

STEERING TEENS CLEAR OF

DANGER

Join Newspapers In Education as we learn valuable safety rules for the road from State Farm®. This 10-week program is designed to help teenagers prepare to be safe drivers and passengers and to reduce the risk of accidents for everyone on the road. This program will run in The Seattle Times through May 22.

Week Nine: DRIVING AT NIGHT

Teens are far more likely to be in serious crashes at night. Driving at night can be very different from driving during the day. At night you have less time to see and react to road signs, upcoming curves, a car swerving into your lane, a kid crossing the street, or other things. That's why you have to slow down and be more cautious. As you become more experienced, you will learn to recognize and avoid hazards more quickly. With practice and time, you will become a better nighttime driver.

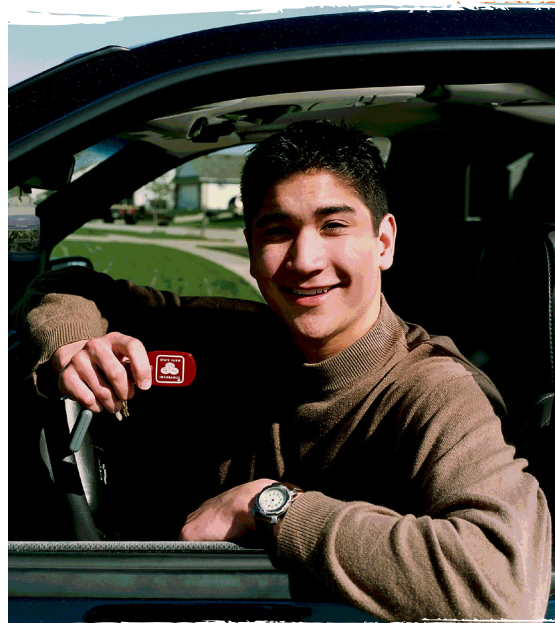
The major difference between day and night driving is the accident rate. When you consider that 90 percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is limited at night, it is no surprise that the night-driving accident rate is roughly three times that of daylight driving. The fatal crash rate of 16-year-olds is nearly twice as high at night.

The cause of the decreased vision varies. At night, the driver's normally wide field of vision is narrowed to the field of view illuminated by headlights, the headlights of other vehicles and fixed road lights. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision may be compromised after sundown.

One of the most dangerous aspects of night driving is one that we can do little to control: blinding glare from oncoming headlights. An immense amount of research has been conducted into the problems of glare and night vision. All these studies have reached the same startling conclusion: When your eyes are hit by a bright beam of light from an oncoming car, you may become distracted. Drivers can be affected by the oncoming glare of headlights as far as 3,000 feet away. If you feel you won't be able to see after a car approaching you has passed, slow down and try not to look directly at those headlights. Looking at the right side of the road may be effective.

Activity

Under Washington state's GDL law, you cannot drive between 1 and 5 a.m. for the first 12 months with a license unless you are with a licensed driver age 25 or older. Discuss with a partner three alternative solutions you can come up with if you find yourself in a situation where you have to travel between 1:00 and 5:00 a.m. so that you may be in compliance with the law.



Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws are a proven strategy to reduce teen driver crashes and deaths. They work by keeping new teen drivers out of high-risk driving situations, such as driving at night, to give them the needed time to develop skills in lower-risk situations, such as driving during the day. Under Washington state's GDL law, you cannot drive between 1 and 5 a.m. for the first 12 months with a license unless you are with a licensed driver age 25 or older. The only exception to this rule is if you drive for agricultural purposes, meaning you transport farm products or supplies under the direction of a farmer.

Sources: Vehicle Dynamics Institute, securitydriver.com and Washington State Department of Licensing

Get The Facts

- The fatal crash rate of 16-year-olds is nearly twice as high at night.¹
- States with nighttime restrictions in place have reported up to a 60 percent reduction in crashes during the restricted hours.²
- Only 14 percent of the miles driven by 16- to 17-year-old drivers occurred between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., yet this time period accounted for 32 percent of fatal crashes in this age group.³
- Among teen nighttime crashes, 58 percent happen between 9 p.m. and midnight.³

Sources:

1. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). *Beginning Teenage Drivers*. 2007. Available at iihs.org by searching "beginning driver." Accessed April 7, 2010.

2. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). *State Legislative Fact Sheet: Graduated Driver Licensing System*. Data from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. 2000. Available at nhtsa.dot.gov by searching "graduated driver licensing system." Accessed April 7, 2010.

3. Williams AF, Ferguson SA. *Rationale for graduated licensing and the risks it should address*. *Injury Prevention*. 2002; 8(suppl 2): ii9-ii14; discussion ii14-ii16.

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