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Safe Driving

A Parent's Guide to Teaching Teens

New Jersey
Motor Vehicle Commission
www.njmvc.gov

General Information:
1-888-486-3339 (toll-free in New Jersey)
1-609-292-6500 (out of state)
1-609-292-5120 (TTY)

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New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

Dear Parent:

Your teen has entered an exciting new chapter in life, joining the nearly six million licensed drivers on New Jersey's roadways. Earning the privilege to drive is a tremendous responsibility, one that should not be taken lightly. Parents play an essential role in helping their teens not only learn to drive, but to do so safely and in accordance with the law. With your guidance and supervision, your teen is assured a positive start on the journey to becoming a new driver.

To aid you in this journey, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (DHTS) developed this award-winning parent guide to complement the wealth of information that can be found in the New Jersey Driver Manual and other driver education resources including www.njteendriving.com. Used in conjunction with behind-the-wheel training, these resources will better prepare you and your teen for the challenges that lie ahead.

As the parent or guardian of a new driver, it is also vitally important that you fully understand the requirements and restrictions of New Jersey's Graduated Driver License (GDL) law, which are detailed in this guide. This law was enacted to help your teen gradually build safe driving skills that will last a lifetime.

We urge you to review the information in this guide and partner with your young driver. By actively participating in this important period of your teen's life, you will not only ensure your child's safety, but help keep New Jersey's roadways safe for everyone.

Good luck and safe driving!

Sincerely,

Raymond P. Martinez
Chief Administrator
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

Please read:
Talk to a professional! This guide is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified expert.

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2011 Edition

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Be a careful and supportive teacher.

Since the time your new driver was in a forward-facing child seat, he or she has been learning to drive by watching you. Studies show that your new driver will follow your example and copy your driving behaviors, good or bad. Be a positive influence. Be sure to:

Lead by example.

When you consistently follow the rules of the road, your new driver is likely to do the same. For example, be sure to:

- always wear your seatbelt—and require that seatbelts be worn by all passengers
- obey the speed limit and be courteous to other drivers
- keep your attention on the road—not on distractions
- never drive while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Be a good communicator.

You need good communication to work well with your new driver. Practice when you're both alert and ready to pay attention to each other. Never practice when either of you is tired, angry or distracted.

Use positive reinforcement.

When your new driver is doing well, let him or her know. That's positive reinforcement. Also, use mistakes as a chance to teach, not punish.

Be enthusiastic.

Most teens are excited about getting their driver's license. Let your teen's enthusiasm rub off on you. Don't make the learning experience seem like a chore.

Choose positive questions.

If your teen can't answer them, you're there to explain. Here are some examples:

Negative

Didn't you see that car coming?

Why didn't you use your turn signal?

Didn't I tell you to come to a complete stop at stop signs?

Positive

What would have helped you see that car sooner?

What could you have done to make that turn safer?

Can you think of why it's unsafe to "roll through" a stop sign?

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Be ready to assume control of the vehicle.

You need to be able to take control of the vehicle in three ways:

- **Verbal control**—Give clear, specific directions that allow your teen plenty of time to react. Don't yell.
- **Passive control**—Be ready to slightly turn the steering wheel to help your new driver avoid a dangerous situation.
- **Full control**—Take control of the steering wheel. You may also need to use one foot to control the brake. Once safe, talk to your new driver about what happened.

Use a safe vehicle.

Practice in a vehicle that is in good working order. If possible, use the vehicle that your teen will be driving the most. Remember that:

- it is easier to learn in a vehicle that has an automatic transmission
- if the vehicle used in the New Jersey road test has a center console, it must have a functional, center-mounted emergency brake.

Practice in a safe place.

Your new driver needs lots of practice before driving on real roads. Choose the largest, safest place to practice that you can find. Before you set off on the road, make sure your teen can:

- keep a safe speed
- speed up (accelerate) gradually
- slow down (decelerate)
- stop, turn and park.

Have the paperwork you need:

- **Special Learners Permit.** Your teen's Special Learners Permit should be in the vehicle any time he or she is behind the wheel.
- **Your license.** Carry your driver's license with you any time you are in the vehicle teaching your teen.
- **Vehicle registration.** Keep the vehicle registration inside the vehicle. Make sure it's current.
- **Decal.** Your teen must display a decal on the front and rear license plate of the vehicle he or she is driving. You should obtain the decals with his or her permit.

- **Insurance coverage.** As soon as your teen receives his or her Special Learners Permit, notify your insurance company. Let them know which vehicle(s) your teen will be driving. Ask if he or she should be added to the insurance policy and if proof of insurance needs to be kept in the vehicle. Never let your teen drive without the proper insurance coverage.

Give driving lessons regularly, and keep them to an hour or less. Start by reviewing what you did in any previous lesson(s).

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Read the *New Jersey Driver Manual.*

This guide is a supplement to the ***New Jersey Driver Manual.*** The manual is the best resource for understanding the laws and regulations you and your teen need to know. Pick one up at any motor vehicle agency. It is also available online at **www.njmvc.gov** or by calling **1-888-486-3339** (toll-free in New Jersey), **1-609-292-6500** (out of state) or **1-609-292-5120** (TTY).

Lesson 1: Signs, signals and markings

Your new driver will need to learn the differences between traffic signs, signals and markings. See the *New Jersey Driver Manual* for more information and guidelines on signs, signals and markings.

Traffic signs

use words and symbols to give drivers information. Different signs have different shapes and colors. Traffic signs include:

- **warning signs**—warn drivers about a dangerous situation
- **regulatory signs**—tell drivers they must do or not do something, because of a law
- **guide signs**—direct drivers to specific locations
- **construction signs**—inform drivers about construction zones.

