



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Andy Beshear: Before Handing Over the Keys, Make Sure Your Teen Knows Rules for the Road

National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 15-21

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 13, 2023) – Gov. Andy Beshear, who made traffic safety a top priority of his administration, today encouraged parents to observe National Teen Driver Safety Week by making sure their teens know the rules of the road before handing them the keys.

“This week serves as an opportunity for parents and guardians to have a conversation with teens about safe driving habits,” Gov. Beshear said. “Having an open dialogue is one way parents can put their minds at ease before handing over the keys, and we hope these conversations will continue throughout the year.”

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.15-21.

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.

“Because they are new to driving, teen drivers are a potential danger to themselves and to other road users,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “Laws are not enough to protect these young drivers. We need parents to set the rules before handing over the car keys. We also need parents to set a good example when they are behind the wheel.”

According to KYTC’s Office of Highway Safety, over the past three years in Kentucky, there were more than 44,000 crashes involving a teenage driver, resulting in more than 13,000 injuries and 211 deaths.

NHTSA's website, 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 cell phones, talking to passengers, adjusting audio and climate controls in the vehicle 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

Additional information on 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**