

# The PARENT'S Supervised Driving Program

For the parents of teen drivers —  
a resource for teen licensing



A PROGRAM OF THE PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

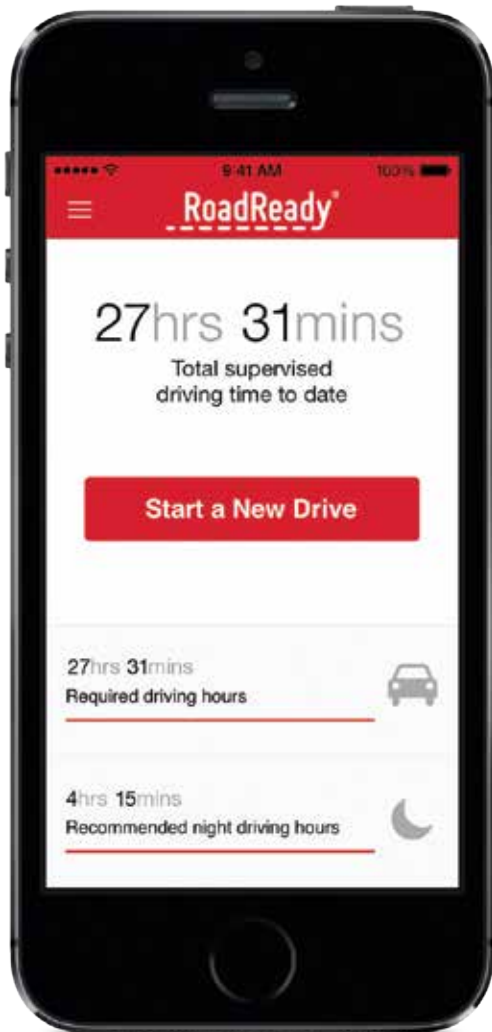


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A component of  
the **PARENT'S**   
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# A Message to Parents and Guardians

Having your teen reach the important milestone of learning to drive is exciting and scary at the same time. This guide is meant to assist you in making this endeavor not only meaningful but enjoyable. Driving a motor vehicle is a privilege that comes with many responsibilities. Assisting your new driver in learning to be safe, courteous, and attentive on our roadways is the first step in a lifelong journey of driving.

Take a moment to think back to the time when you were first learning to drive. What do you remember most? Do you remember who taught you? Those who helped you learn the rules of the road may be the reason you are reading this book today and helping to teach someone else how to drive safely.

As a parent or guardian, you are both a teacher and role model. Your teen has been watching you drive and has been observing how you handle situations on the road. As you know, driving is a task that requires your full attention. The Parent's Supervised Driving Program allows you to confidently teach your teen how to drive in a variety of situations and encourages you to ride with them at different times of day or night and in a variety of traffic patterns and weather conditions. This guide highlights Pennsylvania's laws and each section focuses on core driving skills that progress from basic to complex situations.

Pennsylvania has what is called a Graduated Driver License (GDL) program during the learner's permit and junior license phase. The goal of a GDL is to increase privileges gradually as teens gain experience behind the wheel. This will allow your teen to drive cautiously and with accountability, keeping them out of harm's way to the best extent possible.

Once your teen has earned their learner's permit, they must complete a minimum of 65 hours of practice driving time, including at least 10 hours at night and 5 hours during adverse weather conditions. You or another licensed adult age 21 or older are required to accompany and supervise your teen from the front seat of the vehicle during on-the-road practice sessions. This may seem overwhelming at first, but with the assistance of this guide and the included driving log to track hours, your confidence as a driving mentor will grow.

This guide was designed as a teaching tool and it contains valuable advice, checklists, a driving log, a sample driving contract, and a driving certification form to help you teach your teen to be a safe and confident driver. Please take the time to read and use this valuable resource.

Safe Driving,

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation



## We understand the feeling.

At AAA, many of us are parents too. We've felt the pride of having a new driver...and the fear. That's why we've been helping to protect families with auto insurance for over 100 years. It's also why we're committed to teen driver safety – with programs like AAA's How to Drive Online for new your driver and the StartSmart initiative that helps you reinforce what your child learns in driver education. Learn more at [AAA.com](http://AAA.com).

***For us, safety is a lifetime pursuit.***





## ***Dear Parents of New Drivers,***

Are you nervous, happy or excited? Probably all three. No doubt, you're nervous that your child is now a licensed driver. But happy that your job as their personal chauffeur is over. And excited that they've reached a major milestone in life: driving.

## **At AAA, we're here to help with that nervous part.**

This guide is one of the ways we help. As sponsor, we understand the importance every parent places on keeping their child safe on the road. But our commitment to the well-being of drivers goes much deeper.

## **For us, safety is a lifelong pursuit.**

Back when we were founded in 1902, we were already advocating for a national highway system. Today, we continue to help protect with auto insurance and programs that range from child passenger safety and School Safety Patrol® to the defensive driving courses for seniors.

## **Many of us at AAA are parents too.**

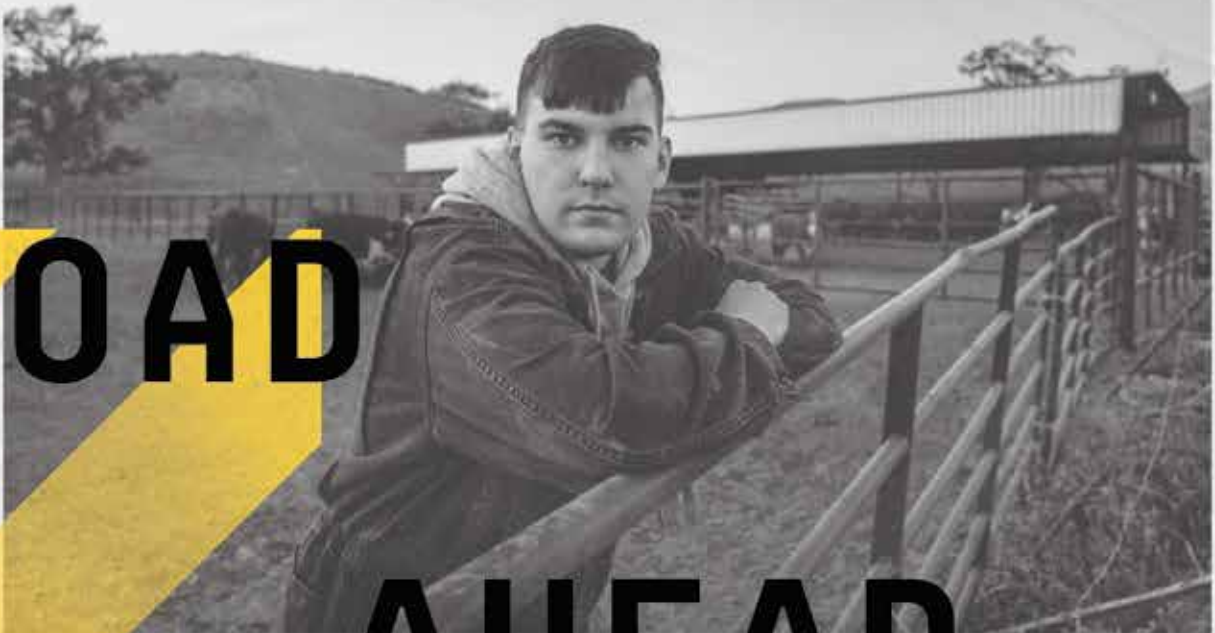
We understand your concerns. We helped our children become safer, more cautious drivers, and you can too. Just remember: When you have the urge to close your eyes the first time they parallel park...safety always comes first.

**[AAA.com/HowtoDriveOnline](http://AAA.com/HowtoDriveOnline)**





**BE  
CONFIDENT  
IN THE**



**ROAD  
AHEAD.**

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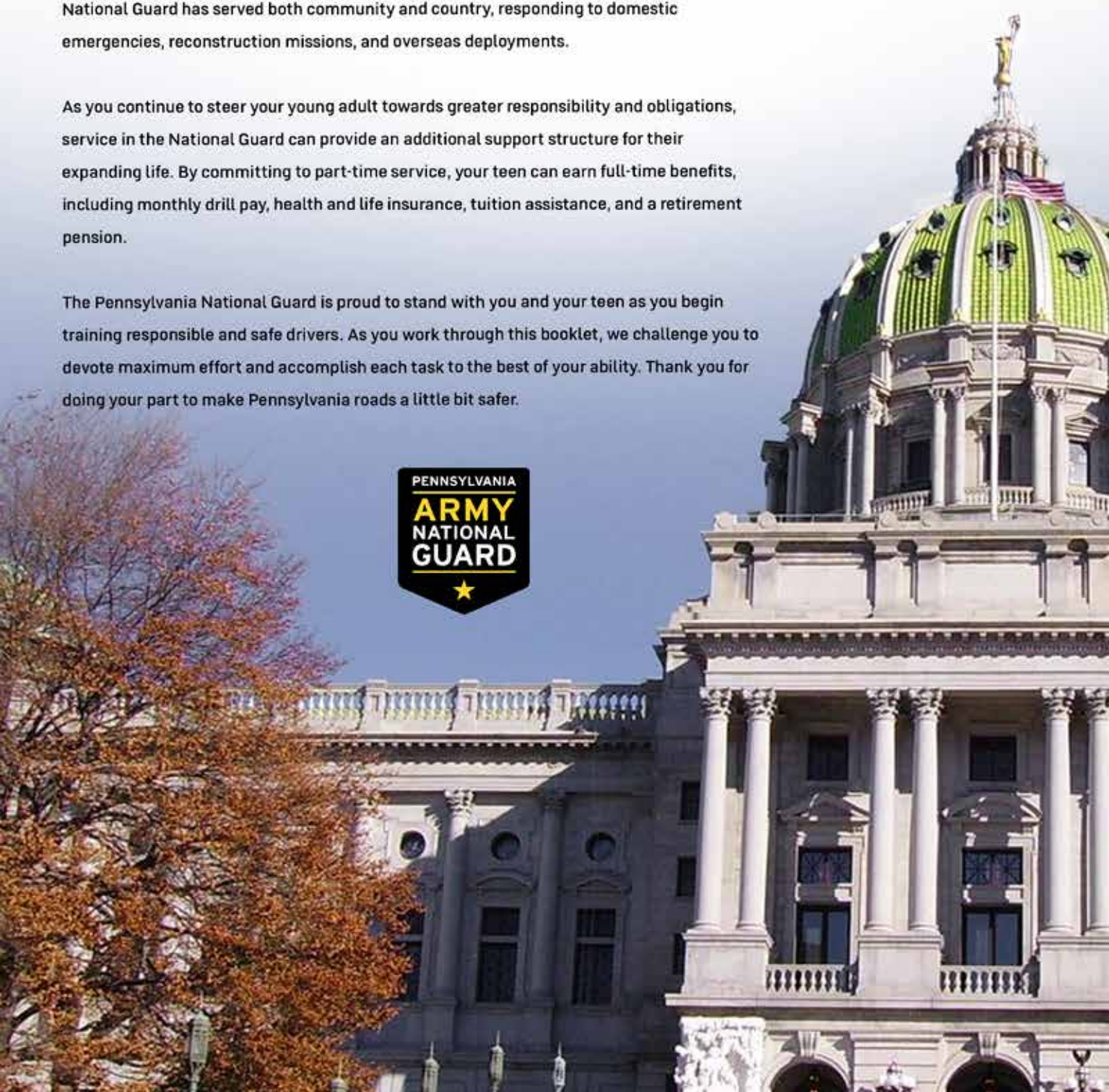
# SPONSOR MESSAGE

For your teen, a driver's license represents maturity and independence. As parents, we understand it means so much more. That is why the Pennsylvania National Guard is a proud sponsor of The Parent's Supervised Driving Program.

Like your new driver, the National Guard has long cherished freedom and independence. As the oldest branch in the military, we trace our lineage to 1636 when colonial citizens organized to protect families and towns from hostile attacks. Since 1860, the Pennsylvania National Guard has served both community and country, responding to domestic emergencies, reconstruction missions, and overseas deployments.

As you continue to steer your young adult towards greater responsibility and obligations, service in the National Guard can provide an additional support structure for their expanding life. By committing to part-time service, your teen can earn full-time benefits, including monthly drill pay, health and life insurance, tuition assistance, and a retirement pension.

The Pennsylvania National Guard is proud to stand with you and your teen as you begin training responsible and safe drivers. As you work through this booklet, we challenge you to devote maximum effort and accomplish each task to the best of your ability. Thank you for doing your part to make Pennsylvania roads a little bit safer.



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# Faulkner

— TO BE SURE —

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on taking an important step to ensure your new driver's safety on the road. As the President of the Faulkner Automotive Group, I am delighted to support you and your new driver in this exciting journey toward responsible driving.

Driving is a significant milestone, bringing new freedom but also new responsibilities. We understand the importance of a solid foundation in driving skills, and that's why we're committed to promoting safe driving practices through the Parent's Supervised Driving Program. Your role as a mentor in your teen's driving education is crucial, and we commend you for dedicating the time to help them build confidence and skills behind the wheel.

We want you to know that our team is here for you every step of the way. We are happy to provide tips, answer questions, and share information on the latest safety features in our vehicles. Our goal is to give you peace of mind and to support your teen in becoming a responsible and capable driver.

Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. Together, we can help create safer roads and ensure your teen has the best possible start as a new driver.