Traffic signals

control the flow of traffic by showing who has the right of way. Traffic signals include:

- red, yellow and green lights
- turn arrow lights
- lane signs.

Teach your new driver what these signals mean. Also explain the importance of the yellow light—which indicates that the light is changing from green to red. **All** drivers should stop for a yellow light unless they are in the intersection or are too close to safely stop.

Pavement markings

on the road give drivers different kinds of information. These include:

- dividing lanes
- showing when drivers can/can't pass or change lanes
- indicating which lanes to use for turns
- showing where pedestrians can walk
- showing where drivers must stop.

To help your new driver learn traffic signs, signals and markings, practice on roads that have them.

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Lesson 2: The vehicle

Before your new driver does any actual driving, help him or her find—and understand—the vehicle's interior controls and features, especially:

Seatbelts

The first thing your new driver should do after getting in the vehicle is to put on his or her seatbelt—including the lap and the shoulder belt—correctly. (Some vehicles may have an automatic shoulder restraint and a manual lap belt. Always use both.) The belts should have no tangles or twists. Under GDL law, the driver and all passengers are required to wear their seatbelts.

Mirrors

Your new driver should adjust all mirrors to obtain the best view of what is happening behind and to the sides of the vehicle. Explain that drivers need to turn their heads ("head checks") to see blind spots that the mirrors don't cover.

Fuel gauge

Fuel gauges are not always accurate (for example, half-full on the gauge may be less than half-full in the tank). Explain that it's always best to put gas in the tank before the gauge is on "empty."

Lights and warning lights

Your new driver should know how and when to use all of the vehicle's light systems—including the headlights (high beams, low beams and running lights), the hazard lights and the dimmer switch. For instance, explain that drivers should use hazard lights when the vehicle is broken down or running slowly because of trouble. New Jersey law also requires all motorists to turn a vehicle's headlights on whenever windshield wipers are in use.

Most vehicles have warning lights for temperature, oil and battery problems. Remind your teen to have the vehicle checked out right away whenever a warning light comes on and stays on.

Airbags

Explain that all passengers, including the driver, should sit at least 10 inches from an airbag compartment. Remind your new driver that children 12 and under must ride properly restrained in the back seat. And a child safety seat should never be put in a seat that has an airbag in front of it.

Practicing with the vehicle running

Once your new driver knows where all of the interior controls are, it's time to practice starting the car.

Then, have him or her practice operating the interior controls:

- keeping the vehicle in park/neutral
- while the engine is running.

More about seatbelts

Recent reports show that 73% of back-seat passengers killed in traffic crashes in New Jersey were unbelted. It's the driver's responsibility to make sure everyone in the vehicle is buckled up for every trip. Tell your new driver that seatbelts and car seats are required by New Jersey law. They keep the driver and passengers from being thrown:

- from the vehicle (the risk of death is much greater if a person is thrown from a vehicle in a crash)
- against parts of the vehicle
- against others in the vehicle.

These safety devices also keep the driver behind the wheel, where he or she can control the vehicle.

Infants and children should ride in child safety seats that are appropriate for their age and weight.

For more information, visit www.njsaferoads.com.

See page 10 for a more complete list of the interior controls your new driver should know.

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Lesson 3: Getting started

Help your new driver get comfortable with handling a moving vehicle. Practice in a very safe, open parking lot before moving into traffic. These driving skills are key:

Speeding up gradually (accelerating)

Your new driver will need practice using the accelerator pedal to smoothly pick up speed.

Choose a long, empty straightaway to practice. Your teen should be able to pick up speed gradually and smoothly. Talk about how to apply pressure to the pedal—with the ball of the foot and toes, not the whole foot.

Maintaining a safe, steady speed

Your new driver should also be able to keep the vehicle at a steady speed. Have him or her practice checking the speedometer while learning to maintain speed.

Also, have your new driver practice mirror checks and head checks for blind spots.

Slowing down (decelerating)

As with accelerating, your new driver will need to learn how to slow down smoothly. Have him or her practice by easing up on the accelerator pedal and slowly applying pressure to the brake pedal.

Braking and stopping

New drivers often apply too much pressure to the brake pedal, which can lock up the wheels. Teach your teen to use "toe pressure" on the brake pedal. Set up a prop as a stop sign (something that cannot damage the vehicle), and have him or her practice slowing down and stopping at it. Also, practice in "reverse."

Stay patient and continue to encourage your teen.
Helping him or her master the fundamentals of driving is a gift for life!

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Turning right

Have your new driver master right turns before moving on to left turns. Teach your teen to:

- Use the right turn signal about 100 feet before the turn or intersection.
- Make sure the vehicle is in the proper lane.
- Check traffic in all directions.
- Slow down appropriately (or stop, if it's required) before making the turn.
- Yield to other vehicles if there is the possibility of a collision.
- **Always stop for pedestrians.**
- Always use both hands in a hand-over-hand motion for all turns. Then, return both hands to the wheel.

Turning left

Preparing for a left turn is similar to preparing for a right turn, with one very important difference. Explain to your new driver that **his or her vehicle may be crossing oncoming traffic when turning left.** Drivers should always yield the right of way to oncoming traffic and stop for pedestrians.

Starting and stopping on an uphill grade

Be sure to give your new driver plenty of practice at this before trying it in traffic.

Teach your teen not to accelerate quickly from a stop on an uphill grade—it can make the tires spin.

