



# StartSmart

Parent-Teen Driving Agreement





**L**earning to drive can be an exciting time in a teen’s life, but it can also be stressful for both teens and parents. The period after a novice driver obtains his or her license is one of the most crucial in terms of safety. Novice teen drivers have highly elevated crash rates during the first few months of independent driving. Recognizing and avoiding the risk factors that contribute to crashes is an important step to mitigate your teen’s risk behind the wheel. Safe driving generally requires more than what the state law calls for and signing an agreement before the teen starts driving can be helpful in establishing expectations for the whole family. This agreement outlines the concept of driving as a privilege and a learned skill that should be taken seriously by parents and teens alike.

Take time to review this agreement together, and discuss the expectations, rules, responsibilities and consequences for both the parent and teen. It is important to talk about each item and make sure that both the parent and teen understand the risk and consequences for breaking the agreement before signing. Be sure that both the parent and teen initial after discussing each area.

More resources for both teens and parents are available at [TeenDriving.AAA.com](https://TeenDriving.AAA.com).



# Part 1: Teen Driving Risk Factors

## Nighttime Driving

During the first six months of independent driving, the risk of a fatal crash at night is about three times higher for teens than during the day. Forty percent of motor vehicle crash deaths among teen drivers and passengers aged 13–19 occurred between 9 pm and 6 am, and 51% occurred on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

## Teen Passengers

The number of passengers in a teen’s vehicle is a major risk factor in teen crashes for all road users. When a teen driver has only teen passengers in their vehicle, the fatality rate for all people involved in a crash increased 51%.<sup>2</sup>

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

## Road Conditions

Driving in the rain, snow, fog, or other adverse conditions can be dangerous for everyone. They can be especially dangerous if you’re unprepared and unfamiliar with how vehicle handling changes in these conditions.

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

## Aggressive Driving

Speeding, tailgating, and erratic driving are never okay. These actions make the road more dangerous for you and everyone around you.

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Teen Drivers Fact Sheet. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehicle-safety/teen\\_drivers/teendrivers\\_factsheet.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehicle-safety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html).

2 Assessing Fatality Rates in Crash Involvement for Motorists and Non-Motorists in Teen Driver Crashes by Risk Factor. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, <https://aaafoundation.org/assessing-fatality-rates-in-crash-involvement-for-motorists-and-non-motorists-in-teen-driver-crashes-by-risk-factor/>.

## Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs is illegal in all 50 states for good reason. One of every four fatal teen crashes is linked to drinking and driving.<sup>3</sup>

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety Belts

Buckling up is the law. Safety belt use is the easiest way to reduce risk while driving, but teens and young adults have the lowest safety belt use of all drivers and are more likely to forget or decide not to buckle up when there are other teens in the car.

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

## Distractions

Texting, tweeting, and selfies should take a backseat when behind the wheel. Among newly licensed teen drivers, the use of electronic devices was the most common distracting behavior and was more prevalent when a teen was alone in the car. Research has found that for teens, texting while driving dramatically increases the risk of a crash.

*Parent Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teen Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> Teen Driving. NHTSA, <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>.

## Part 2: Driving Conditions



1. In the table below, complete one checkpoint at a time. Start with Checkpoint 1. Discuss and assign Unsupervised Driving Privileges for Checkpoint 1. Use the recommendations or write in your own.
2. Decide how long Checkpoint 1 privileges should remain in effect. Use the recommendation or select your own time period. Based on the length of time you agree on, write in the date to review teen progress.
3. Fill in the “refrigerator magnet” on the next page and post it where it will be an easy reminder.
4. On the review date, consider moving to the next Checkpoint if teen passes the Quick Check:

### Quick Check

- ✓ Followed unsupervised driving privileges?
- ✓ Had enough supervised driving practice?
- ✓ Advanced in driving skills and judgment?
- ✓ Obeyed traffic laws?
- ✓ “Checked in” with parent before each driving event?
- ✓ Took no unnecessary risks?
- ✓ Rarely lost driving privileges?

- ✗ If teen progress is not satisfactory, set another review date for the current Checkpoint.
- ✓ If teen progress is satisfactory, discuss and assign Unsupervised Driving Privileges for the next Checkpoint. Then decide on the time period and write in the review date. Continue until you have completed all four Checkpoints.

The Checkpoints Program™ was developed by Bruce Simons-Morton, National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development, in collaboration with PRG, Inc.



## Part 3: Driving Rules & Consequences

### Directions

1. Read, discuss, and put into effect each rule.
2. Discuss the EXAMPLE VIOLATIONS and write in possible CONSEQUENCES.
3. Sign and date at the bottom to confirm your agreement and commitment.

### Rule 1: Check in with a parent every time you drive.

- ✓ Tell parent where you are going, who will be the passengers, and when you will return.
- ✓ Call home if you will be more than \_\_\_\_\_ minutes late.
- ✓ Call home if your plans change while you are out.
- ✓ Call home if you cannot get home safely. Parent will arrange a safe ride home.

### Rule 2: Obey all traffic laws and signs.

- ✓ Never use alcohol or other drugs and drive.
- ✓ Never ride with a person who is driving after using alcohol or other drugs.
- ✓ Never ride in a car where any alcohol or drug use is occurring.
- ✓ Always wear your seat belt at all times as a driver or passenger.
- ✓ Always have every passenger wear a seat belt.
- ✓ Do not drive aggressively (e.g., speeding, tailgating, or cutting others off).

### Rule 3: Do not take unnecessary risks while driving.

- ✓ No playing around with passengers, messing around with the radio, talking on a cell phone, etc.
- ✓ Do not drive when overly tired, angry, or upset.
- ✓ Do not put yourself or others at increased risk by making unnecessary trips in adverse weather.
- ✓ Do not drive unless you are fully rested.



### Part 3: Driving Rules & Consequences

Example Violations	Consequences
Teen used cell phone while driving.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen got a ticket for speeding.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen didn't make all passengers wear seat belts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen lied about where s/he was going with the car.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen came home 45 minutes late without calling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen carried too many passengers in the car.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Teen used alcohol or other drugs and drove.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lose driving privilege for _____ months/years <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____



## Part 4: The Agreement

**I, the Teen Driver Agree:** I promise to abide by the rules outlined above. I understand that driving is a privilege, not a right and that I will only drive the car with permission. I understand that I am responsible for my driving actions and there are many consequences for my behavior. If I break any rules we have agreed to, I will accept the consequences that we have discussed. I also understand that the terms of this agreement may be changed based on how I handle the responsibility of driving.

*Teen Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

**I, the Parent Agree:** I will approach the process of teaching you to drive with patience and support. I promise to be a positive role model by demonstrating safe driving, following all the traffic safety laws and regulations that I have asked you to follow. I agree to establish a schedule of training and to honor that schedule by providing you with the legally required number of supervised driving hours and any additional time that you need. I also agree to make myself available to discuss progress on a regular basis. I will also consider your requests for changes to our agreement with respect and careful consideration. I will be involved in your driving!

*Parent Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