Safe travels,



Harry Faulkner  
President,  
Faulkner Automotive Group

**ToBeSure.com**

## About this program

Developed by Safe Roads Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to promoting safer driving through education for drivers of all ages, *The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* is designed to improve teen driver safety by providing parents and guardians with a methodical approach to teaching the requisite driving skills. Each lesson concentrates on a particular sequential skill. Parents are in the best position to help their teens become safe, smart, and skilled drivers.

*The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* also includes a website, social media pages, and a mobile app, RoadReady®.

**Publisher:** Safe Roads Alliance -  
info@saferoadsalliance.org

**Illustrator:** Lou Eisenman

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- AAA
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- Faulkner Automotive Group

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This program is also available online at:

**PSDPonline.com**

## The **PARENT'S** Supervised Driving Program

# Welcome Parents of Teen Drivers!

*The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* is a resource for parents to utilize when teaching their teen to drive.

1. This program is divided into core driving skills.




- Read through each section at home before your teen starts a new skill.

2. Log your teen's driving time. This can be done 2 ways:



- Carry this printed guide with you during the drive and use the printed log section – you or your teen can log the supervised driving hours once the drive is finished.



- Download and use the free  **RoadReady**® app to track your driving time. RoadReady tracks your teen's driving hours until they reach the state requirements. You can print out the log straight from the app.

3. Your teen can turn in their log when applying for their license.

## Stay Connected With Us!

Follow *The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* for expert driving articles, program launch events and additional safety resources.



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TheParentsSupervisedDrivingProgram



**X (formerly Twitter)**

www.twitter.com/PSDP\_Info



**Instagram**

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**Your opinion matters**

Take our program survey and tell us about your experience.

[www.theparentssuperviseddrivingprogram.com/survey.html](http://www.theparentssuperviseddrivingprogram.com/survey.html)



## About Supervising Teen Drivers

*The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* gives you a simple, easy-to-follow plan you can use to help your teen be a safe and responsible driver.

Some thoughts as you begin this exciting experience together:

**Make an effort to enjoy the learning process:** Driving is a big step toward independence, and your teen is entering a new phase of life. You'll both remember this experience for years to come. Make it a good memory!

**Consistent and varied practice:** Studies show that the risk of a crash diminishes with experience. The more time you can spend driving with your teen, the less likely it will be that they'll crash when they begin driving alone. Driving in a variety of circumstances is equally important, along with consistent practice. Don't try to compress all the driving time in one or two months. Make sure your teen is exposed to all types of roads, and in different conditions: at night; in rain, fog, and snow; and in heavy and light traffic.

**Be a driving role model:** It's not enough to say, "Do as I say." Children imitate their parents'/guardians' behavior, so your driving should set a good example for your teen to emulate. Be sure that you:

- Obey all traffic laws.
- Correct any unsafe driving habits (driving aggressively, rolling through stop signs, accelerating through yellow lights, speeding, etc.).
- Refrain from using your cell phone while driving.
- Always wear your seat belt, and remind your teen that buckling up is the law. This will need to be an ongoing conversation — buckle up every trip, every time, every person.

### Tips for Teaching Your Teen

- **Seat belts** must always be worn properly by **everyone** in the vehicle.
- **Before each session**, discuss the goals of the day's lesson.
- **Before each new lesson**, review what was learned during the previous lesson.
- **Keep instructions simple and concise.** Say where to go and what action to take. For example: "Drive to the corner and turn right." Give the direction with enough time for your teen to process and safely execute the maneuver.
- **The feedback** you give should be calm, precise, and immediate. Be patient and alert at all times. Remember to give positive feedback when your teen succeeds!
- **When your teen makes a mistake**, which will happen often, do not criticize. Remain calm and simply repeat the maneuver until it's done correctly. To minimize their frustration, emphasize to your teen that mistakes are a normal part of learning.
- **These lessons should be consistent** with what is taught by your teen's driving instructor. If you teach something differently, your teen will be confused and learning will be more difficult. If the lessons in this program are different from the instructor's, contact them to clarify the discrepancy.
- **Remember that students learn at different paces.** Make sure your teen has mastered each skill before you move on to the next lesson, even if that means repeating a lesson several times. Patience and practice will pay off in the long run.
- **Integrate night driving** into as many lessons as possible.

Most importantly, make sure the vehicle you use for training is safe. Confirm that the brakes have been recently inspected, and check to make sure the tires have sufficient tread depth. It's generally recommended that you do not train in larger vehicles that lack stability control.

### Check Your Emotions

At the start of each driving lesson with your teen, leave your problems behind — and make an effort to stay focused. Bringing up touchy subjects such as grades, homework, significant others, etc. can distract either of you from the task at hand.

### Consider StartSmart

This is an online course for parents to learn about the licensing process, the parent's role, managing solo driving, and more.

[exchange.aaa.com/safety/teen-driver-safety/pointers-for-parents](http://exchange.aaa.com/safety/teen-driver-safety/pointers-for-parents)

# Vehicle Control for Supervisors

Teaching a new driver can be stressful, but knowing you have some control can help. Professional driver education instructors are taught emergency responses to potential hazards that can crop up with an inexperienced driver behind the wheel. Here are some skills you can learn to help you maintain control from the passenger seat while teaching:



**Emergency shifting:** In a quiet, large, level, empty area, practice shifting the transmission from drive to neutral. This would be necessary if the accelerator becomes stuck.



**Taking the wheel:** With an experienced driver in the driver's seat, in a quiet, large, level, empty area, practice steering the car with your left hand from the passenger seat.



**Mirrors:** Adjust the mirror on the passenger sun visor so you can use it as a rearview mirror. If the right side mirror is properly adjusted, you can use it to monitor traffic to the rear from the passenger seat.



**Awareness:** Never assume everything is okay. Always check and re-check mirrors before you give instructions to your teen. Remember that you are a second set of eyes and ears, and you need to be alert and ready to help your teen.



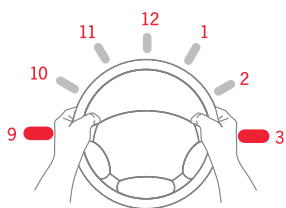
**Emergency stopping:** Practice stopping the car with the parking brake (if your vehicle's parking brake is located between the seats). This can be dangerous, even at low speeds, and should only be used as a last resort.

## Driving Has Changed

Chances are, today's cars are not the same as they were when you learned to drive. To teach your teen effectively, you need to know about a few important recent changes in how cars work, how we drive, and how driving is taught.

**Anti-lock Brake System (ABS):** Most newer cars offer ABS as standard equipment. ABS is a dramatic safety improvement that works by letting the tires rotate, rather than lock up, when the brake is engaged. This allows drivers to steer the car in an emergency stop. ABS should be used with firm, continuous pressure. The brakes may shake and grind when applied, which often concerns users — but this is a normal function of ABS. To find out if your car has ABS, check the instrument panel after you turn on the ignition or read the owner's manual.

*Note: When driving a car without ABS, the old rules still apply. Don't "slam" the brakes. Rather, press the brake pedal firmly. The intention is to stop quickly, but also to avoid locking the brakes and skidding. Skidding causes a loss of control.*



Arms holding the wheel at 9 and 3 o'clock are not as likely to be hit by the air bag.

**Air bags:** Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, which must be worn for the air bags to be effective. The use of a seat belt allows the driver to stay behind the wheel in order to take advantage of the airbag. Since air bags deploy out of the wheel on impact, it's important to keep your hands and arms in the recommended position.

**Steering wheel hand position:** Most of us were taught to position our hands at 10 and 2 o'clock or 8 and 4 o'clock on the steering wheel. It's now suggested that you hold the wheel at 9 and 3 o'clock, or 8 and 4 o'clock. This gives you better vehicle control and also lessens the risk of injury if the airbag was to deploy.

## Commentary Driving

Commentary driving is a great communication tool. Coach your teen to describe their actions, thoughts and observations out loud as they drive, similar to a sports commentator. Throughout the learning process, ask them to verbalize what they see around them, including potential risks and any steps they need to take to avoid those risks. Encourage your teen to verbalize an action they plan to make, such as turning, merging and approaching traffic lights.

## Distracted Driving and More

Distracted driving involves any activity that takes the driver's attention away from the primary task of driving. Distraction, impairment, speeding, and not wearing seat belts are all risky choices that can lead to serious injury and death. Teens, who are still learning the complex skills of driving, are particularly susceptible to distractions while behind the wheel. Don't let you or your teen become another statistic. Here are the facts:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Mile for mile, teens are involved in 3 times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. In a 2019 study, 39% of teen drivers admitted to texting and driving at least once in the last 30 days.
- According to NHTSA, 3,308 people were killed in 2022 in distraction-related crashes nationwide, with teens having the highest rate of distracted driving crashes involving a fatality.
- A Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study revealed that physically dialing a phone while driving increases the risk of a crash as much as 6 times. Texting is riskier still, increasing collision risk by 23 times, as texting involves visual, manual and cognitive distractions.
- A recent AAA study shows that when a teen driver is carrying teen passengers, the fatality rate for occupants of other cars increases 56 percent; for pedestrians and cyclists, it increases 17 percent; and for the teen driver, the fatality rate increases 45 percent.

To combat this growing epidemic, we suggest the following:

- **Set a good example:** Kids observe and learn from their parents. Put your phone down while driving and only use it when you are safely pulled over. According to the Pew Research Center, 40 percent of teens aged 12 to 17 say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put themselves and others in danger.
- **Talk to your teen:** Discuss the risks and responsibilities of driving and the danger of dividing their attention between a phone call and the road. Show them the statistics related to distracted driving and urge them to share what they learn with their friends.
- **Establish ground rules:** Set up family rules about not texting while behind the wheel. Enforce the limits set by the graduated licensing program (GDL).
- **Sign a pledge:** Have your teen take action by agreeing to a family contract about wearing seat belts, not speeding, not driving after drinking, and not using a cell phone behind the wheel. Agree on penalties for violating the pledge, such as paying for tickets or loss of driving privileges.
- **Other dangerous distractions:** In addition to cell phone use, distracted driving can include eating, grooming, drinking, listening to or adjusting the radio or MP3 player, using the GPS, talking to passengers, or watching a video, just to name a few activities. Inexperienced drivers are particularly susceptible to these kinds of distractions.

### Dangers of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Talk to your teen about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. All gas-powered vehicles produce carbon monoxide, a deadly odorless gas released out of the exhaust pipe of the vehicle. Symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure include: fatigue or weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea and/or vomiting, rapid heart rate, irregular breathing, confusion or disorientation, coughing, and chest pain.

Tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning from your vehicle include:

- Manage routine inspection and maintenance of your exhaust system and mufflers.
- Never leave your vehicle running in a garage with the door down, nor partially down.
- On snowy days, always inspect your tail pipe for any snow or ice that may be causing obstructions.
- If you are stuck in traffic or your vehicle is idling, make sure to partially open a window.
- Consider installing a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your vehicle, and replace the batteries when changing the time on your clock in the spring and fall each year.
- If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide in your vehicle, exit the vehicle immediately, get fresh air, and seek emergency medical attention right away.

### Eyes on the Road

Teens tend to look away from the road and become distracted for longer periods than older drivers. It's important to train them to keep their eyes on the road ahead. Test your teen on how long they look away when doing various tasks inside the vehicle, such as adjusting the temperature. Coach them repeatedly on the importance of focusing on the road ahead.

### Talk to Your Teen

Discuss the risks and responsibilities of driving and the danger of dividing their attention between a phone call and the road. Encourage them to speak up if they are a passenger in a car with a distracted driver.

# The more the merrier? **The more the scarier.**



Risk of Fatal Crash

**The risk of a fatal crash** goes up in direct relation to the **number of teens** in the car.

A safety message from:



# Before You Start the Engine

**Goal:** Teach your teen vehicle basics before actual driving begins.

**Location:** Parked. This is a non-driving lesson.

## Lesson One – Touring the Vehicle

Walk around the outside of the car with your teen. Instruct them to look for leaks and hazards such as broken glass, blocked tail pipe, etc., and to make sure it's clear behind the vehicle as well as in front of the vehicle.

Have your teen practice these basic skills until they don't need help:

- Starting and stopping the engine
- Checking oil level
- Naming and operating all dashboard controls
- Checking wiper fluid

## Lesson Two – Checking Tire Pressure and Tread Depth

Be sure your tires have adequate tread and air pressure prior to driving. Check the tire pressure using the recommended PSI (Pounds per Square Inch), located in the vehicle owner's manual, the driver's side door jamb, or check the tire pressure on the tire itself by using a tire pressure gauge. If your PSI is above the number listed on your door jamb, let air out until it matches. If below, add air (or have a tire professional help you) until it reaches the proper number.

You can measure tread depth using the penny test. Here's how:

1. Take a penny, Lincoln side up, and hold it between your thumb and forefinger.
2. Select a point on your tire where the tread appears to be lowest and place Lincoln's head into one of the grooves.
3. If any part of Lincoln's head is covered by the tread, you're driving with the safe amount of tread depth. If your tread is below it, your car's ability to grip the road in adverse conditions is greatly reduced.

## Lesson Three – Mirror Settings

The method below provides the best view of adjacent lanes, for maximum safety.

