



# Fact Sheet/Talking Points

## Talk to Your Teen About the “5 to Drive”

*National Teen Driver Safety Week Is October 18-24, 2015*

The “5 to Drive” campaign highlights the five necessary rules that teen drivers need to follow to stay safe behind the wheel. These rules address the greatest dangers for teen drivers: alcohol, texting, seat belts, speeding, and extra passengers.

### THE PROBLEM—TOO MANY TEENS ARE DYING

- Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for 15- to 19-year-olds in the United States.
- In 2013, there were 2,614 teen (15-19 year old) passenger vehicle drivers involved in fatal crashes, and an estimated 130,000 were injured.
- You are the biggest influence on your teen’s safety behind the wheel. Parents need to take the time to talk with their kids about the many dangers of driving. Those dangers include:
  - **Alcohol:** Teen drivers are at a greater risk of death in alcohol-related crashes compared to drivers in all other age groups, even though they’re too young to legally buy, possess, or consume alcohol. Nationally in 2013, almost one out of five (19 percent) of the teen drivers (15 to 19 years old) involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.
  - **Seat belts:** Wearing a seat belt is one of the simplest ways for teens to stay safe in a vehicle. Whether their unsafe behavior stems from immaturity or a false perception that they’re invincible, the numbers speak volumes: teens aren’t buckling up, and neither are their passengers. In 2013, 64 percent of all the young passengers (13- to 19-year-old) of teen (15- to 19-year-old) drivers who died in motor vehicle crashes weren’t restrained. When the teen driver was also unrestrained, the number of all passengers unrestrained increased to almost 90 percent.
  - **Texting:** Texting or dialing while driving is more than just risky—it’s deadly. In 2013, among drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes, 11 percent were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the highest percentage of drivers distracted by phone use. In 2013, 318 people were killed in crashes that involved a distracted teen driver.
  - **Speeding:** In 2013, almost one-third (29 percent) of teen drivers involved in a fatal crash were speeding.
  - **Passengers:** Extra passengers for a teen driver can lead to disastrous results. Research shows that the risk of a fatal crash goes up in direct relation to the number of teens in a car. The likelihood of teen drivers engaging in risky behavior triples when traveling with multiple passengers.

### THE SOLUTION—SPEAK UP AND TALK TO YOUR TEEN OFTEN

You’ve guided your teen this far. Driving is a new chapter, a step toward independence for many teens. But your job’s not done. Surveys show that teens whose parents impose driving restrictions typically engage in less risky driving and are involved in fewer crashes. They can’t listen if you don’t talk.

- From October 18-24, join parents across the country in the “5 to Drive” campaign.

- Get the facts about teen driving and share some of the grim statistics with your teen.
- Know your State’s graduated driver licensing (GDL) restrictions and enforce them.
- Remind your teen that driving is a privilege, not a right, and should be taken seriously.
- *Set the Rules Before They Hit the Road.*

**Remember the “5 to Drive”:**

**1. No Drinking and Driving.**

*Set a good example by not driving after drinking. Remind your teen that drinking before the age of 21 is illegal, and alcohol and driving should never mix no matter your age.*

**2. Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time. Front Seat and Back.**

*Lead by example. If you wear your seat belt every time you’re in the car, your teen is more likely to follow suit. Remind your teen that it’s important to buckle up on every trip, no matter how far or how fast.*

**3. Put It Down. One Text or Call Could Wreck It All.**

*Remind your teen about the dangers of texting or dialing while driving, and that the phone is off-limits when they are on the road. It’s equally important to model safe driving habits for your teen—you shouldn’t text and drive either.*

**4. Stop Speeding Before It Stops You.**

*Drive the speed limit and require your teen to do the same. Explain that every time your speed doubles, your stopping distance quadruples.*

**5. No More Than One Passenger at Any Time.**

*With each passenger in the vehicle, your teen’s risk of a fatal crash goes up. Check your State’s GDL law before your teen takes to the road; it may prohibit any passengers.*

**PARENTS REMEMBER—KEEP TALKING ABOUT THE “5 TO DRIVE”**

- Start the conversation with your teen during Teen Driver Safety Week, but continue the conversation every day.
- Even if it seems like they’re tuning you out, keep telling them. They’re listening, and these powerful messages will get through.
- Get creative! Talking is just one way to discuss safe driving. You can write your teen a letter, leave sticky notes in the car, or use social media to get your message across.
- Get it in writing. Create a parent-teen driving contract that outlines the rules and consequences for your teen driver. Hang the signed contract in a visible place.

For more information about National Teen Driver Safety Week and the “5 to Drive” campaign, please visit [www.safercar.gov/parents](http://www.safercar.gov/parents).