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Spring 2011

TEEN DRIVING STATISTICS

Learning to drive and getting a license is a major milestone and an important rite of passage in the life of every teenager. As parents, we are the ones who care the most about our teenager's safety and driving ability. Check out these real statistics...

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20 year olds.

- ▲ There were over 1,429,000 young drivers aged 15 to 20 involved in police-reported motor vehicle collisions in 2008. *That's an average of nearly 4,000 young drivers in a police-reported motor vehicle collision every day.*
- ▲ There were 5,864 young drivers aged 15 to 20 involved in fatal motor vehicle collisions in 2008. *That's an average of 16 young drivers involved in fatal collisions each and every day.*
- ▲ In 2007, *25% of young drivers aged 15 to 20 who were killed in crashes had a Blood Alcohol Concentration of 0.08 g/dl or higher*, and 31% of all young drivers killed had been driving.
- ▲ Young drivers aged 15 to 20 account for only 6.4% of total drivers, *but are involved in 13% of all fatal motor vehicle collisions and 14% of all police-reported motor vehicle collisions.*
- ▲ Over 10 million drivers (of all ages) were involved in police-reported motor vehicle collisions in 2008, *resulting in 37,261 fatalities and another 2.35 million people injured.*
- ▲ Over 5.8 million police-reported motor vehicle collisions occurred in 2008; *that's one every 5 seconds. On average, a person was injured in these crashes every 19 seconds, and someone was killed every 15 minutes.*
- ▲ More 15 to 24 year olds are killed in motor vehicle related crashes than those that are killed by drugs, guns and violent crimes combined.
- ▲ Nearly one-third of all deaths for people aged 15 to 24 were motor vehicle related.
- ▲ There were 4,497 young people aged 16 to 20 killed and 359,000 injured in motor vehicle collisions in 2008. *That's an average of over 12 young people aged 16 to 20 killed and another 1,000 injured each and every day.*
- ▲ When compared to any other age group, *young drivers aged 16 to 20 have the highest fatality and injury rates in motor vehicle crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers.*
- ▲ While young women aged 16 to 20 account for only 31% of the motor vehicle crash related fatalities for the age group, they account for slightly more than half (53%) of the motor vehicle related injuries.

So please remember that getting a license should not be the end of learning to drive. With a teenager receiving his or her license new doors of freedom are opened up and our relationships with them will change one way or another. Nevertheless, it our responsibility to ensure they can DRIVE. The remainder of this newsletter will give some helpful tips on various items to share with your teens and just remind us all of the simple things we can do to protect ourselves.

TEEN'S RISKY HABITS!

TEENS DRIVE SAFER WHEN THEY APPRECIATE THE RISKS—AND CONSEQUENCES, SAYS PETER KISSINGER, PRESIDENT OF THE AAA FOUNDATION FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY. USE THE INFORMATION BELOW TO HELP TEENS AVOID THE RISKY DRIVING HABITS THAT CAN CAUSE CRASHES.



Looking away from the road for **two seconds** doubles your chance of crashing. Distractions like cell phones kill some 6,000 drivers each year in crashes.

MAKE THE STATS REAL FOR TEENS:

Have your teen close her/his eyes for two seconds and try to walk down a crowded school hallway without having a collision.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ▲ Have an "ignition on/phone off" policy for your teen.
- ▲ Consider using new devices that can jam cell-phone signals while the car is on.
- ▲ Show your teen the video of Rob and Shari Reynolds, who share their grief after a distracted driver killed their daughter Cady. To see the video in *AAA Living's digital edition*, visit AAA.com/AAALiving.

For every 10 mph over 50 mph you drive, your chance of death or serious injury **doubles**. And, 1 in 3 traffic fatalities is speeding-related.

MAKE THE STATS REAL FOR TEENS:

Tell your teen that if his/her time in high school doubled, he/she wouldn't graduate until he/she was 22 years old.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ▲ Consider cell-phone services with speed monitors that text parents when kids exceed certain limits.
- ▲ Model good behavior. Always drive the speed limit, especially when your teen is in the car.
- ▲ Remind your teen that just one speeding ticket may cost him/her a hefty fine, higher insurance rates and possible license suspension.