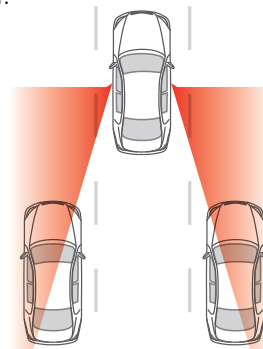
- **Inside mirror:** Have your teen sit up straight in the driver's seat and adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the entire rear window. This is the main mirror for viewing what is behind the vehicle.
- **Left-side mirror:** Have your teen lean their head toward the left-side window, and set the left mirror so they can barely see the side of the car. When they sit up straight, the car should no longer be visible in the mirror.
- **Right-side mirror:** Do the same to the right. Have your teen lean to the right over the car's center console, and set the right mirror so they can barely see the right side of the car.

## Lesson Four – Checking Blind Spots

Additionally, teach your teen how to look over their shoulder to check the blind spot on each side of the car that cannot be seen in the mirrors. Blind spots should be checked every time you change lanes.

## Lesson Five – Seating Position

A proper seat position is critical to maintaining control of the vehicle. Your teen should sit with their back firmly against the seat. There should be at least 10 inches between the steering wheel and the driver's chest, with the air bag pointing at the chest. The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the shoulders. Move the seat forward or backward so that the driver's heel touches the floor and can pivot quickly between the brake and accelerator. Shorter drivers may need a seat cushion or pedal extenders to sit safely 10 inches from the air bag. The head restraint should be at the center of the driver's head.



*The most effective way to deal with blind spots is to briefly turn and look.*

### Proper Mirror Settings

In the past, drivers were often taught mirror settings that created an overlap between the rear and side mirrors. This is actually less safe because it increases the size of the blind spots. This is a great opportunity to update your own driving skills while teaching your teen!

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# Moving, Steering, and Stopping

**Goal:** Teach your teen to consistently start, stop, and turn smoothly with full vehicle control.

**Location:** A large, level, mostly empty area.

Everyone in the vehicle **must** be properly buckled up.

Before starting, coach your teen to always signal and check mirrors and blind spots before changing the speed, position, or direction of the car. Remind them when needed.

Have your teen drive around the perimeter of the lot several times at a slow speed. Have them stop and start frequently, practicing smooth hand-to-hand steering, braking, and accelerating.

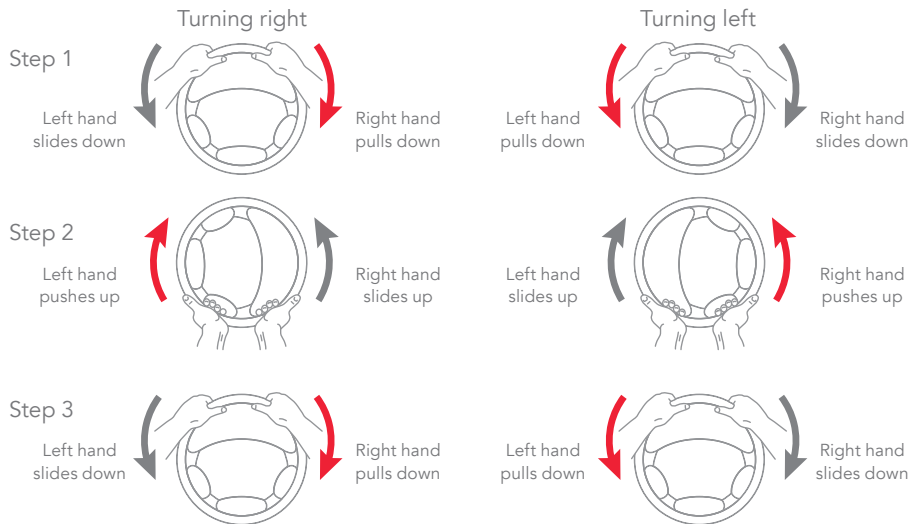
Pick several targets in the large, level, empty practice area, and have your teen drive to them at specific speeds. For example, "Drive to the stop sign at 15 mph." Focus on steady speed and smooth starts and stops.

Once your teen is braking smoothly, practice "hard, smooth stops" at slightly higher speeds (approximately 25–30 mph). *Hint: Curling toes back just before braking results in smoother stops. It eases the pressure on the brake.*

## Controlling Speed

New drivers tend to use the brake too much and the accelerator too little to control speed. Coach your teen about easing up on the accelerator as a way to reduce the car's speed.

## Lesson One – Steps Toward Turning



*With hand-to-hand steering your hands do not cross each other.*

## Lesson Two – Turning Techniques

- Ease off the accelerator or use the brake to reduce speed before entering a curve; use gentle acceleration to overcome inertia and pull the vehicle out of the curve.
- Use smooth, continuous steering wheel movements when approaching a turn and when returning (controlled sliding) the wheel through the hands until the vehicle is in the proper post-turn position.
- Coach your teen to pick a target near the center of the intended travel path. This target can be used as a visual aid to aim at while steering through turns.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady



# How Close Are You?

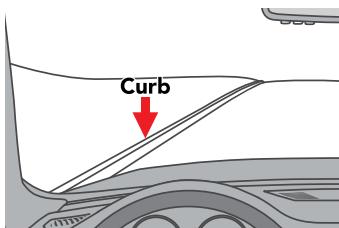
**Goal:** Teach your teen how to tell where their vehicle is in relation to other vehicles or objects.

**Location:** A large, level, mostly empty area with clearly painted pavement lines and curbs.

## Reference Points

Explain to your teen that reference points are visual guides to help them judge the car's distance from curbs, lines, other objects, and vehicles.

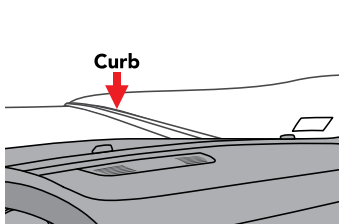
### Lesson One – Driver's Side Curb (or Line)



*View out the front windshield.  
Reference points will be different  
for everyone, depending on the  
vehicle and the height of the driver.*

- Choose a pavement curb (or line), and tell your teen that the goal is to pull the driver's side of the vehicle 6–12 inches away. Coach them to slowly pull up parallel to the line, getting gradually closer, and stop when they think they are 6–12 inches away. Have them look at where the line intersects in the front window.
- Have your teen put the car in park and get out to check if the driver's side wheels are 6–12 inches from the line. If it's not the right distance, have them do it again, checking the reference points.

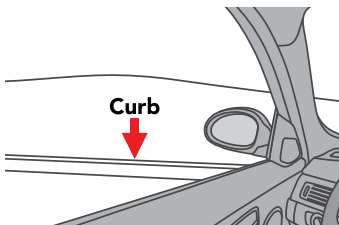
### Lesson Two – Passenger's Side Curb (or Line)



*View out the front windshield.  
Reference points will be different  
for everyone, depending on the  
vehicle and the height of the driver.*

- Choose another curb (or line) parallel to the passenger's side, again pulling up slowly to within 6–12 inches. Use the same gradual pull-up method, but for this side, coach your teen to stop when the curb appears to intersect the center of the hood.
- Again, have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the tires are 6–12 inches from the curb. Keep practicing and making adjustments, noticing the reference point, until they can do it consistently.

### Lesson Three – Front Curb (or Line)



*View out the driver's side window.  
Reference points will be different  
for everyone, depending on the  
vehicle and the height of the driver.*

- Teach your teen to align the front bumper between 6–12 inches from a pavement curb (or line). Have them drive slowly straight toward the curb. Coach them to stop when the curb appears under the driver side mirror.
- Have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the front bumper is 6–12 inches from the curb. If not, have them adjust the reference point as needed and keep practicing.

## Making Your Teen Safer

It takes more than 20 minutes every day for six months to complete 65 hours of practice driving. For 100 hours, it's more than 30 minutes a day for six months. Studies show that the more time you drive together, the safer your teen will be when driving alone.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

#RoadReady



# Backing Up

**Goal:** Teach your teen how to safely drive backwards in a straight line and while turning.

**Location:** A large, level, mostly empty area.

## Lesson One – Before Moving the Vehicle

- Coach your teen to first search around the vehicle before entering to identify potential hazards that may not be visible once they are in their seat. Then teach your teen that they must always turn around and look backwards through the rear window when backing up. They should also use their mirrors and back-up camera.
- Have your teen shift their hips and turn around until they get a good view behind the vehicle. When backing up to the right, they should drape their right arm over the back of the seat and grasp the top of the steering wheel with their left hand. When backing up to the left they should look over their left shoulder.
- Review how to use the backup camera with your teen, including what the different lines mean. Always remember that a camera cannot be a substitute for your eyes - it is meant as an additional tool to use when backing up.

### Slow and Consistent

Emphasize that it is important to back up slowly and be prepared to stop. It is harder to maintain control of the car when it's in reverse.

## Lesson Two – Backing Up in a Straight Line

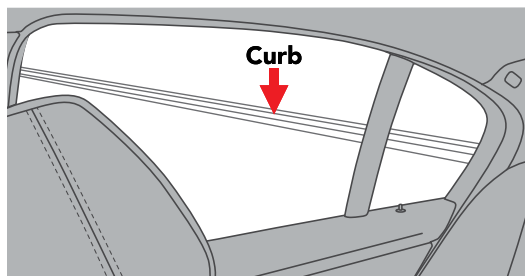
- Check all areas behind the vehicle prior to and while backing up.
- Grasp the steering wheel with the left hand and look over the right shoulder through the rear window.
- First release the brake, then use the accelerator gently, and only when necessary, to control speed. Keep it slow.

## Lesson Three – Backing Up in a Turn

- If turning to the left, grasp the steering wheel with the right hand, or with the left hand if turning to the right. Remind your teen to turn the wheel in the direction they want the car to travel.
- Look in the direction the car is moving through the rear side windows.
- Back into the turn slowly, first releasing the brake, then using the accelerator if needed.

## Lesson Four – Aligning Rear Bumper to a Curb

- Choose a curb (or line) for a target.
- Have your teen back up toward the target, coaching them to stop when the curb appears near the middle of the rear right window when looking over their right shoulder.
- Have your teen put the car in park and set the emergency brake.
- Have your teen get out of the car to see whether the rear bumper is close to the target.
- If adjustments are needed, have your teen try again, establishing a new reference point. Repeat as often as needed until your teen can consistently come within close proximity to the target.



*The driver's view out of the back passenger window. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.*

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

#RoadReady

# Driving on a Quiet Street – Part One

**Goal:** Teach your teen to move and stop a vehicle safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

**Location:** Start in a large, level, mostly empty area. Move to a quiet neighborhood street. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice.

Before moving out onto the road, make sure that your teen has reviewed the driver’s manual and is familiar with street signs, signals, pavement markings, and right-of-way and speed laws.

## Skill Review

Starting in a quiet, large, level, empty area, review the skills learned so far. Have your teen drive several laps around the lot, practicing smooth braking and accelerating, maintaining steady speeds, steering into right and left turns, and using reference points to align the car with curbs (or lines).

## Lesson One – Commentary Driving

Coach your teen to use “commentary driving” (see sidebar on page 2) throughout this lesson, if possible.

## Lesson Two – Lane Position

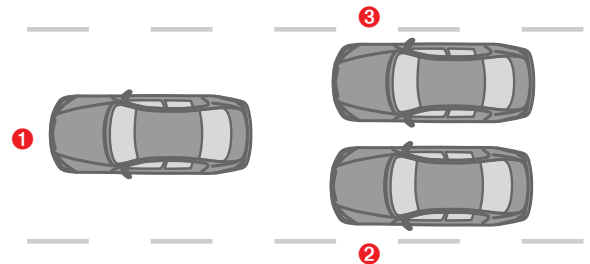
When you and your teen feel ready, move to a quiet street.

With your teen behind the wheel, first have them practice driving straight in three different lane positions. Do this for several miles, practicing each position at least 10 times:

**Center position 1:** The most common position, with the vehicle centered within the lane. Coach your teen that they should stay in the center position under most circumstances.

**Left position 2:** The vehicle positioned to the left side of the lane. This is best used when approaching parked vehicles and potential hazards on the right (if no oncoming traffic). It should be avoided on a hill or a curve.

**Right position 3:** The vehicle positioned to the right side of the lane. This is usually done when making a right turn to allow for a safety margin on the left side of the vehicle.



*Most driving is done in lane position number one.*

## Lesson Three – Intersections

Coach your teen on these techniques for safely approaching an intersection:

- Search for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and traffic signals.
- Check the rearview mirror for any potential hazards behind the car.
- If it’s an intersection with traffic signals, identify who has the right-of-way.
- If turning, put on the signal three to four seconds before making the turn.
- If a stop is required, stop behind the white stop line or crosswalk, whichever comes first.
- Select the best lane for travel by reading signs and pavement markings.
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other vehicles.

### Emergency Vehicles

Make sure your teen understands what to do if they encounter emergency vehicles. First, turn down the radio to listen for the direction of the emergency vehicle(s). Stay calm and pull over to the nearest curb, clear of intersections, and wait for the emergency vehicle(s) to pass.

### Move Over Law

All 50 states now have a Move Over Law. In PA, if you cannot merge out of the adjoining lane, you are required to slow to no more than 20 mph below the posted speed limit.

