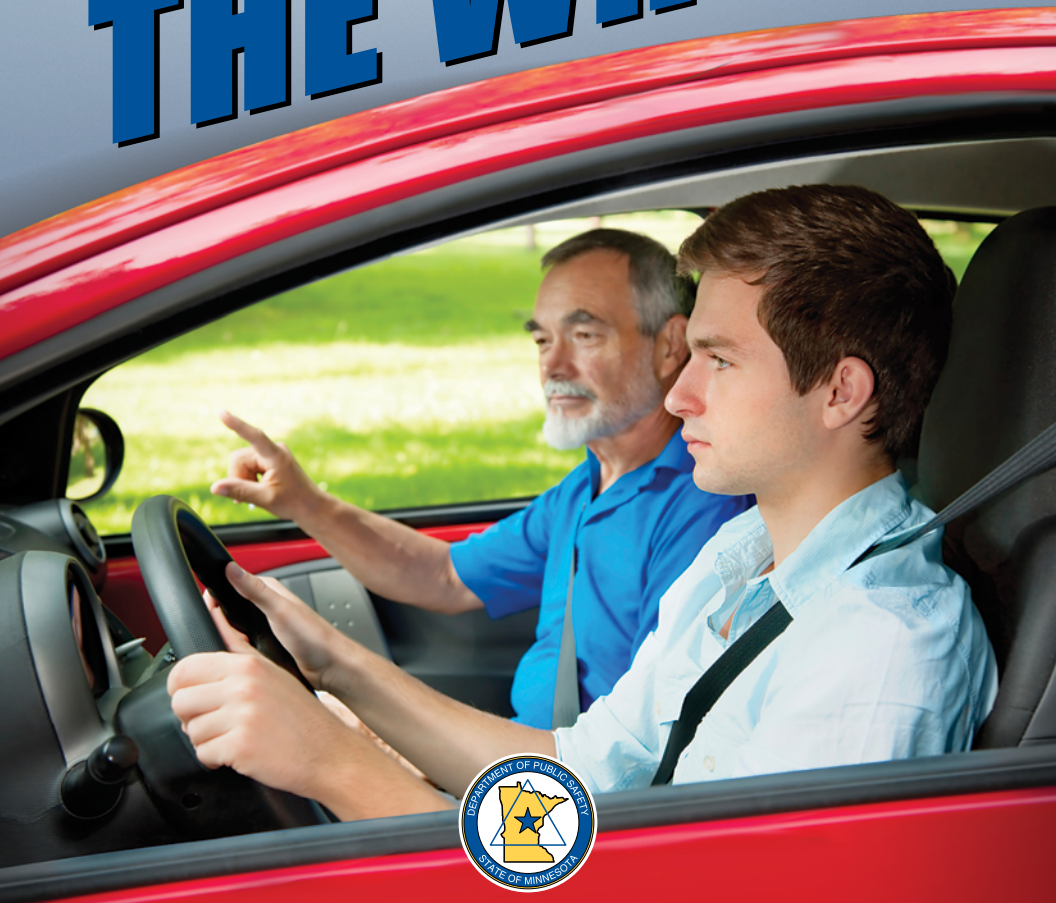


TEENS BEHIND THE WHEEL



A Road Map for Parents



It was beginning of the school year, September 4, 2012, and DJ Logan was heading home from Byron High School in Byron, Minnesota. It would be her first and last day of her senior year, the last day her parents would ever see her alive, all because of a simple text.

DJ was sending a text when she smashed into the back of a school bus. Dozens of DJ's friends came to St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. At the hospital, DJ's parents would share the heart-breaking news to those teens that DJ would not survive. She was just 17 years old.

DJ was a typical teenager with good grades, lots of friends and a perfect driving record, but that day she made a choice to text while driving — a choice that cost DJ her life and changed her family forever.