Backing the vehicle (going in reverse)

Be sure to tell your new driver to back the vehicle only when absolutely necessary. When the need arises, he or she should:

- Confirm that it's clear behind the vehicle (by getting out and checking, if necessary).
- Get help from someone outside the vehicle if mirrors don't give a good view.
- Use the left hand on top of the steering wheel.
- Look backward (checking the front at times if the vehicle needs to clear obstacles there).
- Move the top of the steering wheel in the direction the vehicle should go (if turning).
- Go slowly.

The tracking progress checklist on page 10 can help you measure how well your new driver understands these important skills.

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Lessons 2 & 3
Tracking progress checklist

Before moving on to Lesson 4, have your new driver locate interior controls and demonstrate a mastery of the driving skills covered so far. If you find he or she needs work with any of the items on the list, continue to practice together.

Can locate	Can operate	Interior controls
		seatbelts
		speedometer
		odometer
		fuel gauge
		headlights (running lights)
		headlights (low beams)
		headlights (high beams)
		directionals (turn signals)
		hazard lights
		dimmer switch
		horn
		ignition
		gear shift
		accelerator pedal
		brake pedal
		clutch pedal (if applicable)
		emergency brake
		rearview mirrors
		windshield wipers/washers
		sun visors
		heater/defroster/air conditioner
		airbag(s)
		driver's seat adjuster
		steering wheel tilt (if applicable)
		window controls
		radio controls
		door locks

Completed	Needs work	Pedal pressure and speed
		starts smoothly
		stops smoothly
		keeps speed consistent
		checks mirrors (left, right and rearview)
		checks to see blind spots
		Turning (run through this list for right and left turns)
		signals at least 100 feet before turn
		checks for traffic in all directions
		watches for pedestrians
		enters turning lane (if available)
		makes turn at proper speed
		yields to oncoming traffic and pedestrians (left turns)
		Backing the vehicle
		checks area before moving the vehicle
		watches behind while backing
		maintains slow speed
		Starting and stopping on an uphill grade
		keeps vehicle from rolling backward
		uses proper acceleration from a stop to keep tires from spinning

Notes:

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Lesson 4: On the road

Teach your new driver to follow these rules while in traffic:

Drive defensively.

The following two systems effectively teach how to drive defensively. Talk about the techniques with your teen.

The Smith System®

- Steer accurately to avoid problems.
- Keep your eyes moving. Don't stare.
- Look in all areas. Don't get stuck looking in just one direction.
- Anticipate problems. Think about "what if."
- Make sure other drivers see you, especially when your vehicles are in conflict for space.

SIPDE
(Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide, Execute)

- **Scan**—search front, back, rear, and sides for possible problems.
- **Identify**—watch for possible problems in your immediate path of travel.
- **Predict**—think about what other drivers may do that could put you in danger.
- **Decide**—determine what you would do to avoid this danger.
- **Execute**—move to avoid conflict (by braking, accelerating, turning, etc.).

Don't drive distracted.

Drivers need to focus **all** of their attention on driving. Teach your new driver to avoid these common distractions:

- texting
- talking on a cell phone*
- eating or drinking
- adjusting the radio, CD player, temperature controls, etc.
- listening to loud music or wearing headphones
- being distracted by passengers.

When a driver's eyes, ears and mind are not on the road, he or she may be headed for danger.

*New Jersey law prohibits permit holders or probationary drivers from using cell phones, either handheld or hands-free, **and MP3 players.**

Look ahead.

The path in front of a driver is the most dangerous. But drivers need to be aware of trouble from all sides. Teach your new driver to look at least 12-15 seconds down the road to see what is developing ahead. Explain that in heavy traffic, drivers should watch for brake lights 3 or 4 vehicles ahead in order to have enough time to react.

Avoid aggressive drivers.

Teach your new driver to:

- get out of an aggressive driver's way (if he or she can)
- not challenge the other driver (with eye contact or gestures).

Stop for pedestrians.

Pedestrian safety is a shared responsibility. It's important for drivers to be aware of pedestrians at all times. New Jersey law states that drivers must stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, obey speed limits and avoid blocking/parking in crosswalks.

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Lesson 4 continued

Drive at the proper speed.

Teach your new driver that the speed limit means the maximum speed allowed by law. But, under some conditions, the speed limit could be too fast. If the weather is bad, he or she may need to slow down. Drivers may need to go more slowly at night. Explain that driving at the proper speed means driving:

- within the driver's abilities
- within the vehicle's capabilities
- within the limits of the roadway
- according to the weather conditions.

Know when to slow down.

All drivers must slow down when approaching:

- curves
- intersections
- downhill grades.

Stay alert in "Safe Corridors."

To help reduce crashes, certain stretches of New Jersey roadways have been designated "Safe Corridors." Fines for committing various violations in these corridors—including speeding and aggressive driving—are doubled.

To learn where "Safe Corridors" are located, visit www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/traffic_orders/safe_corridors.

Keep your distance.

Although there is no perfect rule for following distance, explain that the rule of thumb most often used is to keep one car length back (about 20 feet) for each 10 miles per hour of speed. At high speeds or in bad weather, drivers need to increase their following distance.

Minimum safe following distance (car lengths)

Road condition	20 mph	30 mph	40 mph	50 mph
Ideal	2	3	4	5
Wet pavement	4	6	8	10
Gravel	4	6	8	10
Packed snow	6	9	12	
Ice	12	18		

TWO-SECOND RULE. Since most people have trouble judging distances, the two-second rule may be easier to use. It is usable at any speed. Simply pick a stationary object ahead of you, such as a sign, tree or pole. After the car ahead of you passes the object, count how long it takes for your vehicle to pass the same spot. Two seconds is a safe minimum—increase your following distance to three or four seconds when the road or weather conditions are poor.

See the ***New Jersey Driver Manual,*** Chapter 5, "Following Distances" section.