[tinyurl.com/228cz3v3](http://tinyurl.com/228cz3v3)

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

#RoadReady

# Driving on a Quiet Street – Part Two

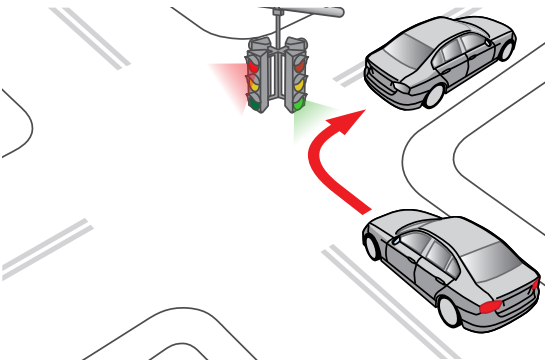
**Goal:** Teach your teen to turn both right and left safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

**Location:** A quiet block of single-lane roads, ideally without traffic signals at the intersections.

## Lesson One – Right Turns

When your teen is comfortable with lane positions and intersections, it's time to practice turns. Start with right turns. Have your teen drive clockwise around the block 10–12 times:

- Pick a line at the center of the intended travel path while steering through a turn. Make sure your teen does not fixate on one specific spot, but instead focuses on a broader path.
- Focus on smooth braking into the turn and acceleration out of the turn, as previously practiced in the large, level, empty area.
- Always check mirrors before turns and signal three to four seconds before turning. Make sure to check for vulnerable users, such as bicyclists and pedestrians, before turning.



*Have your teen drive around the block making right turns 10–12 times. When they are proficient, drive around the block 10–12 times making left turns.*

## Lesson Two – Left Turns

When your teen is proficient at right turns, move on to left turns. Have your teen drive counterclockwise around the block 10–12 times, coaching them on these techniques for safe left turns:

- Position the vehicle close to the yellow line in the middle of the road.
- If there is a stop sign or red light, stop with wheels pointed straight and make sure to stop before the stop line, crosswalk, or sidewalk, whichever is first.
- Search the intersection in all directions for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and signals.
- Select a gap in traffic and pull straight forward toward the middle of the intersection. Coach your teen to avoid hesitating.
- Use the yellow line on the street being turned onto as a target. Turn into the travel lane closest to the yellow line.
- When the turn is complete, let the steering wheel slide back through the hands while maintaining contact with the wheel.
- Pick a new target 15–20 seconds ahead in the center of the travel path and accelerate gradually.

Be sure to practice with your teen in a variety of conditions, including at night and in inclement weather, as much as possible.

### Focus Ahead

Most drivers have a tendency to steer in the direction they look. If their eyes move to one side, the car may drift in that direction, too. Remind your teen to focus on a path line in the middle of their travel lane — and not fixate on lane lines or other objects. The rest of the area should be scanned quickly but frequently.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# Looking Ahead

**Goal:** Teach your teen to develop defensive driving techniques and higher-level visual and anticipatory driving skills before moving on to more complex driving situations. In order to avoid last-second reactions and spot potential hazards, have your teen always look 12–15 seconds down the road. When they are looking far enough ahead, they will be able to spot hazards early and be well prepared to react to them.

**Location:** Start on a quiet neighborhood street. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice. Move onto a road with light traffic when your teen is ready.

## Don't Tailgate

Rear-end collisions are the most common type of car crash. Emphasize to your teen that increasing following distance behind other vehicles is the single best thing they can do to minimize the risk of a crash.

## Lesson One – IPDE System

Teach your teen the IPDE system, a simple system to help new drivers recognize, anticipate and avoid risks before they turn into problems. IPDE stands for:

- Identify** potential risks, like oncoming vehicles, pedestrians, obstacles, or intersections.
- Predict** when and where there will be a conflict or problem.
- Decide** on the best course of action.
- Execute** that action.

Have your teen use commentary driving as they practice the IPDE system. As they drive, ask them to verbally describe their thoughts, intentions, and actions in order to identify potential risks they see, predict problems these risks could cause, decide what to do to avoid them, and then execute the appropriate maneuver.

## Lesson Two – Stopping-Distance Rule

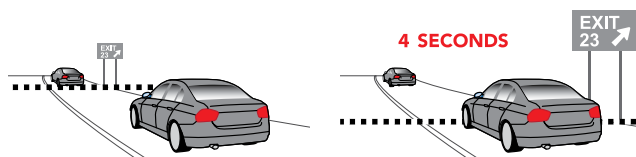
Teach your teen the stopping-distance rule, for the safest distance to stop behind another vehicle. When your vehicle stops, you should be far enough away from the car in front of you that you can see where its tires make contact with the ground. Any closer is too close.

## Lesson Three – Four-Second Rule

Teach your teen the four-second rule for the appropriate following distance when driving behind other vehicles. The four-second rule is an important safety measure designed to give drivers enough time to safely steer or brake to avoid problems that occur in front of them on the road.

- Start counting when the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you passes an object.
- Count “one thousand ONE, one thousand TWO, one thousand THREE, one thousand FOUR.”
- Your front bumper should not pass that same object before you’ve reached “four.”

Have your teen practice the four-second rule at least 10–12 times, counting out loud to check whether their following distance is appropriate. If the road is wet, add on an additional second. If you drive an SUV or heavier vehicle, add an additional 1–2 seconds, as it will take your car longer to stop. Always err on the side of caution and allow for more space in front of you.



*Your front bumper should not pass before you've reached "four."*

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

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# Turning Around

**Goal:** Teach your teen the best ways to turn a vehicle around in various circumstances.

**Location:** Start on a quiet neighborhood street with accessible driveways. Please be respectful of neighbors and private property. Move to a multi-lane road for U-turns, if legally allowed in your area.

## Lesson One – Turning Around Safely

Start by coaching your teen that the safest and easiest way to turn around is to drive around the block. The less backing up, the better! Since that's not always possible, it's important to practice other ways to turn around.

## Lesson Two – Two-Point Turns

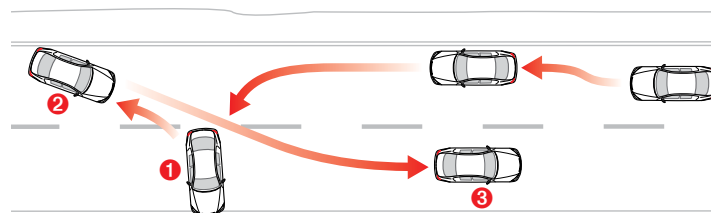
A two-point turn involves backing into a driveway to reverse direction. On a quiet street, have your teen identify an available driveway on the same side of the street as your car, at a point where they can see oncoming traffic for at least 200 feet.

- Pull just ahead of the driveway, making sure there is no traffic behind the car, and signal.
- Make sure the road is clear behind the car and the driveway, put the car in reverse, and then back into the driveway.
- Shift back into drive and check the road for approaching traffic from both directions.
- When it's clear, turn back on to the road.

## Lesson Three – Three-Point Turns

This more challenging turn should only be done when there is no available driveway. Three-point turns block both sides of a two-lane road, so coach your teen to make absolutely sure that the traffic is clear in both directions:

- Pull as far to the right as possible to maximize room to maneuver.
- Turn sharply across the road **1** until the car is perpendicular, facing the curb.
- Continue checking for traffic in both directions.
- Put the car in reverse **2** and back up, turning sharply in the other direction, into the original lane, but now facing the opposite direction.
- Shift into drive and pull forward **3** into the correct lane, driving straight ahead.



## Legal U-Turns

U-turns are illegal in many locations. Make sure you and your teen only practice legal U-turns. U-turns should never be made across a double yellow line or where a sign indicates that they are prohibited. Do not attempt U-turns on a curve or a hill.

## Lesson Four – U-Turns

First explain that U-turns can be very dangerous, and should only be done where they are legal.

- Begin the U-turn in the left lane, closest to the center line or median.
- Be sure there is enough room to make the turn without hitting the curb or any parked cars.
- Signal to indicate the direction of the turn, checking carefully for traffic in both directions.
- Move forward, turning the wheel sharply to turn around.
- Finish the U-turn in the opposite direction and accelerate to an appropriate speed.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

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## PA Graduated Drivers Licensing

### GDL Systems

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems are intended to provide teen drivers with practice under the safest conditions, exposing them to more situations only as their skills and experience grow.

### Learner's Permit

- Mandatory six (6) months skill-building before road test.
- Certification of 65 hours behind-the-wheel skill-building, including no less than ten (10) hours of nighttime driving and five (5) hours of bad weather driving.
- Supervising adult must be: 21 or older; or a parent, guardian, person in loco parentis or spouse at least 18 years of age; and licensed with the same or higher class vehicle that appears on your Learner's Permit.
- Permit valid for one year.
- Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
- Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 mph or more over posted speed limit).

### Junior License

- 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. driving restriction.
- Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
- You may not carry more than one (1) passenger under the age of 18 who is not an immediate family member unless your parent(s) or guardian(s) is in the vehicle with you. After the first six (6) months of driving with a junior license, this limit is increased to no more than three (3) passengers under the age of 18 who are not immediate family members unless your parent(s) or guardian(s) is in the vehicle with you. The increased limit does not apply to a junior driver who has ever been involved in a crash in which they were partially or fully responsible, or who has been convicted of any driving violations.
- Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 mph or more over posted speed limit).

### Regular License Before Age 18

Possible with:

- Crash and conviction-free record for 12 months.
- Completion of an approved driver's education course.
- If you have a regular license and you are under age 18, the following restrictions still apply:
  - Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
  - Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 mph or more over posted speed limit).

### Graduated Drivers License Log

**Pennsylvania Teen Driver Law:** The law requires Learner's Permit holders to have 65 hours of behind-the-wheel skill building before the driver's skills test can be taken. It also mandates that out of the required 65 skill-building hours, 10 hours be acquired during nighttime driving and 5 hours be acquired during bad weather driving. Parents or guardians will be required to fill out a certification form attesting that the young permit holder has met all training requirements before the skills test can be given.

The Parent or Guardian Certification Form DL-180C can be found at: [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov)

# Teen Driver?

## Schedule Your Skills Test In Advance!

We allow our young drivers to schedule their skills tests up to 6 months in advance, and we encourage all young drivers to schedule it as soon as possible. Additionally, PennDOT has certified certain third-party businesses to administer the skills test for a market-driven fee. All third-party examiners are PennDOT-certified and the test is identical to the test that you'd take at a PennDOT driver license center. For a list of participating businesses in your area, visit [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).

Schedule your test online at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).



PennDOT offers an additional, optional tool for parents and guardians to use in their education efforts - PennDOT's "Teen Driver" plate.

Visit [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov) for ordering information.



## On the Day of Your Test

When you are ready to take the driving test, you can schedule your driver's test at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov). If you do not have access to the internet, you can schedule your driver's test by calling 1-800-423-5542. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment and have the items listed below readily available to present to the examiner. Please be sure to bring original documents.

1. Your valid learner's permit.
2. Valid registration card for the vehicle you plan to drive for the test.
3. Valid Inspection sticker(s) on the vehicle you plan to drive for the test.
4. Proof that the vehicle is insured: an insurance identification card, declaration page of an insurance policy, valid insurance binder, or policy of self-insurance issued by PENNDOT.
5. The valid driver's license of the person accompanying you to the Driver's License Center.
6. If under 18 years of age, you will need the completed Parent or Guardian Certification Form. If your parent or guardian is not accompanying you to the Driver's License Center, he/she must sign the form in the presence of a notary.

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# Who Will Speak For You?

## Two FREE PennDOT Programs - One Goal: To Save Lives



### Upload Emergency Contact Information



The Emergency Contact Information Program was developed to allow your emergency contact information to be quickly available to law enforcement through a secure online database. Just visit [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov) and click on the icon you see above to use your Pennsylvania Driver's License or ID information to enter emergency contacts to speak for you if ever you can't speak for yourself.



The Yellow Dot Program was created to assist you in the "golden hour" of emergency care following a traffic accident. Placing a yellow dot in your vehicle's rear window alerts first responders to check your glove compartment for vital information to ensure you receive the medical attention you need. Find program information in the information racks at this center, or online by scanning the code below or by visiting [www.YellowDot.pa.gov](http://www.YellowDot.pa.gov).

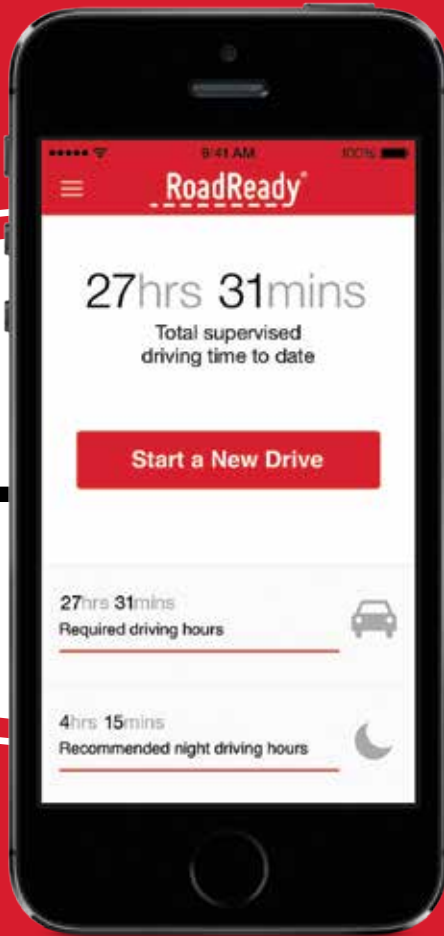
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Sign up today to be an organ donor!  
Visit [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov) to find out more.

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Connect one teen driver's practice drive time across multiple phones by using the same log-in on each device.

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# Parking – Part One

**Goal:** Teach your teen to master angle and perpendicular parking.

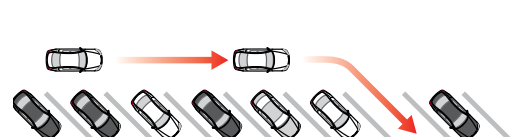
**Location:** Start in large, level, mostly empty areas. You will need angled and perpendicular spaces.

