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FROM OUR READERS

Good driving habits boost safety

Teenagers are involved in nearly three times more fatal crashes than drivers over age 20. These sobering statistics are a heartbreaking reality for many families. National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 15-21, a campaign designed to bring awareness to this issue.

Promoting teen-driver safety is a shared responsibility. Look for opportunities to discuss and model safe driving habits with the young people in your sphere. Limit cellphone use, and never text behind the steering wheel. Talk about driving distractions and best practices to reduce them.

Stress the importance of following posted limits, leaving adequate space between cars and adjusting to changing road conditions. Urge young people to buckle up on every trip, whether in the driver's seat or as passengers. Discourage teens from driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including certain prescription and over-the-counter medications. Encourage good sleep habits, as drowsiness also impairs the driver's ability to operate a vehicle.

Inexperience is a factor in many teen-driving accidents. Illinois' graduated licensing law addresses this problem by requiring more supervised time behind the wheel for beginning drivers. Use this opportunity to help the young person in your family recognize and respond appropriately to hazardous driving situations.

The Illinois Insurance Association, a property-casualty trade association, and its member companies encourage parents, families, community members and all licensed motorists to support safe-driving initiatives during National Teen Driver Safety Week and throughout the year. Together, we can help teens become capable, skilled and careful drivers.

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