

## Teen Driving Risk Awareness

Sixteen- and 17-year-old drivers have the highest crash rates of any age group. Crash rates are highest during the first six months of licensure without supervision. The major reason for crashes among newly licensed drivers is the failure to search effectively for potential risks. The most critical time for parents to be involved with young drivers is during the first six months of unsupervised driving.

Our culture tends to view teens as young adults when, neurologically, they are only large children. The area of the brain that regulates logic and reasoning develops before the area that controls impulse and emotion. Young drivers often do not have the full capacity to control impulses. As a result, adults need to provide guidance, oversight and set limits.

Inexperience and immaturity combine to make young drivers especially at-risk in five circumstances:

**At night:** Driving is more difficult and dangerous at night for everyone, but particularly for teenagers. Young drivers have less experience driving at night than during the day, and drowsiness and alcohol may be more of a factor at night.

**After drinking alcohol:** Young drivers' inexperience with both driving and drinking means that they have a higher crash risk at all bodily alcohol content levels than older drivers.

**With passengers:** Teenage passengers can distract young drivers and encourage them to take risks.

**When unbelted:** Seat belts reduce the risk of injury or fatality in a crash, but teenage drivers and passengers have lower belt use rates than older drivers and passengers.

**When using cell phones:** All drivers are at higher risk when talking or texting; however, young drivers use cell phones more frequently than older drivers and have more difficulty handling distractions.

-Countermeasures That Work, NHTSA 2011

Youth Traffic Safety Statistics - National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S.

Nationally in 2009, 3,349 teen passenger vehicle occupants, age 16 to 20, were killed in motor vehicle crashes, and 56 percent (1,880) were unrestrained at the time of the fatal crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, teenage drivers and passengers are among those least likely to wear their safety belts.

In 2009, 33 percent of the young driver's age 15 to 20, who were killed in crashes had a bodily alcohol content of .01 or higher.

### **Teens/Young Adults Age 16-20 - 2010 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts:**

100 persons (16-20 years old) were killed in motor vehicle crashes, including 53 (8.9%) drivers. The 16-20 age group accounted for 10.7 percent of all traffic deaths.

In addition, 10,652 teenagers and young adults were injured in motor vehicle crashes.

There were 521,467 licensed drivers ages 16-20 who represented 7.4 percent of Michigan's active driving population, yet the drivers in this age group represented 12.9 percent (60,721) of drivers in all crashes and 11.1 percent (147) of drivers in fatal crashes.

Generally, younger drivers were involved in more shoulder/outside curb crashes and had a higher incidence of speeding, overturn, inability to stop in assured clear distance, collision with a ditch, and hitting a tree. They were less likely to be alone in their car at the time of the crash.

Teenagers and young adults had the highest incidence of fatal crashes when their speed was too fast.

The weekend had a higher involvement of teen and young adult drivers in all crashes when compared to older drivers.

Teenagers and young adults accounted for 6.9 percent of the pedestrians killed in Michigan in 2010, and 14.1 percent of all pedestrian injuries.

Two (6.9%) of the 29 bicyclist deaths in 2010 were in the 16-20 age group.

See [www.Michigantrafficcrashfacts.org](http://www.Michigantrafficcrashfacts.org) for more Michigan crash facts.

#### Segment 2 Driver Education - Risk Awareness

The Segment 2 driver education curriculum objectives are centered on risk awareness (including distractions and aggressive driving); avoiding alcohol-involved driving; and driver and vehicle actions. The Segment 2 Driver Education Risk Awareness materials are used by driver education programs to teach teens about these driving risks.