Before your teen starts parking practice, review “Skill Three: How Close Are You?” and “Skill Four: Backing Up.”

## Lesson One – Angle Parking

The gentler turn makes this the easiest type of parking for new drivers. *Hint: Choosing a parking spot on the left side of the car can provide more room to maneuver and a better view of traffic when backing out.*

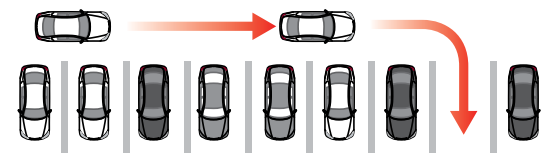
- Signal to indicate intent to turn into a parking space.
- Move forward until the steering wheel is aligned with the first pavement line marking the space.
- Look at the middle of the parking space and turn the wheel sharply at a slow, controlled speed.
- Steer toward the center of the space, straightening the wheel upon entry.
- Stop when the front bumper is six inches from the curb or from the end of the space.
- After you’ve parked, put the gear in park for automatic transmissions (for manual transmissions, put the car in either first or reverse) and set the parking brake. Shut off the ignition and remove the key. Check for traffic prior to getting out. Lock the doors.
- Suddenly opening a car door can pose a very serious threat to bicyclists. Check your rear-view and side-view mirrors before opening your door, then open the door with your far hand.



*Turn when the front of your vehicle reaches the edge of the space. Stay alert for cars backing out to leave their space.*

## Lesson Two – Perpendicular Parking

The steps are the same as for angle parking, but the sharper turn into perpendicular spaces may require more practice.



## Lesson Three – Exiting Spaces

- With a foot on the brake, shift into reverse, which will signal that you will be backing up.
- Before moving, search all around your vehicle using your mirrors, backup camera, and looking over your shoulder side-to-side and behind.
- For **angled spaces**, back up straight until the driver’s seat is even with the bumper of the next vehicle on the turning side. For **perpendicular spaces**, back up straight until the windshield is aligned with the bumper of the next vehicle.
- Quickly turn the wheel in the direction that the rear of the car needs to go.
- Glance forward to make sure the front bumper is clear of the car on the other side.
- When the front bumper clears the other vehicle, stop, shift into drive, and pull forward to complete the exit.

*Turn when your outside mirror reaches the edge of the space. Always finish with your wheels straight and your car centered in the space.*

### Practice Makes Better

Plan to spend a good amount of time on parking practice with your teen — it’s a difficult skill to learn. Many crashes happen in parking lots, and mastering parking skills is an important way to help avoid collisions. Have your teen practice angle and perpendicular parking 15–20 times each.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady



# Parking – Part Two

**Goal:** Teach your teen to master parallel parking.

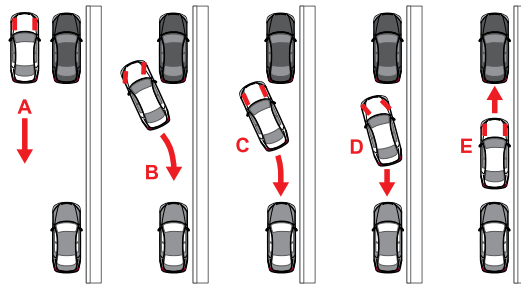
**Location:** A street with marked parallel parking spaces at a time of day when traffic is light.

**Resource:** Before your teen begins parallel parking practice, have your teen review PennDOT’s parallel parking training video, located at [www.dmv.pa.gov/Driver-Services/Teen-Drivers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dmv.pa.gov/Driver-Services/Teen-Drivers/Pages/default.aspx)

## Lesson One – Parallel Parking

Parallel parking is a difficult maneuver for new drivers, so patience is key. Many drivers never learn to do it well, especially in areas where it’s not common. Because of the difficulty of learning parallel parking, and because there are several different teaching methods, this skill is sometimes best taught by a professional driving instructor. Assess your own parallel parking skills and your teen’s abilities before beginning.

- Select an available space on the passenger’s side of the car.
- Signal when approaching the space and check mirrors for traffic behind the vehicle.
- Move forward past the space until lined up directly parallel to the car parked in front, 2–5 feet away. Being too close or too far away will make parking more difficult.
- With a foot on the brake, shift to reverse and turn around to check for traffic and make sure the travel path is clear.
- Release the brake, start backing up slowly, and start to make an “S” turn, turning first right and then left.
- Glance both forward and backward repeatedly to check the space around the car while turning.
- As your front passes the back bumper of the car next to you, quickly straighten the wheels and continue to back straight. When clear of the car in front of the space, turn the wheel sharply to the left and back slowly toward the car behind.
- Adjust the vehicle’s position as needed to center it in the space.
- Check to see if the wheels are 6–12 inches from the curb. If not, pull out and try again.
- Always check for passing vehicles and cyclists before you open your door.



*Start by practicing with cones before graduating to practicing alongside vehicles.*

### Have Patience

When practicing parallel parking, your teen will probably hit the curb several times. Tell them not to worry — even the best parallel parkers do this sometimes. Coach them to pull out of the space and try again, adjusting their turning angle as needed.

## Lesson Two – Exiting a Parallel Parking Space

- With a foot on the brake, shift to reverse, turn around, and back as close as possible to the vehicle behind you.
- Check your side mirror and look over your shoulder for cyclists or fast-moving cars, then signal, and shift into drive.
- Make sure the travel path is clear, then move slowly forward while steering rapidly out of the space.

## Lesson Three – Parallel Parking on a Hill

Make sure the vehicle is in park and the parking brake is properly engaged. To prevent the vehicle from rolling into traffic, instruct your teen to turn the front wheels as follows:

- Toward the curb when parking downhill
- Away from the curb when parking uphill
- The foot brake may be used to help control the vehicle on a hill.

If there is no curb, have your teen point the wheel so that the car would roll away from traffic if it moved.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# Multi-Lane Roads – Part One

**Goal:** Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

**Location:** A busier, multi-lane road. When beginning, choose a time with limited traffic, such as a weekend morning.

## Skill Review

By now, your teen should be comfortable driving on quiet roads. Before starting multi-lane road practice, it's important to review some key information from previous lessons. The following skills are crucial to safe driving on busier, more complicated roads.

### Lesson One – Mirror Positioning, Monitoring and Blind Spots

**Refer to Skills One and Two.** Clearly seeing the adjacent traffic is especially important on multi-lane roads. Remind your teen to check the mirror positions when entering the car, and to constantly monitor the traffic around them.

### Lesson Two – Stopping Distance

**Refer to Skill Six.** Remind your teen that when stopping their vehicle behind another one, they should be far enough back to see where the other car's tires meet the road.

### Lesson Three – Following Distance

**Refer to Skill Six.** Review the four-second rule with your teen, emphasizing that increasing following distance is the single best way to reduce crash risk. This gives the driver visibility, time, and space to avoid crashes.

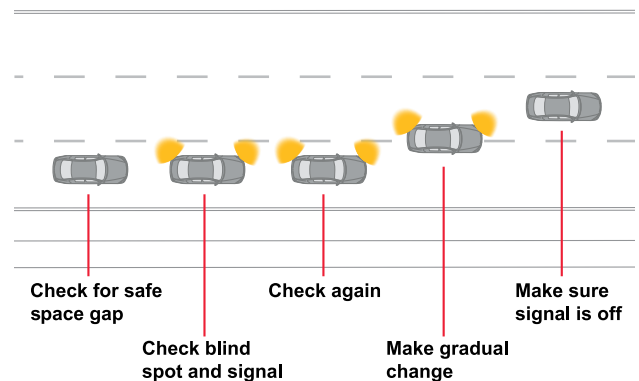
### Lesson Four – Safe Lane Changing

First, coach your teen not to change lanes unnecessarily. Studies show that while it may not look like it, most travel lanes flow at around the same rate. Changing lanes in an effort to save time doesn't actually save time, but it does increase crash risk.

Ask your teen to list valid reasons to change lanes. Good answers include: to make a turn, to avoid an obstacle, to exit the road, to park, or to pass another vehicle.

Have your teen practice these lane change steps until proficient:

- Check traffic to the rear and the sides for an appropriate gap.
- Signal to indicate intention to change lanes.
- Recheck traffic, including a glance over the shoulder at the mirror blind spot area.
- Maintain speed or accelerate slightly before and during the lane change.
- Gradually move into the new lane.
- Adjust following distance, using the four-second rule.



*When changing lanes, always recheck traffic with a glance over the shoulder at the blind spot.*

## Other Road Users

Motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians are more difficult to see than cars because they are smaller — and drivers tend to focus on looking only for cars. Traffic, weather, and road conditions require cyclists to react differently than motorists. It can be difficult for young drivers to judge and predict their actions. Always give motorcyclists and bicyclists a wide berth and reduce your speed.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

#RoadReady

# Multi-Lane Roads – Part Two

**Goal:** Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

**Location:** A busier, multi-lane road. Choose a time with limited traffic, such as a weekend morning.

## Lesson One – Right Turns

Start with right turns, which are fairly simple. Right turns are always made from the right lane of the current road to the first, open lane of the new road. Look for signs and signals that indicate whether “right on red” is allowed. Practice right turns until you feel confident that your teen is proficient.

## Lesson Two – Left Turns

Left turns should almost always begin and end in the closest lane to the right of the yellow line. The yellow line in the lane being turned into should be your teen’s target. There are three types of left turns:

- **Protected left turns** with a designated left turn lane and left turn signal
- **Semi-protected left turns** made from a center or shared turn lane
- **Unprotected left turns** made from an active travel lane

Protected left turns should be made from the designated lane when the left turn signal displays a green arrow, using the yellow line in the lane being turned into as the steering target.

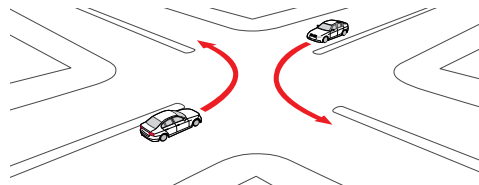
For semi-protected and unprotected left turns, coach your teen on these steps:

- Signal the turn and begin slowing down at least 100 feet from the intersection.
- Make sure the vehicle is in the correct lane to make a left turn.
- Move carefully into the intersection. Don’t turn the wheel until you’re ready to make the turn.
- Yield to any vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians.
- When there is sufficient space with no oncoming traffic, move ahead into the turn.
- Choose a steering path line in the middle of the closest lane to the right of the yellow line.

## Lesson Three – Safe Passing Procedures

Discourage your teen from passing other cars unnecessarily. If passing is necessary, the following steps should be observed:

- Position your vehicle more than four seconds behind the vehicle to be passed.
- Check the oncoming travel ahead to make sure there’s plenty of space before you try to pass.
- Check mirrors and blind spots for traffic behind you.
- Signal intent to pass and accelerate quickly to match the speed of traffic flow.
- While passing, monitor the space to the front and rear of your vehicle and check the rearview mirror for the front of the car being passed. Make sure to not exceed the speed limit when passing.
- When you see the front of the passed car in the rearview mirror and your vehicle is well clear, signal intent, gently and slowly move back to the original lane, cancel the signal, and maintain speed.



*Don't turn the wheel until you're ready to make the turn.*

## Making Left Turns

Left turns are one of the hardest maneuvers for teens to master. Be patient. New drivers often have difficulty judging the speed and distances of multiple lanes of oncoming traffic. Practice judging oncoming vehicles’ distance from your vehicle by counting out loud the time it takes for them to reach your car from a designated point.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# City Driving – Part One

**Goal:** Teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving.

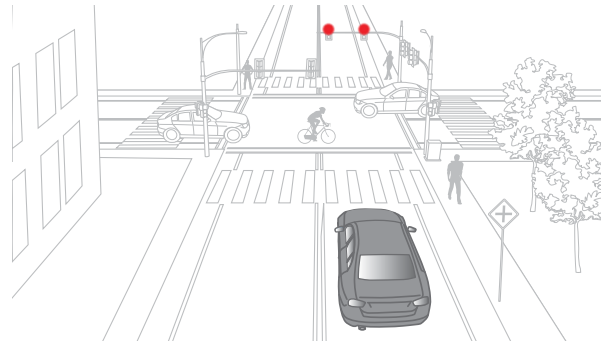
*Note: City driving takes hundreds of hours, if not several years, to master.*

**Location:** Busy, urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

## Skill Review

Since the busy, crowded environment of city driving is challenging for new drivers, this is a good time to review key driving skills. **One of the most important skill for drivers is the ability to make good decisions.** City driving forces drivers to make lots of decisions quickly. The three things they need to drive safely in the city are:

- **Visibility:** To see potential problems in all directions
- **Space:** To maneuver around obstacles and avoid hazards
- **Time:** To anticipate risks and make adjustments to speed or position



*Looking ahead, identifying and anticipating potential problems is crucial for safe driving.*

## Scan First

Keep reminding your teen that constant awareness and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely on city streets. Emphasize the idea that a green light means, "Scan the intersection first, then go."

## Lesson One – Maximizing Visibility and Space

As you practice, have your teen focus on making decisions that will maximize visibility and space around the vehicle, increasing the available reaction time.

- **Looking ahead (refer to Skill Six):** Congested city driving leaves very little room for error. Identifying and anticipating potential problems is crucial.
- **Covering the brake:** Coach your teen that when they spot a hazard, they should "cover" the brake by taking their foot off the accelerator and holding it over the brake. This will prepare them to slow down or stop suddenly. Make sure they don't "ride" the brake. Riding the brake confuses other drivers and puts unnecessary wear on the brakes.

