



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
TRANSPORTATION CABINET  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Kentucky Parents Encouraged To Teach Teens 'Keys to Driving' Before They  
Take to the Road**

*National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 20-26*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 17, 2024)** – Supporting the Beshear administration’s priority of road safety for Kentucky families, state transportation officials are encouraging parents and guardians during National Teen Driver Safety Week to make sure their teens know the rules of the road before handing them the keys.

“This week reminds us how important it is to instill good driving habits in our young drivers to protect them and everyone else on the road,” Gov. Andy Beshear said. “As a parent of future teen drivers, I encourage families to engage in open conversations about safe driving practices and responsible behaviors that will keep them safe for a lifetime.”

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is helping empower parents by joining the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) in its efforts during National Teen Driver Safety Week, Oct. 20-26.

According to NHTSA, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the United States. Per mile driven, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

“Teen drivers, being new to the road, pose a risk to themselves and others,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “While laws play a crucial role in ensuring safety, they alone aren’t sufficient. Parents should establish clear guidelines before giving their teens the car keys and lead by example when driving themselves.”

According to KYTC’s Office of Highway Safety, over the past three years in Kentucky, there were more than 47,000 crashes involving a teenage driver, resulting in more than 13,000 injuries and 210 deaths.

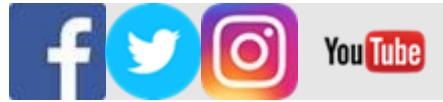
NHTSA's website, [www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving), has information and statistics on teen driving and outlines six basic rules for the road:

1. **Avoid Distracted Driving:** According to NHTSA, driver distraction is the leading factor in most crashes. Avoid distractions, like talking or texting on cellphones, talking to passengers, adjusting audio and climate controls and eating or drinking while driving. Additionally, headphones are not safe to wear while driving, as they can distract a driver from hearing sirens, horns or other important sounds.
2. **Wear Seat Belts:** Wearing a seat belt is the best protection against injury and death, yet according to NHTSA, teens are less likely to be buckled up than members of any other age group. Properly fastened seat belts contact the strongest parts of the body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. A seat belt spreads the force of a crash over a wide area of the body, putting less stress on any one part, and allows the body to slow down with the impact, extending the time when the occupant feels the crash forces.
3. **Take Extra Caution While Driving with Passengers.** Passengers in a teen's car can lead to tragedy. NHTSA research shows that the risk of a fatal crash goes up dramatically in direct relation to the number of passengers in a car. The likelihood of teen drivers engaging in risky behavior triples when traveling with multiple passengers.
4. **Obey Speed Limits:** Limits are put in place to protect all road users. Driving over the speed limit greatly reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around another vehicle, a hazardous object or an unexpected curve. According to NHTSA, young males are most likely to be involved in speed-related fatal crashes.
5. **Never Drive Impaired:** All teens are too young to legally buy, possess or consume alcohol, but they are still at risk. Once a person takes a drink, impairment begins. Alcohol slows reflexes, weakens coordination, blurs eyesight, gives a false sense of being in control and leads to risky decision-making. Like alcohol, marijuana and other drugs also affect a driver's ability to safely react to their surroundings.
6. **Don't Drive Drowsy.** Between school and extracurricular activities, teens are busier than ever and tend to compromise something very important: sleep. According to NHTSA's National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Study, drowsy drivers are twice as likely to make performance errors in a crash as compared to drivers who are not fatigued.

For additional assistance, the KOHS partnered with the Kentucky Safety Prevention Alignment Network (KSPAN) to develop the Kentucky Checkpoints™ program. This free program works with county and community entities, high schools and health departments to educate parents and teens on Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) requirements and risks to teen drivers. The program is available for free in all 120 counties with a "Train the Trainer" class and printed materials provided for free. To learn more, visit the [KSPAN website](#), and/or contact KSPAN Program Coordinator Steve Sparrow at [Steve.Sparrow@uky.edu](mailto:Steve.Sparrow@uky.edu)

Additional information on GDL graduated Driver Licensing requirements can be found on [Kentucky's graduated driver licensing \(GDL\) law](#) website.

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**Your teen is in the driver's seat but  
YOU'RE IN CONTROL.**

Talk with your teen about  
the rules for the road.

Wear seat belts | No speeding  
| No texting | No alcohol or drugs  
| Limit extra passengers



 **NHTSA**  **RULES  
-for the-  
ROAD**