

APPENDIX B

Teens behind the Wheel

Driver Guide for Parents and Teens

The Driver Guide for Parents and Teens is posted on myBMV.com. It is an important tool that can be used to help keep parents engaged in their child's driver education.

Risk Factors for Teens

- **Errant/Risky Driving.** Errant/risking driving and distraction is the most common contributing factor in teen crashes.
- **Inattentiveness.** Driver inattention and distraction is a common contributing factor in multiple-vehicle crashes.
- **Excessive speed.** Illegal or unsafe speed is a common contributing factor in single vehicle crashes. Teens may have difficulty adjusting their speed to suit current driving conditions. Higher speeds reduce the time a driver has to recognize and react to hazards.
- **Driving with other teens.** The chance of a crash doubles with each passenger present in the vehicle.
- **Failure to wear a seat belt.** Wearing a seat belt is the best way to reduce the chance of injury or death in a crash – it's the law.
- **Being inattentive at intersections.** Most multi-vehicle crashes involving teens occur at intersections. Teen drivers need to be free from distractions and focused on other vehicles at intersections.
- **Use of alcohol or other drugs while driving.** While the percentage of teen drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs is small, they account for a much higher percentage of serious injury and death from crashes involving all teen drivers.

Tips for Teen Drivers

- You and your passengers must always wear seat belts.
- Always adjust your seats and mirrors for the best visibility before starting each drive.

- Do not adjust your radio while you are driving. It is better to wait until you are stopped because taking your focus off the road for even a few seconds could lead to a collision
- Do not play music loudly. You might miss hearing a siren or a horn that could warn you of possible trouble.
- Do not talk on the phone or text while driving — it’s against the law. Also, do not eat, comb your hair, put on make-up or do anything else that distracts you from driving.
- Do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol or ride with anyone who is under the influence. Even some over-the-counter drugs can make you drowsy.
- Before entering an intersection, make sure the intersection is clear before you proceed.
- Obey all traffic signals. Always be prepared to stop as you approach an intersection with a green light in case the light changes. Unless you are already in an intersection when the light turns yellow, you should not enter the intersection after the light turns yellow.
- Obey the speed limit. Going too fast gives you less time to stop or react.

Tips for Parents of Teens

- When you drive, set a good example for your teen.
- Require seat belt use at all times.
- Take your teen practice driving with you while your teen has a learner’s permit and during the first year of licensed driving.
- Expose your teen to different driving conditions, including wet roads, snow, highways, rural roads, night driving, etc.
- Practice on unfamiliar roads.
- Choose vehicles for safety, not image.
- Take the necessary time to discuss driving rules, responsibilities and consequences appropriate for your family.
- Develop a strategy for progressive privileges. As the teen driver gains experience and demonstrates appropriate decisions, allow your teen to “graduate” to a higher level of driving responsibility.
- Developing necessary skills for safe driving is a complex task and can be learned only after many hours of practice. Driver education is a first step, but parents have a crucial role in teaching teens to drive.