



## FIVE REASONS FOR TEEN CRASHES

### 1. Driver inexperience

- Practice with your teen driver.
- Have your teen learn to drive in all situations: on the highway, at night, and in different weather conditions.

### 2. Driver distractions

- Tell your teen to turn off cell phones while driving. In emergency situations, pull to the side of the road.
- Enforce no texting while driving – IT'S THE LAW.
- Remind them to give their full attention to the road and don't let distractions get in the way of safe driving.

### 3. Excessive speed

- Always tell them to drive the posted speed limit and to plan their time so they aren't speeding to get somewhere.
- Tell them the consequences of driving too fast for hazardous road conditions.
- And tell them to always maintain proper following distance and never tailgate.

### 4. Not buckling up

- Use of seat belts is the law. Remind your teen and all passengers to buckle up every time they get in a car.

### 5. Use of alcohol and illegal drugs

- Virginia has a zero-tolerance law for those under age 21 who drink and drive. If convicted of driving after illegally consuming alcohol, the penalty includes losing your driving privilege for one year, and a minimum mandatory fine of \$500, or 50 hours of community service.
- Prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs can cause drowsiness that can negatively affect driving and reaction time.

## TIPS FOR COACHING YOUR TEEN DRIVER

- Follow the Virginia Department of Education's required 45-Hour Teen/Parent Driving Guide
- Establish a contract allowing your teen to earn the privilege to drive
- Mark your calendar for practice times and remain consistent
- Stay calm, rational, upbeat, and engaged
- Reinforce new driving techniques
- Ensure that your teen makes safety and instrument adjustments before driving
- Offer coaching comments that are positive and not judgmental
- Don't use practice time to discipline your teen driver about other matters
- Make sure your teen has his/her learner's permit, vehicle registration card, and insurance information

## ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Scientists now know that the decision-making portion of the teenager's brain is not mature and the impulse control portion of the brain does not physically mature until about age 25.

As a result, teenagers often fail to realize that fast driving, texting while driving, drinking, drag racing, and having too many passengers are dangerous activities. Teenagers need active parental supervision, especially where driving is concerned.

In addition, teens often don't recognize themselves as inexperienced drivers. A study by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia found that 60% of teens believe inexperience heavily influences safety, but only 15% consider their peers to be inexperienced. "This contradiction is quite dangerous, considering this sample of teens is almost exclusively comprised of inexperienced, novice drivers," the study stated. Further, many teens believe that getting a license automatically makes them experienced.

## RESOURCES

Partners for Safe Teen Driving is an educationally focused community health initiative designed to educate parents about what they can do to better prepare their teenagers for driving.

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

Applying for a Learner's Permit

[www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#applying\\_learners.asp](http://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#applying_learners.asp)

45-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide

[www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/driver\\_education/parent\\_teen\\_driving\\_guide.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/driver_education/parent_teen_driving_guide.pdf)

Parent/Teen Driving Agreements

[www.safeteendriving.org/parents/agreements](http://www.safeteendriving.org/parents/agreements)

## GET THE FACTS!

**PARTNERS FOR SAFE  
TEEN DRIVING**  
A COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE

P.O. Box 389, Manassas, VA 20108

[www.SafeTeenDriving.org](http://www.SafeTeenDriving.org)

703.791.7270

Partners include:



Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles



Virginia Department of Education



Virginia State Police

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TEEN DRIVING**  
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## PARENT GUIDE

**What You  
Need to Know  
Before Your  
Teen Drives**

