

# Working *with your* Parents: How to Communicate

*"Parents may cut their drivers' risk in half if they set driving rules and monitor them in a supportive, non-controlling way."*

Learning to drive isn't easy. That's why it takes commitment – from you and your parents (or another trusted adult). Your parent or guardian will need to monitor your driving activities for the first year of driving on your own and continue to help you practice new skills. With their help, you will become an experienced, skilled driver.

To help reduce the stress and arguing that develop during the permit period, we propose making the car a 'nag-free' zone, one where you can concentrate on learning to drive.



## What is important?

- Keep the lines of communication open. To be successful, it's crucial to create the right learning environment. The car may seem like the right place to discuss a wide range of topics with your parents. It still can be but not when you're behind the wheel. Heavy topics are best left for discussion around the dinner table. In the car try to restrict the talk to driving-related topics. Keep this in mind when you and your family develop "House Rules."
- Establish a "safe space" to talk outside the car. Agree to discuss anything sensitive or important somewhere calm outside the car—the front steps, living room, or backyard swing—the choice is yours. Be sure to follow through. You'll have to talk about it sometime. Don't put it off.
- It's okay to tell your parent to 'chill out.' An angry parent is one of the worst distractions. Politely encourage your mom or dad to count to 10, save the criticism for later, and stay focused on teaching.
- Learn to accept constructive criticism. When your parent gives you focused and specific feedback on your driving performance, accept it and learn from it.

CHILL  
OUT!

# Seeking Out Different Avenues *to get* Help and Experience

*"Nearly two thirds of teens reported that at least 2 different adults were involved in helping them how to drive."*

The PA Graduated Driver Licensing Law requires teens to have 65 hours of behind the wheel practice before testing for their license. Your parent/guardian may not be available to be there the whole time. Who else can you go to for help?

- ▼ One option is to look into instruction from a professional driving instructor. Be sure to find one that is a good fit for your family's budget and your personal learning style
- ▼ Enlist the help of another trusted adult, with your parent's approval. This could be a family member, neighbor or family friend. Find someone that is willing to invest the time in you and willing to help teach driving skills
- ▼ Ask your school counselor or Driver's Ed instructor for advice to locate an adult or professional driving school.

[www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org)



## Tips for Teens:

- ▼ Always Buckle Up.
- ▼ Obey the speed limit.
- ▼ Use your turn signals.
- ▼ Don't drink and drive.
- ▼ Focus on driving – the road and the conditions around you.
- ▼ Avoid distractions – Do not use your cell phone, eat or drink while driving.
- ▼ Get directions before you leave.
- ▼ Leave early so you do not feel the need to rush.





# How *does* GDL Work?

The Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is one intervention proven effective at reducing fatal teen crashes. States with comprehensive GDL laws generally have lower fatality rates than those with less robust GDL laws. GDL works by keeping novice teen drivers out of high-risk driving situations, such as driving at night or with peer passengers, while giving them the opportunity to develop driving skills in lower-risk situations.

## Stage 1: Learner's Permit

- Pennsylvania sets the minimum age for learner's permit at no younger than 16 years.
- Must pass vision and knowledge tests, including rules of the road, signs and signals.
- Completion of basic driver training.
- Licensed adult (who is at least 21 years old) required in the vehicle at all times.
- All occupants must wear a seat belt.
- Teenager passenger restrictions.
- Permit has different appearance than driver's license.
- Must remain crash and conviction free.
- Parental Certification of required driving hours.
- Nighttime/bad weather practice requirements.
- No alcohol while driving.

## Stage 2: Intermediate (Provisional) License

- ▼ Completion of Stage 1.
- ▼ State sets minimum age at 16.5 years.
- ▼ Pass a behind the wheel road test.
- ▼ All occupants must wear a seat belt.
- ▼ Nighttime driving restrictions.
- ▼ Teen passenger restrictions.
- ▼ Provisional License is visually distinctive from a regular license.
- ▼ Must remain crash and conviction free.
- ▼ No alcohol or drugs prior to or while driving.

## Stage 3: Full Licensure

- Completion of Stage 2.
- Age 18 passenger restrictions and nighttime restrictions are lifted.
- No alcohol while driving.



# How *do* I gain experience?

Driving is a highly complex skill – no one is ever a perfect driver and it takes years to become an experienced one.



- ▼ You should start reading your state's driver manual well before applying for your Learner's Permit. It is available for free online at [http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/drivers\\_manual/pa\\_driversman.shtml](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/drivers_manual/pa_driversman.shtml).
- ▼ Simply memorizing the rules will not make you a safe driver. You should take the time to study and understand them. Ask questions if you are confused.
- ▼ When you get your permit, remember to keep a practice log of how long you drove, where you drove and what time of day/conditions you drove in. You will need 65 hours of logged driving time to test for your Junior License. You can find a log on the inside panels of the folder.
- ▼ Focus on different skills and travel different roadways when you go out, making sure you keep track of which skills you have practiced and which you still need to work on. A good guide can be found on the inside of this folder.

## TIPS DURING THE LEARNING PROCESS

<b>Always Wear A Seat Belt</b>	<b>Make Your Passengers Wear Their Seat Belts</b>
Your seat belt will prevent you from hitting other things in the car as well as being ejected.	You are the driver so you have the authority. Refuse to drive until ALL passengers are buckled up.
<b>Don't Use Your Cell Phone While Driving</b>	<b>Utilize The Four Second Rule When Driving Behind Cars</b>
This reduces your concentration, greatly increasing your chance of making a fatal mistake and crashing.	Cars can stop suddenly. Make sure you leave four seconds between you and the car in front of you. This tip will help you avoid rear-ending other vehicles.
<b>Schedule Your Time</b>	<b>Never Drive Under the Influence</b>
Plan your trip wisely to help reduce stress, speeding and risky decisions.	Drugs and alcohol dramatically reduce your reaction time behind the wheel.
<b>Be Familiar With Your Vehicle</b>	<b>Avoid Aggressive Driving and Road Rage</b>
Know all the blind spots on your car by having someone slowly walk around the car as you watch in the mirrors.	Be courteous on the road! Driving is not a competitive event. Don't take someone else's driving mistakes personally.



