

TOP 10 TIPS FOR PREVENTING TEEN ACCIDENTS

1 **Develop the right attitude about driving.**

Many teen auto accidents are a result of attitude and maturity. Make a commitment to yourself to practice a responsible attitude about driving. You're controlling over 3,000 pounds of fast-moving metal, and you owe it to yourself, your passengers and other drivers to drive responsibly.

2 **Get as much supervised practice driving as possible.**

Your parents should take an active role in your practice driving. Make a firm schedule with them and stick to it. And keep it up until you take your test to get a license.

3 **ALWAYS wear your safety belt.**

Get into the habit of wearing your safety belt whenever you drive or ride – no exceptions.

4 **Underage drinking and drug use is illegal.**

Even if you've consumed only one drink or smoked one joint, there is a chemical effect on your brain that can impair judgment and reaction time. Driving under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or other illegal drugs can cost you your license – or your life. Visit www.freevibe.com for more facts on drug use.

5 **Limit your passengers.**

Your risk of a fatal crash increases with every additional passenger. When you're a new driver, it's best to limit your number of passengers.

6 **Limit your night driving.**

Your risk of a fatal crash is three times higher at night than in the day for every mile driven. It is better to avoid nighttime driving until you're comfortable driving during the day.

7 **Keep it slow and safe for starters.**

Fast-moving, high volumes of traffic can make you feel uncomfortable, so avoid them until you can get enough supervised driving experience. Then you can gradually introduce more difficult driving situations, like highway driving, merging off ramps and driving in cities.

8 **Train for poor weather conditions.**

Even when you begin to feel confident driving on dry pavement, it's best to avoid driving in bad weather conditions unsupervised. Keep it simple at first, and get as much supervised practice driving in poor weather as you can before trying it on your own.

9 **Cell phones are for emergency use only on the road.**

One of the worst habits anyone can get into is talking on a cell phone while driving. Keep a cell phone with you in the car for emergency situations only. If you have to use a cell phone, pull safely over to the side of the road.

10 **Drive a safe vehicle.**

If you are thinking of getting your own car, look for one with high safety ratings. Avoid small cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles. Check out federal statistics and consumer report literature to help to evaluate the safety rating of a car or truck. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (the people who do crash tests) offers valuable vehicle safety test results and advisories. Just go to www.highwaysafety.org.