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THE NEW JERSEY MOVE OVER LAW

www.MoveOverLaw.com

Move over—to help protect those who are helping protect us.

Drivers must move over one lane when they approach stationary emergency vehicles, tow trucks and other highway safety vehicles with red, blue and/or amber flashing lights. If it's not safe to move over, drivers must slow down below the posted speed limit. **It's the law!**

Pay attention to your lane position.

Remind your teen to try to keep the vehicle more or less in the center of the lane, not at the edges. He or she will need to make small steering changes—not sudden jerks—to keep the vehicle on the right path. Drivers should keep both of their hands on the wheel. But for sharp curves or turns, show your new driver how to use the hand-over-hand motion.

Discuss the importance of periodically checking mirrors to see what is happening behind and to the sides of the vehicle, and using head checks for blind spots.

Be careful at all intersections.

As your new driver approaches an intersection, he or she should slow down, look both ways, and be prepared to stop or to get safely out of the way. Your new driver should also:

- not pass or change lanes
- be aware of vehicles following behind—will they be able to stop if necessary?

When stopped at the intersection, your teen should:

- look left, right, then left again, checking for oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

Change lanes carefully.

Tell your teen to always:

- Use the turn signal in advance, giving other vehicles plenty of warning.
- Check for traffic on all sides, including in all blind spots.

Work Zone Safety

Work zones present a particular risk for new drivers. An inexperienced driver is less likely to know what precautions to take to stay safe within a work zone. Nationally, a teen driver is killed every three days, and seven are injured each day, in crashes that happen in work zones.

Help protect your new driver by practicing maneuvering through work zones. Make sure that he or she understands what the posted signs mean, and the importance of obeying them.

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Lesson 4 continued

Know who has the right of way.

Explain that all drivers must yield to traffic and stop for pedestrians. A driver must also stop:

- at an intersection with a stop sign
- where there is a red light*
- where there is a flashing red light
- for a pedestrian in a crosswalk or an intersection
- when a traffic officer orders him or her to stop
- when there is a yield sign and traffic on the through road is too close
- when a school bus flashes red lights and picks up and lets off children
- when coming from an alley, a private driveway or a parking lot
- at a bridge span that is about to open for boat traffic
- for a blind pedestrian using a white or metallic-colored walking cane, or a trained guide dog
- at a railroad crossing.

Be careful in merging traffic.

Failure to yield is one of the top 3 causes of teen crashes. Be sure to practice merging into and out of traffic with an emphasis on yielding the right of way.

When merging: Tell your teen that he or she must yield the right of way to moving traffic. Other drivers do not have to change lanes to allow him or her to enter.

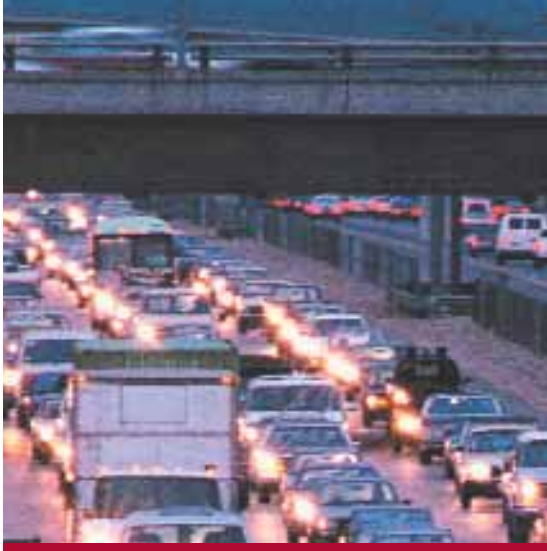
When allowing others to merge: If it is safe, he or she can change lanes to allow vehicles to merge. Your new driver should check mirrors and blind spots, and—if it is safe to change lanes—use his or her turn signal before leaving the lane. If it is unsafe to change lanes, your teen may still be able to accelerate or decelerate to allow others to merge (provided it is safe to do so).

Pass only when it is absolutely safe.

Teach your new driver to take precautions when passing. For example, your teen should:

- Make sure he or she is in a legal passing zone.
- Not tailgate (not crowd the vehicle to be passed).
- Make sure road conditions and his or her vehicle are safe for accelerating to pass.
- Check mirrors and blind spots to ensure there is plenty of time and space.
- Use the correct turn signal.
- Return to the right lane when the vehicle that was passed is visible in the rearview mirror. In 2-way traffic, your teen must return to the right lane before coming within 200 feet of any oncoming vehicle.

*A driver may turn right on red only where permitted after a full stop, and only after yielding to traffic and pedestrians crossing on green.

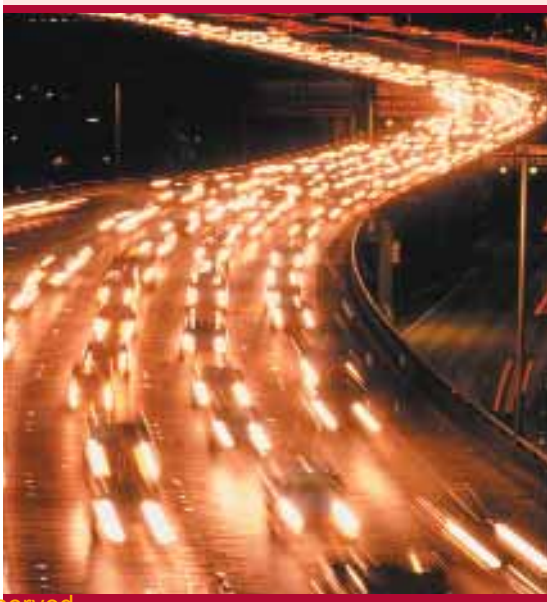


Know when not to pass.