Having a friend riding along increases a teen's chance of crashing. And, kids can be **four times** more distracting than adults as passengers.

MAKE THE STATS REAL FOR TEENS:

Turn on four audio devices at once—iPod, stereo, CD player, TV—and ask your teen to try to focus on just one.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ▲ Although allowing teens to drive other kids in car pools may be convenient, don't allow it.
- ▲ Know where your teen is going, who she/he is going with and when she/he will be home.
- ▲ Use AAA Parent-Teen Driving Contract to set and enforce limits on how many non-adults your teen can have in the car.

MAKE A CONTRACT WITH YOUR TEEN!

The safety and well being of your child should be your foremost priority. For that to happen, there must be an open line of communication. Many teens find themselves in trouble, and countless teens have been killed, simply because they were more afraid of their parents' reactions than the consequences of the actions they chose to take.

As a parent, you cannot afford to be naive or keep your head in the sand. Take an interest in the life of your teens. Know their friends. Know where they hang out. Know what they like to do. Think back to when YOU were their age. Talk with your teens. Let them know that you want to be able to count on them. More importantly, make sure they absolutely know that they can ALWAYS count on you.

EVEN THE BEST KID CAN MAKE BAD DECISIONS

You and your teens need to plan for the worst-case scenario together. It's just like a fire drill; you hope it never happens for real, but without a safety plan in place even the smallest fire can become deadly. Even the best son or daughter in the world can make a bad choice or decision. At one time or another, your teen could be faced with any one of the following (or similar) situations.

- ★ Getting into a car with someone who's been drinking or doing drugs.
- ★ Getting into a car with someone who does not have his or her license, or has had it suspended.
- ★ Experimenting with alcohol or other substances themselves, and then being in a situation where they feel like they have to drive home. (Keep in mind your teen could also become a victim unknowingly being "slipped" a substance).
- ★ They wrecked the car. What do they do?
- ★ They received a ticket. What do they do?

As a parent, how do you want your teen to handle those, or similar, situations? Forget the fact that you hope such situations never occur in the first place. The only thing you should be concerned with is preparing your teen to respond properly if a situation arises when the consequences of a wrong decision could become deadly. If you want your teens to make the right choice, you need to help them feel comfortable with the right choice.

Encourage your teens by rewarding them for good, responsible driving behavior. Give them incentives for making the right choice. The first year behind the wheel is the most challenging for a teen. Reward them for collision free and citation free driving. Set goals together for the first six and twelve months behind the wheel. Make it a contract.

A LITTLE COMMON SENSE!

Every now and then, you probably think at Top Value we're pointing out the obvious. Well, here we go again. These are things we should always act on but let's face it, we get busy or tell ourselves "it's not that big of a deal" or "that's so obvious everyone should know that". These things can be a big deal though and know that sometimes it's not obvious to someone...*especially a new driver.*

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DASHBOARD LIGHTS. When things like your check engine light goes on, have it checked out.

KNOW WHERE YOUR SPARE TIRE IS AND KNOW HOW TO CHANGE YOUR TIRE. Have your teen actually change the tire on all the vehicles he/she will be driving.

KNOW WHERE YOUR REGISTRATION, OWNER'S MANUAL AND INSURANCE PAPERS ARE. Always keep your paperwork in the same spot and let all drivers of that vehicle know where the paperwork is and what it is for.

SMELL SOMETHING UNUSUAL? Don't think it will go away. Get it checked out immediately.

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR? That funny noise you hear doesn't go away by turning up the radio. Don't ignore your vehicle's cry for help.

WIPER BLADES. I know we talk about this all the time but check out those wiper blades constantly. Visibility is essential to safe driving. Make sure you're able to see.

That's Funny!

1. It takes about 8,500 bolts to assemble an automobile, and only one teenager to scatter it all over the road.
2. When buying a used car, punch all the buttons on the radio. If the stations are rock and roll, there's a good chance the transmission is shot.
3. Car sickness is the feeling you get every time you drive with a teenager on a permit.
4. I decided to stop worrying about my teenage son's driving and take advantage of it. I got a bumper sticker that said "How's my driving?" and put a 900 number on it. At 50 cents a call I've been making \$38.00 a week!