## Lesson Two – Identifying Hazards

As you begin city driving practice, have your teen drive through several blocks to identify and name common hazards on busy, congested streets. Ask them to describe how they will safely deal with each hazard they identify.

Such hazards may include:

- Parked cars, cars entering or exiting parking spaces, and car doors opening
- Delivery trucks stopping suddenly, with drivers racing to and from the trucks
- Buses making frequent stops, loading and unloading passengers
- Blind alleys, with cars or cyclists darting out
- Pedestrians and cyclists moving unpredictably, some crossing streets suddenly, or not in a crosswalk, etc.
- Limited visibility and intersections spaced at shorter intervals
- Aggressive drivers competing for lane space and parking spots
- Stop-and-go traffic flow

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# City Driving – Part Two

**Goal:** Teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving.

*Note: This is not a goal that will be achieved in a single session. Spend as much time as possible with your teen practicing safe city driving skills.*

**Location:** Busy urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

## Lesson One – Avoiding Obstacles

**Focus on lane position to avoid obstacles:** City driving involves many circumstances in which travel lanes are shared, congested, and partially or fully blocked. During practice sessions on busy city roads, have your teen identify these steps to safely avoid obstacles:

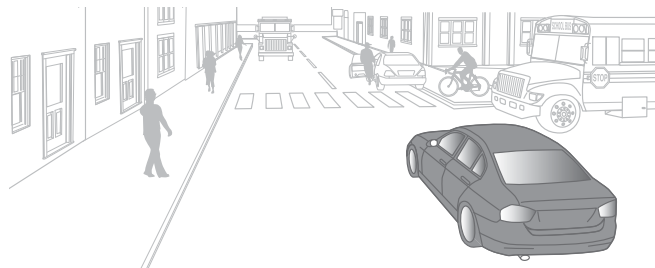
- Identify right-lane obstacles, such as stopped buses, parked cars, delivery trucks, and cyclists.
- Identify left-lane obstacles, such as vehicles waiting to make a left turn, or cars traveling in the opposite direction drifting over the center line.
- Identify the least-congested travel lane. *Hint: On a three-lane road, this is usually the center lane.*
- Position the vehicle in the lane at the greatest distance possible from any obstacles.

It can be tempting to pass vehicles on congested streets, when obstacles or traffic volume slow traffic. However, this can be dangerous, due to closely spaced intersections, irregular traffic flow, cars entering and exiting parking spots, etc. Coach your teen to avoid passing on busy city streets.

## Lesson Two – Deadly Distractions

What happens inside the car can be just as dangerous as what happens outside. **Engaging in distracting activities while driving can be deadly, especially for young drivers.** Ask your teen to list dangerous driving distractions. Their answers should include:

- Talking or texting
- Changing radio stations, shuffling/streaming music
- Dialing a phone
- Passengers, pets, or objects moving in the car
- Eating, drinking, or smoking
- Searching for an item
- Intense or emotional conversations, or cognitive distractions, such as trying to solve a problem
- Putting on makeup or looking in the mirror



*Remind your teen to stay alert, scan their surroundings, and not fixate on any one thing.*

Coach your teen to avoid distracting activities whenever possible, but especially in busy, congested environments where a lot of pedestrians and bicyclists also share the road with vehicles. Remind them to focus on keeping as much space as possible around the vehicle at all times.

### More is Better

City driving skills take a long time to acquire. Spend as much time and drive in as many circumstances with your teen (night, inclement weather) as you are able. Plan trips to less-familiar places where you might not normally travel.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# Highway Driving – Part One

**Goal:** Teach your teen highway basics and how to safely enter and exit a highway.

**Location:** Start on a multi-lane highway with easily-accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

## Lesson One – Observation

Before your teen gets behind the wheel on the highway, have your teen spend some time on highways with you as the driver and your teen as the passenger. Emphasize the importance of looking ahead to anticipate potential problems, and explain key highway features, such as:

- The different kinds of interchanges
- The meanings of highway signs and signals
- The meanings of different lane lines and markings

## Lesson Two – On-Ramp Segments

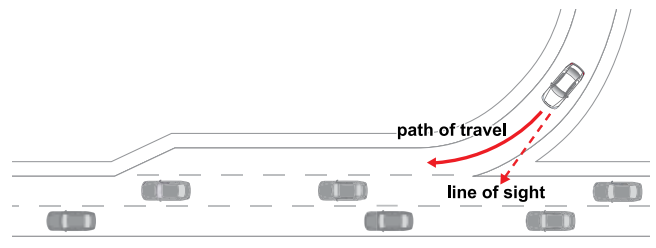
Explain the three segments of on-ramps, and how they're used:

- **Entrance area:** This stretch allows the driver time to search the highway and evaluate how much space they have to enter and what speed is needed.
- **Acceleration area:** The driver brings the vehicle up to the speed of highway traffic flow.
- **Merge area:** The driver uses this space to merge into the traffic flow.

## Lesson Three – Merging

Teach the steps for merging onto a highway:

- Check for on-ramp speed signs.
- Before the entrance area, make quick glances at the highway, scanning for vehicles and entry gaps.
- In the acceleration area, signal to show intent to enter the highway and adjust speed to match the traffic flow.
- In the merge area, first look for a gap in between cars, and then enter the flow of traffic, checking mirrors and blind spots.
- Turn off the turn signal and begin looking ahead to anticipate problems or upcoming lane changes.
- Do not completely stop in the entrance area unless absolutely necessary.



*There is plenty of time to merge. If a gap doesn't present itself immediately, adjust your speed as early as possible in order to find one.*

## Lesson Three – Exiting

Teach the steps for exiting a highway:

- Identify the exit well ahead of time.
- Scan traffic for problems when approaching the exit, but don't slow down on the highway.
- Start to signal four to six seconds before reaching the ramp.
- Upon entering the ramp, tap the brakes and begin to slow down to the posted exit ramp speed limit before reaching the curve. On some ramps, be prepared to rapidly reduce your speed.

Practice both merging and exiting 10–12 times each, or more if needed for your teen to feel comfortable.

### Worthy of Repetition

Practice merging and exiting many times, until you feel confident that your teen is proficient. Keep coaching your teen that always being attentive and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

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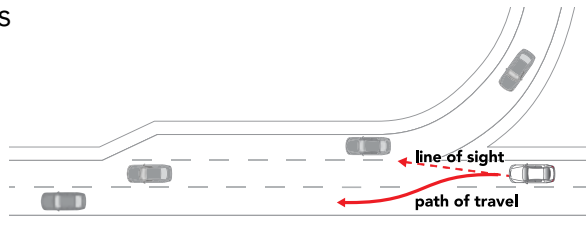
# Highway Driving – Part Two

**Goal:** Teach your teen to maneuver safely in complex highway driving environments at higher speeds.

**Location:** Start on a multi-lane highway with easily-accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

## Lesson One – Steering Techniques

Once on the highway, coach your teen on steering technique. At fast highway speeds, excessive steering can be dangerous and lead to loss of control. Remind your teen to steer gently on highways.



*For the first several lane changes you may need to talk your teen through the decision-making process. Double-check all mirrors to make sure that the lane is clear.*

## Lesson Two – Lane Changing

In the high-speed, complex highway environment, lane-changing skills are very important. Have your teen spend lots of time practicing the lane-changing and passing skills previously learned in “Skill Nine: Multi-Lane Roads,” until they are comfortable performing them at highway speeds.

Remind your teen to:

- Watch for merging vehicles and move one lane left to make space for them when needed.
- Change lanes one at a time only.
- Watch mirrors for tailgaters and move to another lane to let them pass. Grow comfortable with checking blind spots frequently to be aware of the traffic around you.

## Lesson Three – Following Distance Rule

Review the four-second rule for following distance, learned in “Skill Six: Looking Ahead.” At higher speeds it’s recommended to add more following distance. Additionally, coach your teen to also use a four-second rule for these highway driving circumstances:

- Merging onto a highway
- Changing lanes
- Exiting a highway

## Lesson Four – Vehicle Speed

Coach your teen to adjust travel speed and vehicle position based on weather and road conditions. Once your teen is comfortable with and proficient at highway driving in good conditions, spend some practice time on highways under more challenging conditions, such as rain. Coach them to always use appropriate caution, as conditions can change quickly.

## Lesson Five – Plan a Short Day Trip

Consider planning some short day trips with your teen to destinations two to three hours away. Have them drive there and back. Find an event or place that you will both enjoy and have fun.

**Highway Hypnosis:** This condition can result from driving for a long period of time. Remind your teen that it is important to stay alert when driving. To avoid driving in a dulled, drowsy, trance-like state, take frequent breaks and stop if you begin to feel tired.

**Velocitation:** This is caused by slowing down after driving at a high speed for a long time. The change makes you think that the car is going much slower than it actually is, leading you to drive faster than you intend to. Don’t be misled. After slowing down, make sure to check your speedometer regularly.

### Higher Order

Early in the training process, parental instruction tends to focus on vehicle handling. As your teen’s skills improve, try to focus on “higher order” instruction, such as scanning ahead, hazard detection, and anticipating other driver’s behavior.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady



# Driving on Rural Roads

**Goal:** Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on two-lane rural roads.

**Location:** A two-lane rural road.

Coach your teen to notice and respond to these hazards:

**Large/slow vehicles:** Slower trucks, farm vehicles and road maintenance equipment are likely to make wide turns at unmarked entrances. Use caution and make sure the driver can see your vehicle before passing.

**Sharp drop-offs and gravel shoulders:** One of the most common driving hazards is running off the road. The urge to overcorrect is strong, and often results in a serious crash. If you run off the road, follow these steps to ease your vehicle back onto the road:

- Do not turn the wheel; continue driving straight.
- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Find a safe place to reenter the road.
- Turn on your turn signal, and re-enter the road when it is clear.

**Blind spots:** Trees, cornfields, buildings and hills can block a driver's view of oncoming traffic or traffic entering from the side. Identify blind spots to better anticipate and prepare for potential dangers.

**Uncontrolled intersections:** These are intersections not controlled by signs, signals, or pavement markings. Use caution, slow down, and check both ways twice. Proceed cautiously once there is no oncoming traffic. The vehicle on the right has the right of way. The vehicle on the left should yield.

**Animals:** If unable to stop for an animal crossing the road, do NOT swerve — swerving makes it hard to keep control. The most serious crashes happen when drivers swerve into oncoming traffic or roll into a ditch.

If you see an animal, slow down and prepare to stop. Always be on the lookout, especially at sunrise and sunset. October and November are peak months for deer crashes — the most common type. Deer travel in groups; if you see one, look for more.

**Hills and curves:** These are often steeper and sharper on rural roads than on highways. Before reaching the crest of a hill or entering a curve, slow down, move to the right side and watch for traffic.

**Railroad crossings:** Always slow down, look both ways and prepare to stop. Many railroad crossings are marked only with a round, yellow "Railroad Crossing Ahead" warning sign and a white X-shaped railroad crossing. There may not be flashing lights, warning bells, crossing gates or pavement markings. It is difficult to judge the speed of a train, so before you cross, make sure you don't see or hear a train either direction.

If you do see a train, remember that the train you see is closer and faster-moving than you think. Wait for it to pass by before you proceed across the tracks, as trains cannot stop quickly. Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take a mile or more to stop once the emergency brakes are applied. That's 18 football fields!

Remind your teen to never drive around lowered gates — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, you should call the emergency number posted on or near the crossing signal or your local law enforcement agency.

Do not get trapped on the tracks; proceed through a railroad crossing only if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping. Remember, the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides.

If your vehicle ever stalls on a track with a train coming, get out immediately and move quickly away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is coming. If you run in the same direction the train is traveling, when the train hits your car you could be injured by flying debris. Call your local law enforcement agency for assistance.

## Road Conditions

Crashes on rural roads account for 58% of all traffic fatalities in Pennsylvania. Help your teen understand that some road conditions and driving hazards are unique to rural roads.

## Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

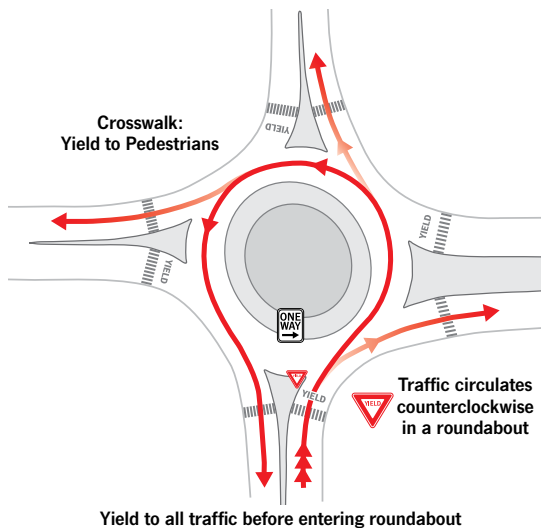
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# Roundabouts

Roundabouts are becoming more common in the U.S. because they provide safer and more efficient traffic flow than standard intersections. Statistics show that roundabouts reduce fatal crashes by about 90 percent, reduce injury crashes by about 75 percent, and reduce overall crashes by about 35 percent, when compared to other types of intersection control.

