



Title: **Talk to teens about safe driving practices**
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Talk to teens about safe driving practices

To the Editor:

National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 18 to 24.

Beginning drivers occasionally make behind-the-wheel mistakes. Some can be easily corrected. Others result in crashes with property damage, injury, even death. The Illinois Insurance Association, a property-casualty trade organization, encourages parents, families and local communities to get behind teen driver safety initiatives. Some ideas to consider:

Support state graduated driver's license laws and adopt house rules to protect teen motorists.

Illinois' GDL gives teens more supervised time behind the wheel, bans handheld mobile devices while driving, limits passengers, restricts night driving and more. These measures have reduced teen driving fatalities, but laws are only part of the answer. Candid, open and ongoing family discussions about driving safety, expectations and responsibilities are equally important.

Model and reinforce good driving habits: Obey traffic laws, never drink and drive, always wear a seat belt and routinely scan the roadway for unexpected situations. Avoid distractions that take eyes, hands or focus away from the task at hand. Cell-phones are one example. Music settings, temperature controls, mapping, food, passengers and even scenery are others.

Choose the right vehicle for your teen driver. A bigger, heavier car, truck or SUV equipped with safety features is best. Avoid those with high horsepower engines, and always check NHTSA safety ratings.

Fatal teen crashes are devastating. Family members, friends and entire communities are forever affected. We can help young motorists reach destinations intact and improve roadway safety for everyone by taking time to talk to teens about safe driving practices.

Kevin J. Martin

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