

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release.

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National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 19-25: Parents are the key to keeping teen drives safe on the road.

Many parents don't realize it, but the #1 threat to their teen's safety is driving or riding in a car with a teen driver. Every year about 3,000 teens lose their lives in car crashes. The main cause? Driver inexperience. Parents play a key role in keeping teens safe on the road.

Parents who are involved with their teen driver in a supportive way can lower their teen's crash risk by 50 percent. Teens with involved parents are also twice as likely to use their seat belt, 70 percent less likely to drink and drive, half as likely to speed, 30 percent less likely to use a cell phone while driving and significantly less likely to drive with multiple passengers.

Use these proven tools to use to keep teens safe behind the wheel.

- Practice. Practice. Practice. Driver inexperience is one of the biggest factors in car crashes. The risk is highest in the first year drivers have their license. Experience truly is the key to safer driving. It is recommended that adults ride with teens for at least 30-50 hours.
- Put the brakes on passengers. The risk of crashing goes up when teens ride with other teens. In Nebraska the first six months that a teen driver holds a Provisional Operator Permit, they may not drive with more than one passenger that is under the age of 19 who is not an immediate family member.
- Watch the Clock. Fatal crashes for every age group are more likely to happen after the sun has gone down. Make sure teen drives are off the road at night. (It is recommended that for the first six months that they do not drive alone after 9pm.) Be sure to practice night time driving with teens.
- Buckle Up! Make buckling up a family rule that is simply not broken. With seatbelt use, the risk of dying or being badly injured in a crash is cut in half. Stress the importance of always buckling as both a driver and a passenger. Buckling up saves lives.
- Do not text and drive. Ever. Texting while driving takes your hands off the wheel, eyes off the road and mind off of driving. Distractions increase the risk of crashes, injury and death. Set an example. Put your phone away when you are behind the wheel.
- Get enough sleep. Drowsy drivers cause thousands of crashes every year. Young drivers are at high risk. If your teen is worn out, don't let them drive.
- S-L-O-W Down. Driving too fast in general and driving too fast for poor road or weather conditions — regardless of what the speed limit is — are two important ones. Tailgating, failure to use turn signals, and being distracted are among several other common risky habits that lead to crashes.
- Set a great example. Teens watch everything you do. Set a good example every time you get behind the wheel. Always buckle up, never drive impaired, never drive distracted, drive the speed limit, and drive safely.

Remember Parents Are the Key to safe teen driving. Don't just talk about safe driving; set your families own driving rules and get your teen to agree to them in writing through a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement.

For additional information visit <http://www.cdc.gov/parentsarethekey/index.html> or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.