



Get the Facts: Young Drivers on the Road

In a Nutshell

It's a tragic truth. New drivers ages 16-19 are over-represented in traffic crashes each year due to driver inexperience, distractions, nighttime driving, speeding and lack of seat belt use.

What should I know about our state's young drivers?

Minnesota teen drivers are covered under graduated licensing laws that limit privileges for these young and inexperienced motorists. But laws aren't enough. Newly minted drivers need role models and guidance in the form of parents and other adults in their lives.

What you can do?

- Model good driving habits. If you speed, they're likely to speed.
- Talk about how to handle driving challenges like weather, aggression and distractions.
- Work with your young driver to set expectations, guidelines (such as passengers, nighttime driving), create a driving contract and outline repercussions.
- Train teens on a variety of road types and in different conditions (nighttime, rain, snow). The more supervised experience, the safer the teen driver.
- Agree to provide a safe ride for teens anytime it's needed.
- Continue to monitor and train teens for the first six to 12 months after licensing, the period of greatest crash risk.

Motor vehicle accidents are the number one killer of teenagers, accounting for over one-third of all deaths

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among teens aged 16–19 than among any other age group.

Per mile driven, teen drivers in this age group are nearly three times as likely as drivers aged 20 or older to be in a fatal crash.

Get to know Minnesota driving laws for teens

Nighttime Driving Limitation: For the first six months of licensure driving is prohibited midnight-5 a.m.

Passenger Limitations: For the first six months of licensure only one passenger under age 20 is permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. For the second six months of licensure, no more than three passengers under age 20 are permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.





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 and Driving: It is illegal for a person under age 21 to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol. Consequences for underage drinking and driving are loss of license for at least 30 days and court fines

Seat Belt Use: Minnesota's seat belt law is a primary offense, meaning drivers and passengers of any age and in all seating positions must be buckled up.

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Office of Traffic Safety