Explain that a driver may not pass:

- where “DO NOT PASS” or “NO PASSING ZONE” signs are posted
- when there’s a solid yellow line on his or her side of the center line
- on hills or curves, or at intersections
- when a vehicle in front of him or her has stopped to let a pedestrian cross
- within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct, tunnel or railroad crossing.

Point out that it is against the law to pull off the roadway to pass on the right.



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Nighttime driving

Young drivers need nighttime driving experience to build safe driving skills. Be sure your new driver has mastered basic driving skills before going out to practice at night. Start on less-traveled roadways. Explain the need to drive more slowly at night. Point out that visibility is reduced in all directions.

Here are some precautions you can take to ensure safe nighttime driving practice for your new driver. Teach your teen to:

- **keep the headlights on between sunset and sunrise**
- **use low beams within 500 feet of oncoming vehicles or within 300 feet of a vehicle he or she is driving behind**
- **not look directly at oncoming headlights—he or she should watch the right edge of his or her lane, checking the other vehicle's position every few seconds.**

Turn to the tracking progress checklist on page 16 to see a complete list of the driving skills covered in Lesson 4.

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Lesson 4
Tracking progress checklist

Don't move on to Lesson 5 until your new driver has demonstrated a mastery of the driving skills listed below. If you find he or she needs work with any of the items on the list, continue to practice together.

Completed	Needs work	General skills
		looks at least 12-15 seconds down the road to see what is developing ahead
		stays focused on the road and avoids common driving distractions
		slows down for curves, intersections and downhill grades
		is familiar with New Jersey's "Safe Corridors"
		keeps 2 seconds behind other vehicles when possible
		lengthens distance behind other vehicles at night or in poor weather
		keeps in center of lane
		keeps both hands on the wheel
		checks mirrors regularly
		steers smoothly
		slows down, looks both ways, and is prepared to stop (or to get safely out of the way) when approaching an intersection

Completed	Needs work	Changing lanes and passing skills
		checks mirrors and blind spots before changing lanes
		uses turn signal before changing lanes
		does not tailgate before passing another vehicle
		before passing, checks mirrors and blind spots
		rechecks mirrors
		uses turn signal before pulling out to pass
		changes lanes smoothly
		allows safe distance before returning to right lane
		does not pass in unsafe zones

		Merging skills
		uses turn signal
		yields right of way
		checks mirrors and blind spots
		enters proper driving lane when it's safe
		adjusts to a safe distance between vehicles
		identifies a merging vehicle
		changes lanes (if safe) to allow a merging vehicle to enter traffic

Notes:

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Lesson 5: Parking practice

Most new drivers are anxious about learning to park. Practice these parking situations together. Review “Backing the vehicle” on page 9 when helping your new driver learn how to exit a parking space.

Parallel parking

Entering the space:

- Put on the correct turn signal.
- Check mirrors to see if traffic behind you is slowing. (Don’t stop unless it is safe to do so.)
- Stop where your steering wheel is even with the steering wheel of the vehicle in front of the parking space.
- Back up and turn toward the curb until the vehicle is at a 45-degree angle heading into the parking space.
- Turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction and continue backing slowly.
- Check behind and ahead of you, making sure not to hit any vehicles or pedestrians.
- Stop when you are about a foot from the vehicle in back. Center your vehicle by pulling forward.

Exiting the space:

- Put on the correct turn signal.
- Check for oncoming traffic and pedestrians.
- Back up until your vehicle is about a foot in front of the vehicle behind you.
- Check again for traffic and pedestrians, making sure you don’t miss blind spots.
- Turn the wheel and slowly pull forward into the driving lane.
- Avoid crossing the center line.

Downhill and uphill parking

Downhill (with/without a curb):

- Put on the correct turn signal.
- Check mirrors for pedestrians and to see if traffic is slowing.
- Pull into the parking space, to within about a foot of the road edge or curb.
- Stop and turn the wheels toward the road edge or curb.
- Put the car in park (first gear on a standard transmission), and set the emergency brake.

Uphill with/without a curb:

- Park as described above.
- Turn wheels away from curb. Let the vehicle roll back until a front tire touches the curb. If there is no curb, turn wheels sharply toward the road edge.

Reentering traffic:

- Put on the correct turn signal.
- Release the emergency brake.
- Check mirrors and blind spots for traffic and pedestrians.
- Straighten wheels and back slowly (if necessary), then move forward, turning toward the traffic lane.
- Yield to any oncoming traffic.

Angle and 90-degree parking

Entering the space:

- Give a vehicle that is pulling out plenty of room.
- Use the correct turn signal.
- Drive forward until you can see the whole parking space.
- Turn in, without crowding the vehicles on either side, and pull forward until the vehicle is completely in the space.

Exiting the space:

- Check for traffic and pedestrians before backing up.
- Back out straight, making sure to clear the other vehicles.
- Check the front of the vehicle when beginning to turn, to make sure it swings clear of the other vehicles.
- Continue to check for traffic and pedestrians as you straighten the vehicle in the proper lane.

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Lesson 5
Tracking progress checklist

Have your new driver demonstrate a mastery of parking skills. If you find he or she needs work with any of the items on the list, continue to practice together. Congratulate your teen—this is the last checklist!
(Pages 19-21 give talking points on driving responsibilities and laws that you can share with your new driver.)