# Keeping Yourself Safe *on the* Roadways

"The greatest lifetime chance of crashing occurs in the first 6 months after licensure."

## Distractions:

The under-20 age group has the highest rate of fatalities related to distracted driving.

## Cell Phone Use:

- Using a cell phone while driving increases your risk of a crash by 4 times, whether or not it is hands free.
- The simple act of dialing your phone increases your crash risk by 3 times.
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. When traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field. (*Virginia Tech Transportation Institute*)
- Texting and driving is unsafe at any age regardless of driving experience or texting abilities.
- Drivers using cell phones look but fail to see up to 50 percent of the information in their driving environment. (ncs.org)



## Fatigue

- Teen drivers who sleep less than 8 hours nightly are one-third more likely to crash than those who sleep 8 or more hours nightly.
- Being awake for 18 hours is similar to having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08, which is legally drunk.
- The majority of fatigue-related crashes are caused by drivers under age 25.

## Driving with My friends:

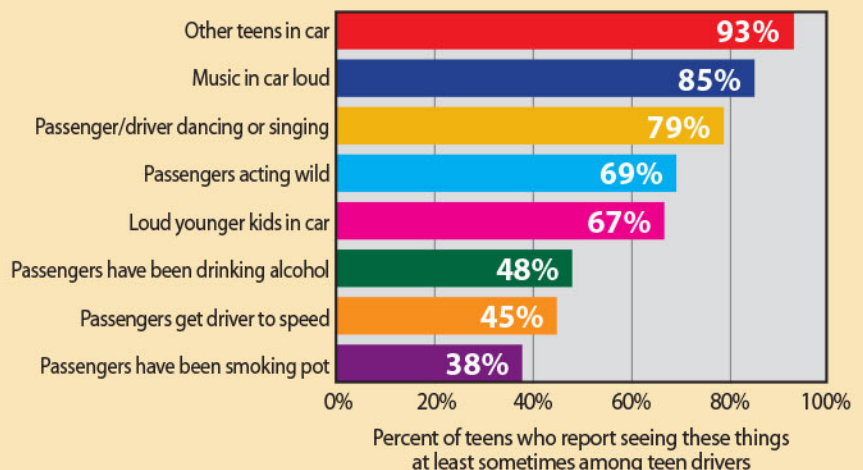
Having your friends in the car greatly increases your chances of crashing

- 1 passenger = 2x as likely to crash
- 2 passengers = crash risk increases 158%
- 3 passengers – crash risk increases 207%

**40% of teen traffic fatalities are to passengers.**

[www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org)

## Distractions by Teen Passengers





# Buckling Up: Why Should I *do it?*

"Two-thirds of teens that die in crashes were not wearing their seat belt."

## Teens have the lowest seat belt use of any age group (76%)

**Teen Statement:** *Why do I need a seat belt? I'm only going down the street to the grocery store.*

- ▼ The truth is most crashes happen near or around your home in local neighborhoods, rather than on high-speed roads or on long trips.

**Teen Statement:** *I'm not going very fast. If I crash, I can hold myself back from hitting the windshield. I'm only going 25 mph, it won't hurt me.*

- ▼ If you weigh 160 lbs, and crashed while travelling at a speed of 25 mph, it would take 4000 lbs of restraining force to stop you from hitting the windshield, steering wheel, dashboard, or other passengers – [weight x pre-crash speed = crash force]. That is the weight of a wrecking ball, a fully grown great white shark, or a small SUV!



## No Seat Belt!

When a car crashes, it stops very abruptly. Occupants continue to travel until something stops them inside the car.



In a crash, **wearing a seat belt** helps you to slow down with the car, enabling a more gradual stop. The more gradually your body slows down in a crash, the less likely you are to experience a serious injury.

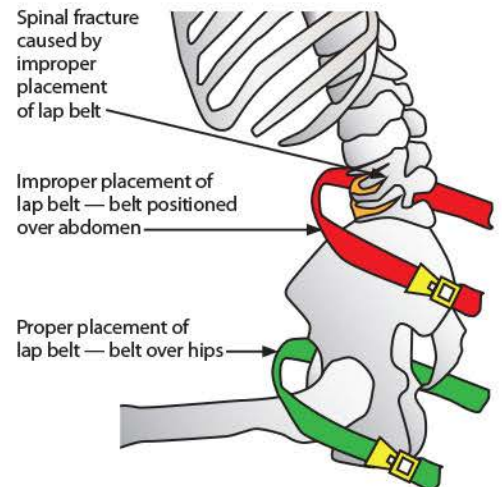


**An unrestrained occupant** continues to travel forward until rapidly striking the steering column, windshield, or other part of the vehicle, causing serious injury.

## Teen Statement:

*It's my life, I take my own risks! I'll wear a seat belt if I want to, for me.*

- ▼ In a crash, when you are not wearing a seat belt, you will continue moving until you hit something. This may be part of the car, but there is a good chance it may be a passenger in the vehicle. Hitting someone else with the crash force of your body can cause severe injury.



## Why Else? Because It is the Law in Pennsylvania:

4581(a)(2)(i) – Every occupant 8 years old to under 18 years old must be in a seat belt.

4581(a)(2)(ii) – Every driver and front seat passenger must be in a seat belt.