## Lesson one – Driving in a Roundabout

- **Slow down.** Obey traffic signs and pavement markings.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Vehicles entering must always yield to cars already in the roundabout. Look to your left for entering traffic.
- Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic.
- Keep your speed low within the roundabout. Don't stop, stay in lane: once inside the roundabout. The vehicle in the roundabout has the right of way. Do not change lanes within the roundabout.
- As you approach your exit, look to your right, check your side mirror and use your turn signal.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists as you exit.



*This example shows the traffic movement patterns through a one-lane roundabout. The one-lane roundabout is known as one of the safest and most efficient intersections.*

### Yield the Right-of-Way

As a rule of thumb, when entering or driving through a roundabout, always yield to traffic on your left.

## Lesson Two – Emergency Vehicles

- Always yield to emergency vehicles.
- If you have not entered the roundabout, pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- If you have entered the roundabout, continue to your exit, then pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- Avoid stopping in the roundabout.

## Lesson Three – Two or More Lane Roundabouts

- As you approach the roundabout, it is very important to observe the signs and pavement markings to determine which lane to use before entering.
- Signs on the side of the road and white pavement markings on the road will show the correct lane to use.
- In general, if you want to make a left turn, you should be in the left lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as left turn lanes.
- If you want to make a right turn, you should be in the right lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as right turn lanes.
- If you want to go straight, observe the signs and pavement markings to see which lane is correct.

### Skill Completed

Supervisor Initials

Driver Initials

#RoadReady

# Driving in Other Conditions

For new drivers, it can be challenging to drive in new and unfamiliar conditions such as in inclement weather, at different times of day, and with varying traffic volumes. It's best that you are there with your teen to provide guidance in these situations before they experience them on their own.

## Night Driving

A driver's reaction depends on their vision, which is limited at night, making it difficult to make judgments and see pedestrians, bicyclists, and other obstacles. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Glare from oncoming headlights makes it difficult to see. Looking toward the right side of the road and flipping the rearview mirror can help to reduce headlight glare.
- Low-beam headlights should be on at all times, but are required at night.
- High beams should only be used when other drivers won't see them, such as on isolated roadways with little traffic.
- To compensate for reduced visibility, drive more slowly and at a greater following distance.

## Wet/Slippery Roads

To reduce risk on wet and slippery roads, coach your teen to practice the following:

- Turn on the wipers as soon as the windshield becomes wet.
- Turn on the low-beam headlights; this helps others see you.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance to five or six seconds. When roads are wet, braking distance increases.
- Be more cautious, and slow down on curves and when approaching intersections.
- Turn the defroster on to keep windows from fogging over.
- If you must make adjustments while driving, make sure the road ahead is clear before looking down at the dashboard, and look away for only a second or two.

## Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs as a result of water on the road that is deeper than the tire tread. This layer of water reduces friction and you can lose control. If you can see deep water on the road, reflections on the pavement, or that the car ahead leaves no tracks on the water, these are indications you could hydroplane. Prevent this by slowing down.

Use low-beam lights and fog lights if your vehicle has them. Don't use high beams — they reflect off the fog, causing glare and reduced visibility. Slow down until your speed matches your ability to see, even if it means slowing to a crawl.

## Snow

It's best to stay off the roads until they are cleared and treated. If you have to drive, make sure your vehicle is clear of snow and ice before driving. Driving can cause snow/ice to slide and block your view, or fly off and strike other vehicles. Other tips to keep in mind:

- When starting to drive in snow, keep the wheels straight ahead and accelerate gently to avoid spinning the tires.
- Decrease your speed to make up for a loss of traction. Accelerate and decelerate gently, and be extra careful when braking.
- Stopping distances can be up to 10 times greater in ice and snow. Begin the slowing-down process long before a stop. Try to brake only when traveling in a straight line.
- Look ahead for danger spots, such as shaded areas and bridge surfaces that may be icy when the rest of the road is clear.
- Stay far behind the vehicle ahead so you will not need to come to a sudden stop, which can cause skidding.

### Overconfidence

After becoming proficient in basic driving skills, teens can become overconfident and begin to drive faster, follow too closely, brake abruptly, etc. It is important to note that in Pennsylvania, if you are the owner of the vehicle, and you knowingly allow your teen driver to violate any laws, you too could be held accountable by law enforcement. Gently and continuously remind your teen to stay four seconds back from other vehicles and to always drive with caution.

### Fog

Use low-beam lights and fog lights if your vehicle has them. Don't use high beams — they reflect off the fog, causing glare and reduced visibility. Slow down until your speed matches your ability to see, even if it means slowing to a crawl.

# Continuing Education

Learning doesn't stop when your teen has received their license. It's important to continue teaching and building upon the skills they have learned. As you continue the supervision process, think about these three areas of focus:

- **Spend as much time as possible driving with your teen, even after they get their license.**
- **Drive in a wide variety of conditions** (weather, time of day, different traffic volumes, etc.).
- **Focus on "higher level" learning:** scanning ahead, recognizing hazards, and learning to anticipate the behavior of other drivers.

Now that your teen has become proficient in the basic operational skills of driving, it is essential that they be exposed to a wide variety of driving circumstances and conditions. Make a point of driving with them in different situations that they have not yet experienced, and do it for all types of roads – quiet neighborhood streets, multi-lane roads, and highways. Drive with them at different times of the day, in poor weather, and with varying levels of traffic. It's much better that they experience these conditions with you, rather than alone or with other teens.

Now, your goal is to ensure your teen is thinking intelligently and making the right decisions as a driver. Sometimes after teens become proficient with the basic skills, parents/guardians will often "step back," becoming less involved in their teen's supervision. But there's still a lot to learn; their teen's education is not complete.

**Even the best new drivers are likely to make mistakes. These mistakes are great teachable moments for "higher level" instructions.** So instead of saying, "Stop sooner," advise your teen to try to focus on looking ahead and anticipating events, with an emphasis on good judgment, good decision making, and hazard perception. The shift from a basic comment to a more advanced focus is perhaps the most essential element of educating your teen at this point in the learning process.

As your teen drives, talk to them about specific hazard areas, possible areas of conflict, and blind spots where trouble may hide. Teens tend to be less skilled at anticipating these trouble areas than experienced drivers.

## What to do if You Are Stopped by the Police

It is important to talk with your teen about what to do if a police officer pulls them over. Let your teen know that it can be stressful; however, if a few simple steps are followed, the interaction can go smoothly.

1. Activate your turn signal. Drive as close to the right side of the road as safely as possible, stop, and park your vehicle safely away from traffic.
2. Turn off your engine and radio and roll down the driver side window.
3. If it is nighttime, turn on the vehicle's interior light as soon as you park, before the officer approaches the vehicle.
4. Limit your movements and ask passengers to do the same — do not reach for anything in the vehicle.
5. Alert the officer immediately if you are transporting any type of firearm.
6. Place your hands on the steering wheel and ask passengers to have their hands in view.
7. Keep your vehicle doors closed and stay inside your vehicle unless the officer asks you to get out.
8. Keep your seat belt fastened until the officer has seen that you are appropriately restrained.
9. Wait until the officer asks you to retrieve your driver's license, registration and insurance cards. Do not hand the officer your wallet, only provide the requested items.
10. Always be polite. The officer will tell you why they pulled you over. You may receive a warning, or you may be cited for a traffic violation. If you disagree with the citation, you are entitled to a court hearing where you can present your arguments. It is not in your best interest to argue with the officer at the scene. If you believe that you have not been treated in a professional manner, you should contact the appropriate police department at a later time and ask to speak with a supervisor.

### Keep on Coachin'

Even after your teen is licensed, use your time driving with them to instill habits of good judgment, accurate hazard anticipation, and smart decision-making. Remember that crash rates are highest in the first months of licensure. Your role is still vital even after your teen receive his or her license!

# Teens' Biggest Dangers

Newly licensed teens crash much more often than older, more experienced drivers. These are the most common trouble areas for young drivers:

## Speeding

We have seen a disturbing increase in speeding in the last 2 years. According to NHTSA, in 2021, speeding was a factor in 32% of fatal crashes among teen drivers 15–18 years. The rate of these fatalities among males was nearly double that of females. Spend time talking to your teen about speeding and model this by following the speed limit yourself. Lastly, studies show that teens are less likely to speed if they drive the family car, instead of having their own vehicle.

## Other Teens

Research is clear on the fact that risky teen driving behaviors increase in the presence of teen passengers. A teen who is driving with other teens in the car is more likely to crash. And the more kids there are in the car, the stronger the likelihood of a crash. This is the primary reason many states have passed laws that restrict the ability of teens to drive with their peers.

## Not Wearing Seat Belts

**It's a shocking statistic, but 51% of teen drivers killed in 2022 were unbuckled.** Seat belts stop you from being thrown out of the vehicle, and help you stay seated and in control of the vehicle. They also stop you from hitting the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, or other hard parts of the vehicle. Hitting the wind shield at 30 mph is like falling from the third story of a building and hitting the pavement. In 2019, 43% of high school students did not always wear a seat belt as a passenger. Whether sitting in the front or back of a car, buckle up every trip and remind other passengers to buckle up too. It could save their lives, and yours. Please visit NHTSA's website for more information [www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts](http://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts)

## Distracted Driving

Distracted Driving is impaired driving. A driver's primary responsibility when behind the wheel is to focus on the act of driving. Any behavior that distracts from this activity increases the risk of a collision. In this age of electronic communication, the dangers of distractions have increased significantly. Use of electronic devices for any purpose to send or receive communications, to surf the web, to view images, video, or anything at all should absolutely be avoided.

## Inexperience

Just as it takes years to perfect any skill — athletic, artistic, or otherwise — it also takes years to be a truly good driver. Until teens are much more experienced, they run a greater risk of crashing, being hurt, and potentially dying. A driver's license makes them a driver. Experience helps them become safer drivers.

## Fatigue

As teens get older their bedtimes get later, but waking times do not tend to change. From ages 13 to 19, nightly sleep is reduced by 40–50 minutes. Teen drivers who sleep less than 8 hours a night are 33 percent more likely to crash than teens who get more than 8 hours of sleep. This lack of sleep can result in depressive moods, more risk-taking behaviors, and lower grades. It further reduces a person's ability to process information, be attentive, and have good reflexes, which are all crucial to safe driving. Studies have shown that being awake for 18 hours has a similar impact to having a blood alcohol content (BAC) level of 0.08.

## Drowsy Driving

Staying alert means focusing on the road and not driving when fatigued. Review signs of drowsy driving, such as difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or drifting from one's lane. Remind your teen to take a break after driving for 2 hours, or after 100 miles. Teens should avoid driving at times they would normally be sleeping. Always increase following distance at night.

# Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol

Teens are at far greater risk of death in an alcohol-related crash than the overall population. This is despite the fact they cannot legally purchase or publicly possess alcohol in any state. When alcohol is added to the inexperience of teen drivers, the results can be deadly. Drunk male teenage drivers are 18 times more likely than a sober male teen driver to be killed in a single-vehicle crash. Drunk female teenage drivers are 54 times more likely to be killed than a sober counterpart.

Not only does alcohol impair your ability to drive safely, but many illegal, prescription, and over-the-counter drugs can also impair your ability to drive. Drugs other than alcohol are involved in approximately 20 percent of deaths among motorists each year. Additionally, combining drugs and alcohol further increases their negative side effects and greatly increases the risk of causing a crash.

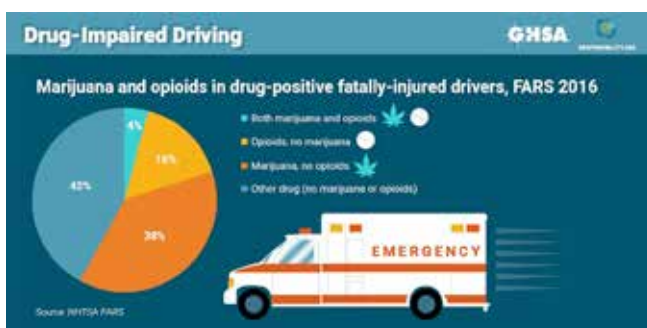
Drugs affect your brain function and can seriously impair your ability to drive safely. For example, marijuana can slow reaction time, impair judgment of time and distance, and decrease coordination. Cocaine and methamphetamine can cause a driver to be aggressive and reckless when driving, and certain kinds of sedatives can cause dizziness and drowsiness. Opioids can make you drowsy and can slow reaction time. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs such as sleeping pills, cough medicines, antihistamines and decongestants can also affect your driving skills in a variety of ways.

It is always important to review warning labels about a medication's side effects prior to driving. If you have any questions about a medication's side effects, it is important to consult with your doctor or pharmacist before driving. Remember that when you see a warning label that states, "Don't operate heavy machinery," your vehicle is considered heavy machinery!

If you are concerned about a loved one's or your own substance use, the PA Get Help Now helpline is available at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This toll-free resource is staffed 24/7 to answer your questions and connect you to treatment providers.

## If You Feel Different, You Drive Different

If you're buzzed, drunk, or high, you are impaired and should never get behind the wheel. Marijuana, the drug most commonly found in the blood of people who have been in a car crash, can affect people differently. The best rule is this: if you plan to drive, avoid drugs and/or alcohol.



