

Teenage Drivers & Auto Accidents

By Basil Housewright

Study after study has shown that teenage drivers have more accidents than any other driver age class. Per a 2013 study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) over 2,000 teens in the United States ages 16–19 were killed and over 200,000 were treated in emergency care facilities for injuries suffered in motor vehicle crashes. That means that over five teen's ages 16–19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries. The report indicated young people ages 15-24 represent only 14% of the U.S. population. However, they account for 30% (\$19 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among males and 28% (\$7 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among females.

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16-19-year-olds than among any other age group. Auto insurance statistics show that male drivers between the ages of 16 to 19 have almost twice the number of automobile accidents than female drivers between the ages of 16 and 19. The presence of teen passengers increases the crash risk of unsupervised teen drivers. This risk increases with the number of teen passengers as well. Crash risk is particularly high during the first months of licensure. Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate dangerous situations or not be able to recognize hazardous situations. Teens also due to their inexperience may not be unable to find and use the vehicles controls and features as an experienced driver can. Many parents allow teens to drive the parent's vehicles which in many families are larger SUVs and pickups which can be more challenging to operate especially for an inexperienced driver. Most teens are taught to drive by driver training companies who typically use small compact type vehicles as their training vehicles. Therefore the youthful driver learns to drive in a more easily steered and stopped vehicle than what they will be operating when they receive their license and their parents give them the keys to their big SUV or pickup to use.

Many driver training experts recommend if you're going to purchase your teen a vehicle do so while they still have their learners permit and allow them to learn how to drive in that very vehicle which they will operate by their self when they receive their license. If the household budget allows this will give your youthful driver the opportunity to become accustomed with the handling characteristics and all of the controls of the vehicle that they will be driving daily. Especially in large metropolitan areas when they will be driving in heavy traffic is very important that the driver is accustomed to all the particulars of the vehicle they are driving.

Talking with your teen driver about some of the major causes of teen crashes is recommended. Some of these are driver inexperience, driving while having other teen passengers in the car, nighttime driving when not accustomed to it, not using seatbelts properly, distractions such as mobile phones and loud music, driving while drowsy, reckless driving, and impaired driving. It is highly recommended that the new driver not be allowed to drive very often at nights especially late nights until they gain more experience. We have a large investment in our children by the time they are 16 so why not spend the extra time and money to attempt to keep them out of harm's way as a new driver.

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