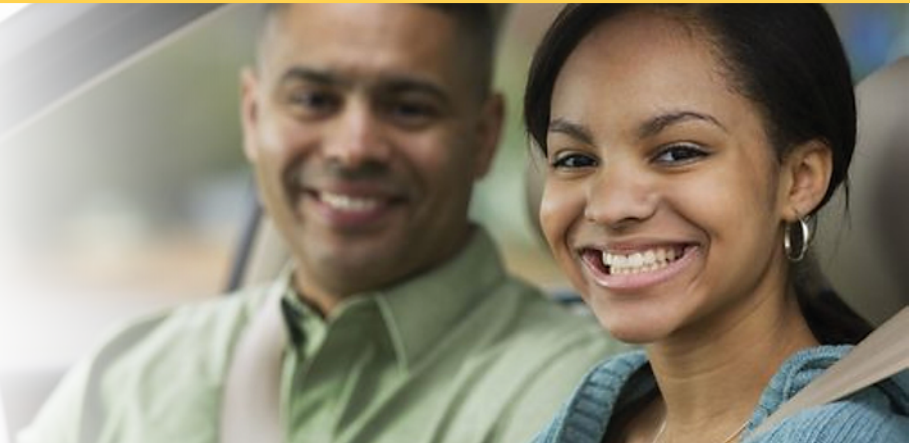
"Texting while driving is a choice and one that my daughter paid for with the highest price imaginable, her life. As her father, I am asking you to please take the pledge to not text and drive," said Matt Logan, DJ's father.

Distracted driving is far too common and involves any activity that takes a driver's focus off the road. Texting, daydreaming, reaching for items on the seat, turning around to talk to passengers — it may only take a few seconds but those seconds can turn deadly. Distracted driving is a contributing factor in one out of every six traffic fatalities and one out of every four traffic crashes in Minnesota each year.

Today, Matt Logan continues talking to teens across the state, encouraging them to put their phones down whenever they are driving. He doesn't want any parent to have to live with the pain and emptiness that one poor choice can cause while behind the wheel.

This publication intends to help parents develop safer teen drivers in order to prevent future tragedies from occurring on Minnesota roads.





Traffic crashes are the second leading killer of 16 and 17 year olds in Minnesota behind suicide. The reason for the high death count is simple; driver inexperience and immaturity that often results in risk-taking behind the wheel.

Top Driving Risk Factors for Teens

Failure to Wear Seat Belts

Teens have the lowest seat belt use rate of all motorists. When motorists don't buckle up, chances of surviving a crash are cut in half. Each year, approximately half of Minnesota teens killed are not belted.

Minnesota's primary seat belt law requires drivers and all passengers to be belted or in the correct child restraint. Law enforcement will stop and ticket unbelted drivers or passengers.

Inattentiveness/Driving with Passengers

Driver inattention/distraction is the most common contributing factor in multiple-vehicle crashes. Teen passengers significantly increase the risk of a crash. Each year, about one-third of fatal crashes involving a teen driver had teen passengers present in the vehicle.

Driving During the Afternoon

The afternoon from 2–6 p.m. is the most dangerous. In 2013, 43 percent of all teen involved crashes and 29 percent of fatal crashes involving a teen driver occurred during that four hour time period.

Excessive Speed

Illegal/unsafe speed is the most common contributing factor in single-vehicle crashes. Teen drivers have difficulty judging safe speeds and adjusting their speed to driving conditions because they are new, inexperienced drivers.

Fatigue

A person who has been awake for 24 hours experiences impairment nearly equal to an alcohol-concentration level of 0.10 percent.



MINNESOTA'S TEEN DRIVER LICENSING SYSTEM

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Minnesota's Graduated Licensing (GDL) system allows novice drivers to build experience incrementally by requiring more supervision in the initial learning driving phases. GDL also reduces exposure to high-risk situations such as carrying teen passengers and nighttime driving. Research has proven that parental influences and controls are clearly effective in making teens safer drivers.

