

Four Ways Parents Can Influence Teenage Driver Safety

SAFETY SECTION >>

Some alarming facts: According to statistics published by the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, 34% of 16 year olds and 18% of 17 year olds will be in a serious crash. Here are four ways parents can help their teenagers avoid accidents.

- Understand that driver training starts much younger than 16. Children see driving habits of those around them early on. Often they put these practices into place when it is their turn to get behind the wheel. Reinforce good driving habits by example.
- Maintain strong lines of communication on "family rules of the road." Make sure your teenager understands your expectations about safe driving, i.e., speed; use of alcohol and drugs; use of a cell phone, the radio and other distractions; and obeying state laws on Junior Operator time and passenger restrictions and others. Support them with incentives. Be firm about disincentives.
- Promote defensive driving repeatedly. Keep reinforcing the need to "watch out for what the other guy may do."
- Consider an Advanced Driver Training program. One program claims that its intensive four-hour session has reduced crashes by first- and second-year drivers (course completers) by 70%.