

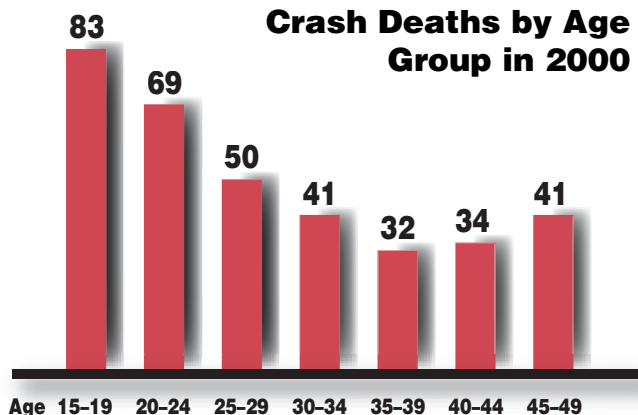


## Risk Situations

Statistics show that the top six driving risk factors for teens are:

- **Inattentiveness** — Driver inattention/distraction is the most common contributing factor in multiple vehicle crashes.
- **Excessive speed** — Illegal/unsafe speed is the most common contributing factor in single vehicle crashes for drivers. Teens particularly have difficulty adjusting speed to driving conditions.
- **Failure to wear a safety belt** — Properly wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger occupants by 45% in a car and 60% in a light truck.
- **Fatigue** — A person who has been awake for 24 hours experiences impairment nearly equal to a blood alcohol concentration of .10%. And, teens often don't get enough sleep.
- **Not checking traffic before pulling out** — Most crashes involving teens occur at intersections because of their inexperience judging distance and speed.
- **Driving with other teens** — The presence of passengers strongly increases crash risk. For teen drivers, the more passengers the greater the risk.

**Number of Minnesota  
Crash Deaths by Age  
Group in 2000**



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# Traffic Crashes — # 1 Cause of Death For Teens



## Top five causes of death in Minnesota's 15 — 17 year olds

Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
<b>Traffic crashes</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Other accidents</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Homicide</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Minnesota Department of Health Center of Health Statistics

## Parent Involvement Matters

Studies show that new drivers who are supervised have very few crashes. Developing necessary skills for safe driving is a complex task and can only be learned after many hours of practice. Driver's education is a first step, but a parent's role in teaching students to drive is crucial. Following are tips for parents.

- Require safety belt use at all times.
- When you drive, set a good example.
- Take time and practice with your teen while they have their permit and during their first year of licensed driving. Give positive feedback frequently and remain calm.
- Set a limit on the number of passengers in the car, especially multiple teens, to minimize distractions.
- Prohibit driving while excessively fatigued.
- Discuss the dangers and legal consequences of driving impaired.
- Take time to discuss driving rules and consequences. Strike a written contract between you and your teen.
- Expose your teen to different driving conditions including wet roads, snow, highways, rural and metro roadways, night driving, etc. Practice on roads unfamiliar to the teen.
- Choose vehicles for safety, not image.
- Restrict new drivers to driving alone only under favorable conditions, such as during daylight hours, good weather and in low traffic. Gradually allow them to take on more driving situations.
- Review the Minnesota Driver's Manual.

Additional information is available through a new brochure, *Teens Behind the Wheel: A Roadmap for Parents*. This publication offers tools to assess teen drivers and provides a sample written contract. It is available at Minnesota Driver Exam Stations and at the following website.

<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/trafsafe/Communications/teendrivers/teendrivers.html>