Stage 1 Instruction Permit

- Must be at least 15 years old.
 - Must have completed 30 hours of classroom training and be enrolled in behind-the-wheel training with an approved driver education program.
 - Must pass the state knowledge test.
 - Permit holder may drive under the supervision of a parent, guardian or other licensed driver 21 or older occupying the front passenger seat.
 - Drivers and all passengers must wear seat belts or be in the correct child safety restraint.
 - May not operate a vehicle while using a cell phone, whether hand-held or hands-free except to call 911 in an emergency. It is illegal for drivers of all ages to compose, read, or send text messages/emails, or access the internet on a wireless device — including when stopped in traffic.
- To ensure your teen is prepared to drive safely in various driving and weather conditions, teens should obtain supervised practice time well beyond the minimum required by law.
 - The supervised driving log must be submitted when taking the provisional driver license road test and becomes part of the teen's permanent driving record.
- For the first six months of licensure driving is prohibited from midnight to 5 a.m. unless: accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older; driving for employment; driving between home and place of employment; or driving to/from home and a school event for which the school has not provided transportation.
- For the first six months of licensure only one passenger under the age of 20 is permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Passengers under age 20 who are members of the driver's immediate family are permitted.

Stage 2 Provisional License

- Must be at least 16, complete six hours of behind-the-wheel training and pass the road test.
- Must have held a permit for six months with no convictions for moving violations, or impaired driving violations.
- Parent/guardian must complete a supervised driving log, certifying their teen driver spent a minimum of 50 hours behind the wheel, of which at least 15 were at night.
 - If the parent/guardian completes an approved 90-minute parent awareness class, the minimum number of hours a teen is required to spend behind the wheel is reduced from 50 to 40, 15 of which are still required a night.
- For the second six months of licensure no more than three passengers under the age of 20 are permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Passengers under age 20 who are members of the driver's immediate family are permitted.
- Drivers and all passengers must wear seat belts or be in the correct child safety restraint.
- May not operate a vehicle while using a cell phone, whether hand-held or hands-free except to call 911 in an emergency. It is illegal for drivers of all ages to compose, read, or send text messages/emails, or access the internet on a wireless device — including when stopped in traffic.

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Teen Driving Laws

Seat Belts

Minnesota's seat belt law is a primary offense, meaning drivers and passengers in all seating positions must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint. Law enforcement will stop and ticket unbelted drivers or passengers.

Cell Phone Use and Texting

It is illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone whether hand-held or hands-free — except to call 911 in an emergency. It is also illegal for drivers of all ages to compose or read text messages and emails, or access the Internet using a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic.

Drinking

It is illegal for a person under age 21 to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol. Drivers under the legal drinking age with an alcohol-concentration of 0.08 or higher will face regular DWI laws and sanctions.

Consequences for underage drinking and driving are loss of license for at least 30 days and court fines. Teen drivers with provisional licenses whose driving privileges are revoked from a crash or alcohol/controlled substance-related violation cannot regain driving privileges until age 18.

Parents: Know Your Role

Developing necessary skills for safe driving is a complex task and requires many hours of practice in a variety of driving environments. Driver education is a first step, but a parent's role is crucial:

- Be a positive role model when you drive.
- Review the Minnesota Driver's Manual to refresh your own driving knowledge.
- Require seat belt use at all times.
- Practice with your teen while they have their instruction permit and during their first year of licensed driving.
- Give positive feedback frequently and remain calm while instructing your teen.
- Begin practice driving in an empty parking lot.
- Practice on roads unfamiliar to the teen.
- As experience is gained, expose teen to different driving conditions — wet roads, snow, freeways, rural roadways, night driving, etc. Continue to monitor and train teen driver even after licensure.
- Always make safety the priority over mobility and convenience issues.
- Set reasonable limits when your teen is licensed, stick to the rules, and follow through with consequences when the rules are not followed.
- Discuss the dangers and consequences of fatigued and impaired driving.
- Choose vehicles for safety, not image.

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Stage 3 Full License

- Parent must certify completion of at least 10 additional hours of supervised driving.
- Must have held a provisional license for at least 12 consecutive months with no convictions for impaired driving or crash-related moving violations, and not have more than one conviction for a non-crash related moving violation.



Responsibilities

Teens are responsible for their actions as a driver. As vehicle owners, parents are legally liable for damages caused by their teen driver. Until age 18, parents may legally withdraw consent of their teen's provisional license, canceling their driving privileges. Visit www.mndriveinfo.org for additional information.