Completed	Needs work	Parking downhill (with or without curb)
		uses turn signal
		checks for traffic and pedestrians
		pulls in to within about 1 ft. of curb
		turns wheels toward curb
		puts vehicle in park (first gear if standard transmission)
		puts on emergency brake
		Parking uphill (with or without curb)
		uses turn signal
		checks for traffic and pedestrians
		pulls in to within about 1 ft. of curb
		turns wheels away from curb
		lets vehicle roll back until a front tire touches the curb
		puts vehicle in park/first gear
		puts on emergency brake
		Reentering traffic, uphill or downhill
		uses turn signal
		releases emergency brake
		checks for traffic and pedestrians
		straightens wheels before moving
		checks blind spots
		reenters traffic safely

Completed	Needs work	Parallel parking
		uses turn signal
		checks for traffic and pedestrians
		correctly positions vehicle in preparation for backing
		rechecks for traffic and pedestrians
		correctly backs vehicle into parking space
		stops before pulling forward
		correctly centers vehicle
		Exiting the space/ reentering traffic
		checks available backing space
		uses turn signal
		checks for traffic and pedestrians in front and back
		exits space safely
		does not cross center line
		Angle and 90-degree parking
		uses turn signal
		moves forward until whole parking space is in view
		turns safely into parking space
		pulls entire vehicle into space
		leaves enough space between other vehicles
		Exiting the space
		checks for traffic and pedestrians before backing
		exits space safely
		stays within proper traffic lane

Notes:

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Talking points:
Road responsibility

Your new driver has a lot to learn—and you play an important role in his or her education! Discuss these key points often to help your teen stay safe on the road.

Distraction, coupled with inexperience, is the number one cause of teen crashes in New Jersey. Speed is the second leading cause.

Distractions can be deadly.

Distracted drivers are more likely to get into a crash. While driving, remind your teen to avoid:

- texting
- using a handheld or hands-free cell phone
- eating, drinking or smoking
- doing personal care activities (combing hair, applying makeup, etc.)
- looking for things or reading
- making equipment adjustments
- being distracted by passengers.

Aggressive drivers can be dangerous.

Teach your new driver to avoid making an already aggressive driver angrier. For example, your teen should:

- get out of the way and let the driver pass
- avoid eye contact
- not "take it personally" or try to "teach a lesson"
- go to a safe place, if he or she is followed.

If your teen notices anyone driving unsafely, he or she can pull over in a safe spot and dial #77 or 1-888-SAF-ROAD (1-888-723-7623) for the New Jersey State Police dispatch office.

Speeding can be a deadly factor in a crash.

Make sure your new driver understands the importance of obeying speed limits. He or she should:

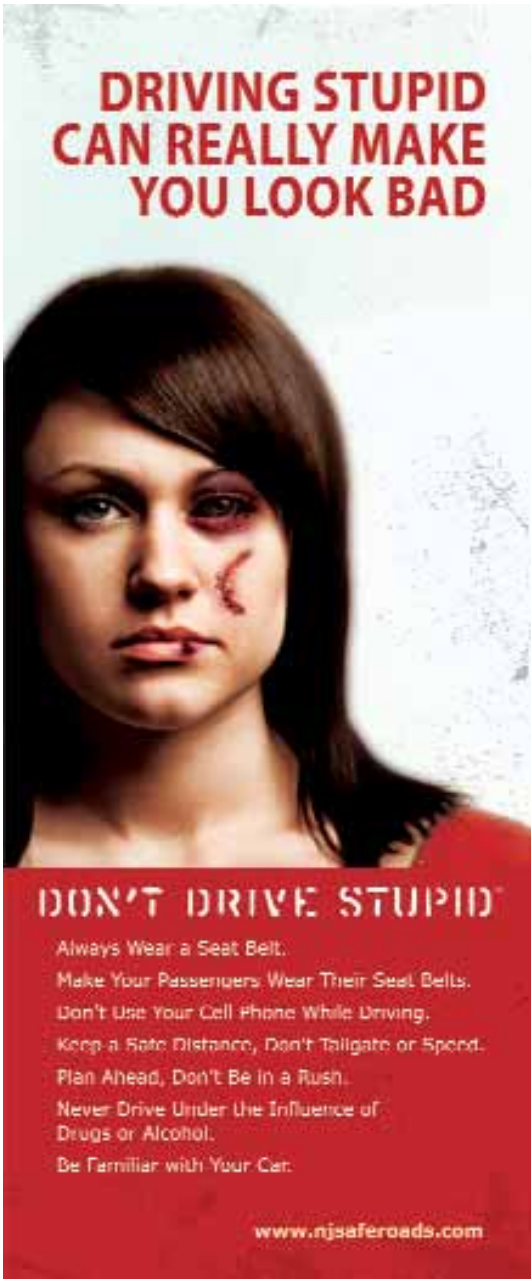
- Always drive at a safe speed. (Remind your new driver that the speed limit is the maximum speed allowed under normal conditions. The safe speed is the one that allows him or her to keep complete control of the vehicle.)
- Drive with the flow of traffic, within the speed limit, but not so slowly as to block other vehicles moving at normal speeds.

Emergency vehicles always have the right of way.

Both drivers and pedestrians must yield the right of way to law enforcement vehicles, fire engines and any other emergency vehicles using sirens and/or flashing lights. Tell your new driver to slow down and pull to the right of the road, if possible, and to always avoid blocking an intersection.

Special conditions call for special precautions.

Rain, fog, snow, and ice can affect visibility, road surface conditions and a vehicle's performance. Teach your new driver to slow down and keep at least twice the normal stopping distance. A wet road can cause skidding or hydroplaning.



Remember, the example you set matters. Keep it positive—and steer your teen toward a lifetime of safe driving!

served

Talking points:
Driving and the law

Driving is a privilege—not a right! All drivers have important legal responsibilities. Teach your new driver about the following situations.

