

SUMMER CAN BE DEADLY FOR NEW DRIVERS

Crash risk increases for novice drivers with multiple teen passengers

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (June 07, 2013) – As June rolls in and the school year ends, most teens are thinking about how they will spend their summer vacation. Whether it is working or socializing with friends, teens will be on the road much more than during the school year. AAA Tidewater wants to remind parents that the long sunny days of summer can also hold some of the deadliest for teen drivers.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, not only are there more teen drivers on the road, they often have more teen passengers with them. Unfortunately, the risk of crashing increases dramatically for teenage drivers when they travel with a passenger under the age of 21. According to a recent study by AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety(AAAFTS), the risk of death in a crash for 16 and 17 year old drivers increases by 44 percent when carrying one passenger younger than 21, doubles with two, and quadruples with three or more, compared with driving alone.

“AAA urges parents to increase their focus on safety during the high-risk summer months ahead when teens are driving more and often with less supervision,” says Georjeane Blumling Ph.D, Vice President of Public Affairs for AAA Tidewater.

To keep teens safe during these dangerous months and year round, AAA Tidewater suggests the following tips for parents:

- **Eliminate trips without purpose.** Limit teens’ driving to essential trips and only with parental permission for at least the first year of driving. Teens have three times as many fatal crashes as other drivers, based on the amount of miles driven. The risk is even higher, during the first year of solo driving.
- **Limit passengers.** Crash rates increase with each additional teen passenger in the vehicle. In fact, fatal crash rates for 16- to 19-year-olds increase fivefold when two or more teen passengers are present versus when teens drive alone. Parents should establish passenger limits for their teen drivers. In Virginia only one teen passenger under the age of 21 (not including family members) is allowed during the first year of solo driving.



- **Restrict night driving.** A teen driver's risk of being involved in a deadly crash doubles at night. Many parents limit driving during the highest-risk late night hours (between midnight and 5 am) but may want to consider limiting evening driving as well, as more than half of nighttime crashes occur between 9 p.m. and midnight.
- **Teach your teens how to drive.** Summer offers the perfect opportunity for teens to practice driving and to gain experience through parent-supervised driving practice. Parents can share their wisdom and experience accumulated over many years of driving. Even after a teen has a license that allows solo driving, parents and teens should continue to practice 'commentary driving' to help teens manage increasingly more complex and challenging driving conditions.
- **Establish a parent-teen driving agreement.** Written agreements help set and enforce clear rules about night driving, passengers, access to the car, and more. AAA offers a parent-teen driving agreement on its teen driver safety website, <http://teendriving.aaa.com/VA/>. The website also provides a variety of additional tools and resources for parents and teens as they progress through the learning-to-drive process.
- **Be there.** Make sure your teen knows that if they need help, advice, or a ride, they can count on you. Extend this offer often and let your teen know that you are always available, and encourage them to call you should they need your help.

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