Establishing Rules for Newly Licensed Teens

Take time to discuss driving rules, responsibilities and consequences that are appropriate for your family. A natural strategy for mentoring new drivers includes a combination of privileges and consequences. Safety should always take priority over mobility and convenience issues.

If a crash occurs due to inexperience, the most effective response is to review driving privileges and increase supervised practice time until skills are mastered.

Discussing consequences may be viewed negatively by teens and parents alike. However, teens who are involved in the rule-making process may be more likely to honor an agreement with their parents. If your teen makes choices that violate your driving agreement and show high risk behaviors, the recommended response is to restrict privileges. Some parents find a written contract enhances the agreement.

As teen drivers gain experience and demonstrate appropriate decision making, they graduate to a higher level of driving responsibility. Studies show that a driver's greatest risk of crashing and receiving citations occurs during the first year of licensure.

Remember, it is a violation of state law for drivers with a learners permit or provisional license to use a cell phone while driving. It is also illegal for drivers of all ages to compose, read, or send text messages/ emails, or access the internet on a wireless device — including when stopped in traffic.

Recommended Limitations for Newly Licensed Teens

To further reduce the risk of teen crashes, consider these safety steps in addition to the laws listed on page 3.

Step 1

- Daylight conditions only.
- Low-stress conditions (low traffic volume and good road conditions).
- No passengers under age 20 (except immediate family members).

Step 2

- Limited nighttime driving with a curfew.
- Moderate-stress conditions (moderate traffic volume and various road conditions).
- No more than one passenger under age 20 (except immediate family members).

Step 3

- Nighttime driving with no more than one passenger under age 20 (except immediate family members).
- No more than three passengers under age 20, except immediate family members, only if licensed more than six months.

Step 4

- All road and traffic conditions allowed.
- Maintain passenger limitations.

Step 5

- Unrestricted privileges to drive.



As a New Driver I Promise to:

1. Always wear my seat belt and require all passengers to do so
2. Never drive after consuming alcohol or drugs
3. Be a passenger only with drivers who are alcohol- and drug-free
4. Always call for a ride if it's not safe to drive or ride
5. Be a courteous driver
6. Call if I will be more than _____ minutes late
7. Drive at safe speeds for road conditions — at or below the speed limit
8. Never engage in racing, stunts, or other thrill-seeking activities
9. Not conceal tickets, warnings, or crashes
10. Not drive when fatigued
11. Never use a cell phone or other electronic device when driving
12. Not drive aggressively, tailgate, or speed up to get through yellow lights
13. Not allow anyone else to drive the car
14. Abide by passenger and night driving provisions
15. Other: _____

As Your Parent/Guardian I Promise to:

1. Be available for practice on a variety of road types and driving conditions
2. Be available to pick you up if it's not safe for you to drive or ride
3. Other: _____



DRIVING CONTRACT BETWEEN TEEN AND PARENT

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The Following Provisions are Agreed Upon:

These Provisions Should be Periodically Reviewed.

Number of passengers under age 20 allowed during first year of licensure:

Months 1-6 None One*

Months 7-12 None One Two Three*

After one year of licensure None One Two Three
(*Maximum allowed by law)

Extra passengers will not be allowed if seat belts are not available for each person.

Nighttime Driving Limitations During the First Year of Licensure:

Months 1-6, no driving from

Midnight to 5 a.m. (as required by law) ____ p.m. or dark to 5 a.m. (use this option to extend the nighttime driving limitation)

Months 7-12, no driving from

Midnight to 5 a.m. ____ p.m. or dark to 5 a.m. ____ to ____

Road Conditions:

Good weather All weather Low-traffic volume High-traffic volume

Teen's signature

Date

Parent's signature

Date





For more information on teen drivers, visit the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety website at ots.dps.mn.gov.

Visit the Minnesota Driver and Vehicle Services Division website at dvs.dps.mn.gov for information on:

- Driver exam station locations and hours of operation
- List of approved driver education schools
- Locations to apply for or renew a driver's license
- Minnesota Driver's Manual
- Scheduling a road test appointment
- Withdrawal of Parent Consent/Voluntary Surrender Form





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PI 025 • 6/2015