If your new driver is stopped by a law enforcement officer,

he or she should:

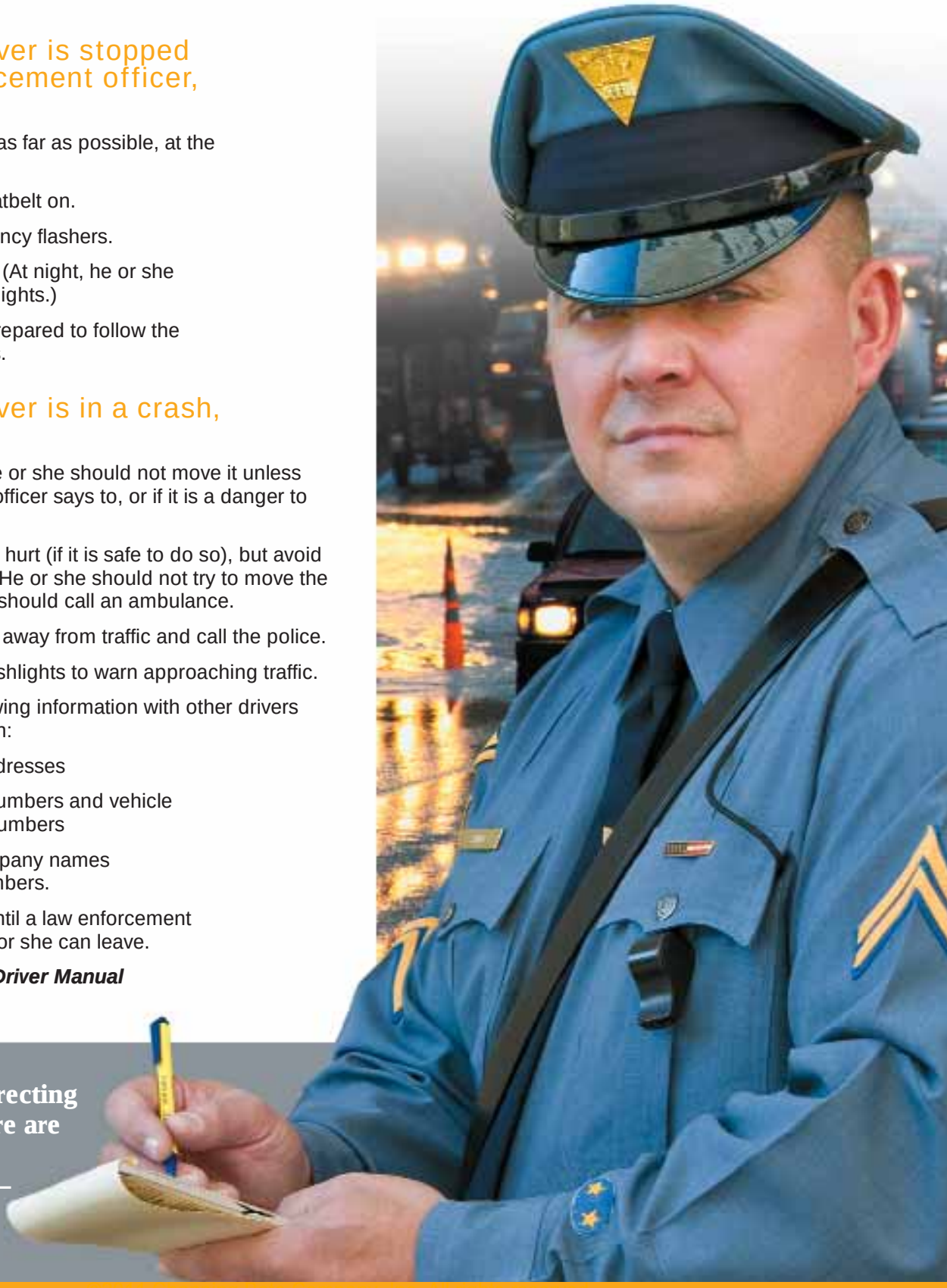
- Pull off to the right, as far as possible, at the first safe location.
- Leave his or her seatbelt on.
- Turn on the emergency flashers.
- Turn off the engine. (At night, he or she may put on interior lights.)
- Sit calmly and be prepared to follow the officer's instructions.

If your new driver is in a crash,

he or she should:

- Stop the vehicle. He or she should not move it unless a law enforcement officer says to, or if it is a danger to other drivers.
- Help anyone who is hurt (if it is safe to do so), but avoid contact with blood. He or she should not try to move the injured person, but should call an ambulance.
- Find a safe location away from traffic and call the police.
- Use reflectors or flashlights to warn approaching traffic.
- Exchange the following information with other drivers involved in the crash:
  - —names and addresses
  - —license plate numbers and vehicle identification numbers
  - —insurance company names and policy numbers.
- Stay at the scene until a law enforcement officer says that he or she can leave.

See the ***New Jersey Driver Manual*** for more information.



If an officer is directing traffic where there are traffic signals, obey the officer—not the signals.

Talking points:

Driving under the influence

Help strengthen your new driver's judgment by discussing these key topics together. (See the *New Jersey Driver Manual* for more information.)

Alcohol

Drinking by anyone under the age of 21 is illegal in the state of New Jersey. And, driving under the influence by anyone, any time, is illegal. It's also very dangerous—and sometimes fatal.

BAC

A law enforcement officer may measure the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of any driver who appears to be driving under the influence. BAC is the percentage of alcohol in the body. It can be measured by testing blood, breath or urine. The breath test is the most common test.

Even one drink can impair the ability to drive safely and raise BAC over the zero tolerance* level.

Other substances

Other drugs affect driving, too. Marijuana, for example, can impair vision, coordination, reaction times, and short-term memory. It can also cause a shortened attention span. New Jersey prohibits driving while under the influence of any illegal drug.

