

## Coaching Your Teen's Driving

As the parent of a new teen driver you will be understandably concerned about the welfare and safety of your son or daughter. There are two major steps to take in teaching your child to drive. First, *review your own driving habits* and offer your teen the example of safe driving. This may do more than any other factor in ensuring your teenager will become a safe driver. Second, *make sure your teenager's practice driving sessions are safe, positive and productive* by following the tips below:

### Set a good example

- Always wear your safety belt.
- Correct any unsafe driving habits that you may have acquired.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of Virginia traffic laws.
- Drive within the speed limit.

### Tips for Coaching Your Teen's Driving

- Follow the Virginia Department of Education's *40-Hour Teen/Parent Driving Guide*.
- Clear your schedule and mark your calendar for dates and times to practice with your teen.
- Designate a pre-determined place to practice driving.
- Stay calm, rational, and upbeat about your child's practice.
- Check to make certain your teen has a learner's permit and knows where the vehicle's registration and insurance cards are located.
- If possible, begin instruction in a car with an automatic transmission so that your child can focus on mastering basic vehicle control maneuvers.
- Enjoy your time together. Have fun! This is a great "bonding" opportunity. Focus on the tasks of driving and leave other family matters at home.

## A FEW MORE TIPS . . .

Beginning July 1, 2008, a new traffic law will come into effect. Individuals applying for a driver's license who fail examinations three times must attend driver training school before trying again. Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner D.B. Smit says the law will guarantee good motorists are on the road and ensure DMV employees don't waste time administering repeat tests.

Two new laws coming into effect July 1, 2008 will make it a Class 4 felony to ignore a police officer who orders you to pull over and that officer is killed in an ensuing pursuit. The offense is punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Another law preventing school bus drivers from using cell phones while driving will also take effect July 1st.