Source: NHTSA FARS

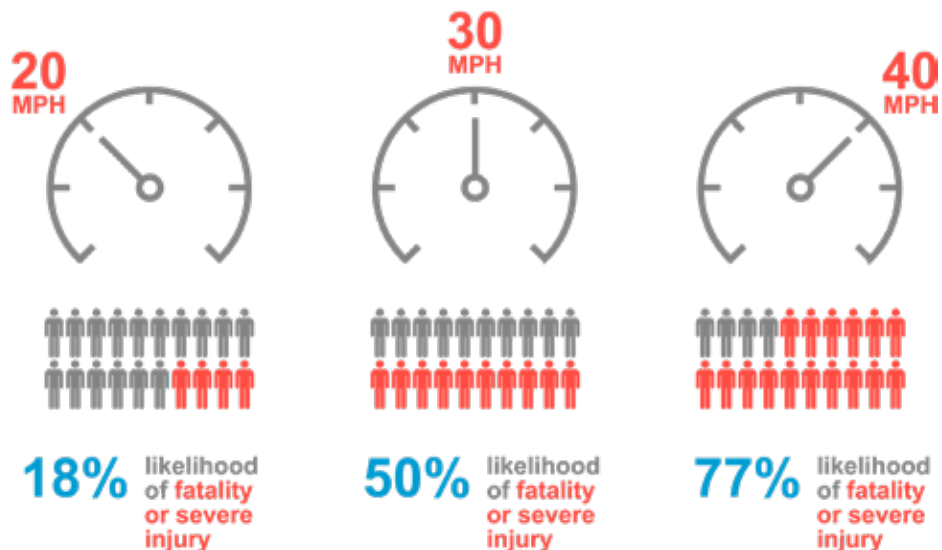
# Sharing the Road With Bicyclists and Pedestrians

## Respect for All Road Users

Put yourself in the shoes of a person walking or biking. We are all trying to safely get to our destination. Respect and kindness towards other road users can go a long way.

- **Scan the street for wheels and feet:** Be especially careful to look for people walking and biking before turning at intersections and driveways.
- **Yield to pedestrians:** Pay attention to the pedestrian signal and give people walking the right-of-way.
- **Double threat:** Never pass another vehicle that has stopped or is slowing down for a pedestrian. Remember, you might not be able to see the pedestrian when you approach a stopped vehicle, so be aware.
- **Watch for bikes:** People riding bicycles have the right to be on the road (and are often prohibited from riding on sidewalks), so respect their right to be there.
- **Passing safely:** Stay at least 4 feet away from bicyclists (and other vulnerable road users, such as garbage collectors, police officers, and tow truck operators) when passing, and don't return to the right until well clear of the person. If there isn't enough room to safely pass in the same lane, you must use another lane or wait for a safe opportunity to pass. Do not pass a person on a bike and then immediately turn right.
- **Avoid the "right hook":** Look for and yield to people biking on the right when turning right.
- **Avoid the "left cross":** Look for and yield to people walking across the street and yield to oncoming people on bikes when turning left.
- **Visibility:** Look for bicyclists at night and watch for their reflectors or lights.
- **Check blind spots:** Watch for bicyclists coming from behind, especially before turning right.
- **Doors are dangerous:** Before opening your car door, look in your mirror and physically turn your body to make sure no bicyclists are coming. Learn more here: [www.dutchreach.org/dutch-reach-practice-tips-door-latch-reminders/](http://www.dutchreach.org/dutch-reach-practice-tips-door-latch-reminders/)

## Lowering Speeds Can Save Lives



Source: *Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death*. Brian Tefft, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2011



# Adapting to New Landscapes

## Mountain Driving

Some hazards you should be aware of are steep hills, changing weather, wildlife, and rocks in the roadway. If your vehicle experiences difficulty traveling up steep roadways, pull off the road at the first place you may do so safely, or stay in the right lane to allow other vehicles to pass. Here are some added tips:

- Pay special attention to speed limit signs and warning signs, such as those warning of curves, steep hills, or other hazards.
- Watch for bicyclists near the right edge of the road.
- Use lower gear to control speeds while going up or down long, steep hills.
- You must yield to vehicles going uphill if you are traveling downhill on a narrow road.
- Do not coast downhill by shifting into neutral or disengaging the clutch.

The higher the altitude, the less oxygen there is in the air. Some people may react to the decrease in oxygen. They may develop mild symptoms, such as headache, nausea, and fatigue. Remember, insufficient hydration can lead to the onset of symptoms of altitude sickness. Even if they are mild, they can affect your alertness as a driver.

## Safety Around Snowplows

When you see lights from a snow plow, slow down and use caution.

- **Give snowplows room to work:** The plows are wide and can cross the center line or shoulder.
- **Do not tailgate and avoid passing, especially on the right:** If you must pass, be extremely cautious and beware of the snow cloud.
- **Keep your distance and watch for sudden stops and turns:** A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they don't always see you.

*Note: Four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles do not stop faster on ice and snow than two-wheel drive (2WD) vehicles. The heavier the vehicle, the longer it takes to stop, no matter the vehicle's wheels.*

### Course of Action

After becoming proficient in basic driving skills, teens can become overconfident and begin to drive faster, follow other cars more closely, brake abruptly, etc. Gently and continuously remind your teen to stay three seconds back from other vehicles and always drive with caution.

# Work Zones

Work zones can be very dangerous, especially when traveling on the highway. It's important to be alert and prepared to slow down or stop. Slowing down and allowing others to merge will ensure a safe passage through work zones. Here are a few tips on work zone safety:

- **Stay alert and follow posted speed limits:** Work zones are busy places where construction vehicles and workers are always moving. Be alert, and stay on the safe path that is designated throughout the work zone. Remember: speed limits are reduced in work zones for a reason. Signs will indicate where speeding fines will be doubled when workers are present.
- **Take your cues from trucks:** Work zones often pop up suddenly. If you are not paying attention to the signs, you could find yourself in a serious crash. Since trucks have a height advantage and can see ahead of traffic, their brake light activity can provide a good signal of a slow-down or work zone ahead. Truck drivers know the stopping limitations of their trucks and pay close attention to traffic.
- **Merge gently:** Aggressive drivers can be extremely dangerous while driving in work zones. Work zones require time and courtesy. For a smooth passage through work zones, allow others to merge in front of you. Be especially considerate of trucks. They require more space to merge and are the least maneuverable vehicles on the road.
- **Safe distance:** Leave extra space between you and the vehicle in front of you, and keep a safe distance between you and workers on or near the roadway.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

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# Late Merge - Zipper Merge

The Zipper Merge is a new driving strategy that requires a change in the mindset of motorists who traditionally have been taught to merge early when recognizing that a lane will end. The results of early merging are longer backups, an increase in crashes and road rage incidents.

The new driving procedure to follow is when you see the "lane closed ahead" sign and traffic is backing up, stay in your current lane up to the point of merge. Then take turns with other drivers to safely and smoothly ease into the remaining lane. When traffic is heavy and slow, it is much safer for motorists to remain in their current traffic lane until the point where traffic can orderly take turns merging.

The Zipper Merge benefits drivers by:

- Reducing the difference in speeds between two lanes. Changing lanes when traffic is traveling at approximately the same speed is easier and safer.
- Reducing the overall length of traffic backup by as much as 40%.
- Reducing congestion on freeway interchanges, especially in metropolitan areas.
- Creating a sense of fairness and equity that all lanes are moving at the same rate.
- Reducing incidents of road rage.

## Vision Zero

Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. All traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable.

# Prevent & Manage Vehicle Breakdowns

The most common reasons for breakdowns relate to failed tires, running out of gas, engine overheating, and dead batteries.

**Prevent tire-related breakdowns:** Taking good care of tires can prevent crashes, as well as breakdowns.

- Have tires inspected, rotated, and balanced by professionals every 5,000 miles.
- Check air pressure every month and before long trips. Best to check when tires are cold. Use a tire pressure gauge, and find the recommended PSI (Pounds per Square Inch) on the driver's side door jam or in the owner's manual (not from pressure shown on the tire sidewall).

**Manage tire-related breakdowns:** Safety comes first. Find a safe location to stop; it's okay to drive slowly on a flat tire's rim for a short distance to a wide shoulder, rest stop, gas station, or parking lot, making sure to activate your car's hazard lights.

Consult the vehicle operator's manual when you change the tire, or call roadside assistance.

- Have a fully inflated spare tire in your car. Donut spares should be inflated to 60 PSI.
- Practice (before the flat tire happens) using your car's tools to change the tire. Identify tool shortages and acquire what is missing.

**Manage running out of gas:**

- Stow an empty 1-gallon gas can so you can carry it to the nearest gas station. Never stow a container with gas in the car. Adding gas works best when the car is on level ground.

**Prevent battery problems:** Car batteries usually last 3 to 5 years. Hotter climates will shorten a battery's life.

- At first sign of weakness, have the battery checked, and replaced if weak.
- Look for: illuminated battery light, slow engine crank, and dimming lights.
- Keep clamps to battery terminals tight so they cannot be moved by hand.

**Manage battery problems:** If the car doesn't start, most likely its battery is dead or its clamps are loose.

Stow 20 ft. long jumper cables in your trunk. Know how to use them correctly with another car's alternator.

- Stow a portable jumper battery. Charge it monthly and after each use.
- Have a correctly-sized combination wrench to tighten loose battery clamps.

**Prevent engine overheating:** Having low coolant in the radiator is the most common cause — usually due to a leak, hot weather, and/or a malfunctioning radiator cooling fan.

- Pay attention to signs, including temperature gauge's reading over halfway from cold to hot, steam or water vapor coming out from the hood, or a sweet smell coming from the engine. Proceed right away to a mechanic!
- Check engine coolant regularly. It should be above the 'Minimal' or 'full' line when the engine is cool, and at or just below the 'Max' line when the engine is hot. Stow a gallon of water in the car in case of an emergency.

**Manage engine overheating:** If you encounter any of the above signs:

- Get to a safe location as soon as possible and turn off the engine.
- Allow engine to cool down for at least 30 minutes before opening the hood. DO NOT open the radiator cap while the engine is hot because the system is highly pressurized.
- Add water if coolant is low. Adding water, without antifreeze, can usually get you from roadside to a repair shop.
- Before proceeding to a mechanic, turn off the air conditioner and turn on the heater.

Sources: Bridgestone Tires, "Roadside Survival: low-tech solutions to automobile breakdowns" by Walt Brinker [www.roadside Survival.com](http://www.roadside Survival.com), AAA, and In Control Family Foundation

## Correct Air Pressure

Correct air pressure in tires helps prevent blowouts. Check spare tire PSI also, as it is usually low.



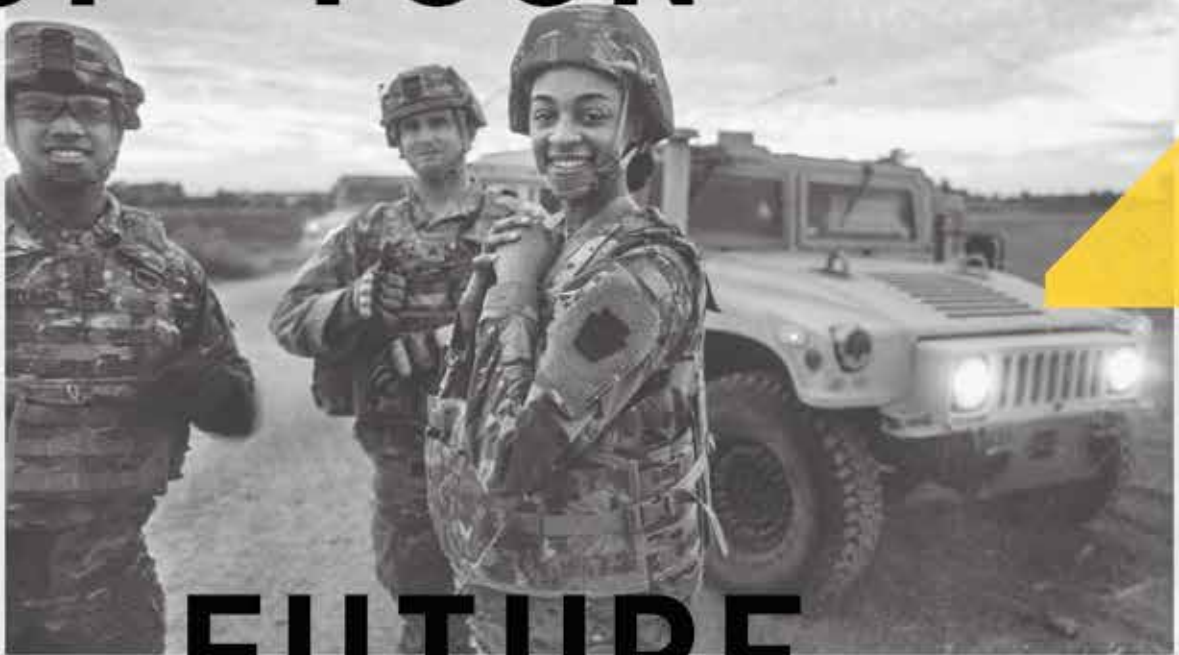
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# Final Tips for Parents...

1. The longer a teen holds their Learner's Permit, the less risk of crashing. Aim for 12 months instead of 6 months of supervised driving.
2. Consistent and varied practice can reduce your teen's crash risk. Practice driving regularly on different roads, even if you're going to and from the same place.
3. Think hard about your teen's access to a vehicle. Consider your teen sharing access to the family car, instead of getting them their own car. It is best for teens to have limited access to a car in the first months of licensure. This can reduce their risk of crashing.
4. Parents should continue to drive with their teens after they get their license! Stay involved, and try to be aware of each trip they're taking in that first year of independent driving.

***Our thanks*** to Dr. Johnathon Ehsani and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for these tips and their ongoing research to eliminate teen crashes.

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