



Young Drivers

Did you know motor vehicle crashes are the **leading cause of death** of teenagers? Young drivers are twice as likely as adult drivers to be killed in a crash. Many young drivers perceive a driver's license as a ticket to freedom and do not realize driving is a privilege, not a right. It comes with a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe on the roadway.

Five Major Factors Contributing To Young Driver Crashes

The term young drivers usually refers to drivers under the age of 21. Teenage drivers represent only 6% of Kentucky's total driving population. Young drivers are involved in 20% of total collisions, 21% of total injury collisions, and 16% of total fatal collisions.

1. Driver Distraction and Inattention:

- Talking to passengers
- Using a cell phone
- Changing the CD/radio
- Eating and drinking
- Daydreaming

These types of activities led to 28,025 collisions, resulting in 9,829 injuries and **80 fatalities**.*

2. Speeding & Aggressive Driving:

- risk-taking behavior
- ignoring the posted speed limit
- following too close
- weaving in-and-out of traffic

These types of activities led to 4,530 collisions, resulting in 1,856 injuries and **74 fatalities**.*

3. Lack of Driving Experience & Inadequate Driving Skills:

- misjudgment
- driving too fast for road conditions
- not under proper control
- over correcting/oversteering

These types of activities led to 17,355 collisions, resulting in 9,000 injuries and **248 fatalities**.*

4. Impaired Driving:

- drugs
- alcohol
- prescription and non-prescription medication
- fatigue

These types of activities led to 2,323 collisions, resulting in 1,711 injuries and **66 fatalities**.*

5. Low Seatbelt Use:

Seatbelt use is one of the most effective measures to decrease injuries and deaths in a crash; unfortunately, teens are less likely to be buckled up than any other age group. Over 61% of the young drivers killed were not wearing a seatbelt.*

*Statistics (2003 through 2005)

Primary Seatbelt Law

Kentucky has a primary seatbelt law, meaning all drivers AND passengers must be restrained while in the vehicle. A fine of \$25 will be given for each person that is not restrained.

Graduated Driver's License

Recently, enhancements were made to the way new drivers obtain a driver's license. This law, enacted in an effort to reduce teenage driving fatalities and injuries, seeks to control high-risk situations new drivers commonly face and motivate new drivers to drive safely. For more information, visit <http://drlic.kytc.ky.gov/Grad/>.

Distracted Driving

For teenage drivers, the risk of a crash increases with each passenger. Conversations with friends and family cause drivers to take attention off the road. Cell phone use, changing a CD or radio station, eating and drinking, and grooming while driving is also dangerous. Mix these distractions with an inexperienced driver and that is a deadly combination! If under 18, make sure to follow the passenger restrictions under the Graduated Driver's License law.

Underage Drinking

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.

All states have ZERO TOLERANCE laws, meaning it is illegal for people under the age of 21 to drive after drinking any amount of alcohol.

Being convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) has serious consequences. It may lead to jail time, losing your license, an increase in insurance, payment of fines and court costs. Most importantly, it could cause serious injury or death.

For more information:

- AAA Exchange: www.aaapublicaffairs.com
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: www.aaafoundation.org
- Drivers.com: www.drivers.com/topic/8/
- Driving Skills for Life: www.drivingskillsforlife.com
- How's My Driving? Teen Safety Program: www.howsmydriving.com/drive4life.nsf
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet practice driver's exam: <http://kentucky.gov/kytc/practicedriversexam/>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/youngdriverstsfo5.pdf
- National Safety Council: www.nsc.org/library/facts/yngdrive.htm
- National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course: www.nsc.org/train/ddc/student/alive25.cfm
- Smart Drivers Just Drive: www.distracteddriving.org
- Students Against Drunk Driving: www.sadd.org
- TeenDriving.Com: www.teendriving.com

