how to talk about safe driving behaviors with their teens and address the five most dangerous and deadly driving behaviors for teen drivers: alcohol, lack of seat belt use, distracted driving, speeding and extra passengers.

NHTSA's website, www.safercar.gov/parents has detailed information and statistics on teen driving. The five basic rules parents can use to help save the lives of teen drivers are:

1. **No Drinking and Driving.** All teens are too young to legally buy or possess alcohol, but they are still at risk. Nationally in 2014, one out of five teen passenger vehicle drivers (15 to 19 years old) involved in fatal crashes had been drinking. Remind your teen that driving under the influence of any impairing substance, including illicit or prescription drugs, could have deadly consequences.

2. ***Buckle Up. Every Trip, Every Time, Everyone—Front Seat and Back.*** Wearing a seat belt is one of the simplest ways for teens to stay safe in a vehicle. Yet, too many teens are not buckling up and neither are their passengers. In 2014, there were 763 passengers killed in passenger vehicles driven by teen (15-19 years old) drivers, and 59 percent of those passengers who died were NOT buckled up at the time of the fatal crash. When the teen driver was also unrestrained, the percentage of those passengers who were not restrained jumped to almost 86 percent. Remind your teen that it's important for everyone to buckle up on every trip, every time, no matter what.
3. ***Eyes on the Road, Hands on the Wheel. All the Time.*** –Distractions while driving are more than just risky—they can be deadly. In 2014, among teen passenger vehicle drivers (15-19 years old) involved in fatal crashes, 10 percent were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. Remind your teen about the dangers of texting, dialing, or using mobile apps while driving. But distracted driving isn't limited to cell phone use. Other passengers, audio and climate controls in the vehicle, and eating or drinking while driving, are all examples of dangerous distractions for teen drivers. ODPS encourages everyone to download headers to spread the message of distracted driving on social media by visiting: www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/distracteddriving.
4. ***Stop Speeding Before It Stops You.*** Speeding is a critical issue for all drivers, especially teens. In 2014, almost one-third (30%) of teen passenger vehicle drivers involved in a fatal crash were speeding at the time of the crash. Remind your teen to drive within the speed limit.
5. ***No More Than One Passenger at a Time.*** Extra passengers in a teen's car can lead to disastrous results. According to data analyzed by NHTSA, teen drivers were two-and-a-half times more likely to engage in one or more potentially risky behaviors when driving with one teenage peer compared to when driving alone. And the likelihood of teen drivers engaging in risky behaviors triples when traveling with multiple passengers.

Teen drivers need to follow rules and any other restrictions outlined in Ohio's graduated driver licensing (GDL) law (http://bmv.ohio.gov/graduated_dl_teen_laws.stm).

Taylor, as part of her "Think Again" initiative that addresses different insurance and life topics, offered these insights to help parents and teens be insurance ready. Parents should conduct an insurance review with an agent to secure adequate insurance for their teen driver. Having a teen driver in the household can affect the family's auto insurance premium. The type of vehicle a teen driver uses can impact the cost of insurance. Most insurance companies offer discounts for having more than one car on a policy or having both your auto and homeowners insurance with the same company.

Ohioans with insurance questions can call the Ohio Department of Insurance consumer hotline at 800-686-1526. An auto insurance consumer guide and young drivers guide to auto insurance are available at: www.insurance.ohio.gov.

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