Combining alcohol and other substances, including legal prescription drugs, is especially risky. The effects of the alcohol and/or the other drugs may be intensified. This can impair driving skills, judgment and alertness—and possibly lead to coma or death.

***Zero tolerance in New Jersey means that any licensed driver under 21 driving with a BAC of .01% or higher will have his or her license suspended for 30-90 days. For drivers 21 and older, it's illegal to drive with a BAC of .08% or higher. See the *New Jersey Driver Manual* for more details.**

Remind your new driver that any drug—prescription or nonprescription—can impair his or her driving ability!

GDL requirements and restrictions

The Early-Bird Road and the Young Adult Road have different steps, but they both lead to an unrestricted basic driver license.

The Early-Bird Road

1. To get a **Special Learners Permit** applicants must:

- be at least 16 years old
- get the signed consent of a parent or guardian
- take an approved behind-the-wheel driver training course
- pass MVC's Knowledge and Vision tests
- pay the required fee.

After applicants complete a driver training course, MVC will validate their Special Learners Permit and they can move to step 2.

2. To practice **Supervised Driving** your teen must:

- display the GDL decals on the vehicle
- be accompanied, in the passenger seat, by a licensed NJ driver who is at least 21 years of age and has been licensed for at least 3 years
- follow the Special Learners Permit driving restrictions
- practice for at least 6 months.

3. To get a **Probationary Drivers License** your teen must:

- be at least 17 years old
- complete the supervised driving period without any suspensions or postponements
- pass MVC's Road Test.

4. For **Unsupervised Driving** your teen must:

- display the GDL decals on the vehicle
- follow the Probationary Drivers License restrictions
- drive for at least 12 months.

5. To get a **Basic Driver License** your teen must:

- be at least 18 years old
- complete the unsupervised driving period without any suspensions or postponements
- pay the required fee.

The Young Adult Road

1. To get an **Examination Permit** applicants must:

- be at least 17 years old
- get the signed consent of a parent or guardian
- pass MVC's Knowledge and Vision tests
- pay the required fee.

After applicants complete the steps above, MVC will validate their Examination Permit and they can move to step 2.

2. To practice **Supervised Driving** your teen must:

- display the GDL decals on the vehicle
- be accompanied, in the passenger seat, by a NJ licensed driver who is at least 21 years of age and has been licensed for at least 3 years
- follow the Examination Permit driving restrictions
- practice for at least 6 months (or 3 months if the applicant is over 21).

3. To get a **Probationary Drivers License** your teen must:

- complete the supervised driving period without any suspensions or postponements
- pass MVC's Road Test.

4. For **Unsupervised Driving** your teen must:

- display the GDL decals on the vehicle
- follow the Probationary Drivers License restrictions
- drive for at least 12 months.

5. To get a **Basic Driver License** your teen must:

- be at least 18 years old
- complete the unsupervised driving period without any suspensions or postponements
- pay the required fee.

Restrictions

Special Learners and Examination Permit, and Probationary Drivers (under 21 years of age):

- may not drive between 11:01 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.
- may not use cell phones (handheld or hands-free) or other portable, wireless electronic devices (i.e., MP3 players, GPS)

  (Note: This restriction also applies to all Examination Permit and Probationary Drivers over 21 years of age.)
- may transport only one passenger. Restriction is waived if driver is accompanied by parent or guardian or if passengers are the driver's children.

All drivers and passengers must wear seatbelts. It's the GDL law!

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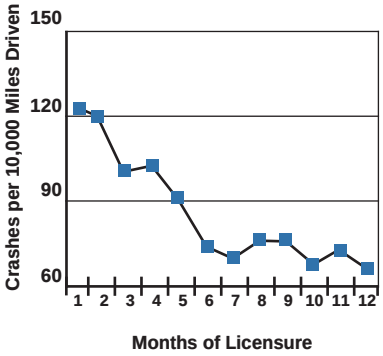
New Jersey's Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program

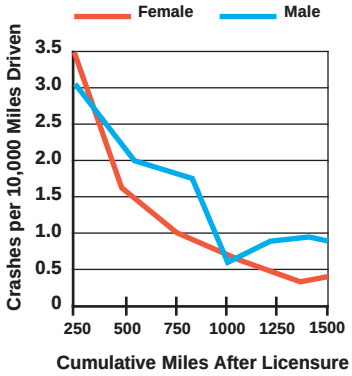
Cultivating safe driving skills for life

Instruction and experience

Studies show that a young driver's risk of being involved in a car crash is highest during the first 12-24 months of driving. With this in mind, New Jersey designed its Graduated Driver License (GDL) program to provide young drivers with the instruction and driving experience they need to become a safe driver for life. The goal of the GDL program is to protect young drivers, as well as their passengers and other motorists. As a parent or guardian, you play a key role in helping your teen through this process.



Source: Mayhew, Simpson & Pak, 2002



Source: McCartt, Shabanova & Leaf, 2001

Practice driving sessions

Experience and amount of time behind the wheel lower your teen's risk of being involved in a car crash. Make time to practice driving with your teen as often as you can. Try to expose your teen to different driving situations each time you go out. For example, try driving at night or on wet roads. Also, offer positive support. (See page 4-5 for more on being a careful and supportive teacher.) Practicing together during the permit phase of the GDL program will better equip your teen to handle different situations when he or she is alone.

The more passengers, the more risk

Teen drivers who drive with one teen passenger have twice the risk of a fatal crash as teens driving alone. The risk is five times greater when two or more teen passengers are in the car. You can lower your teen's risk by enforcing a passenger restriction at home. Talk to your teen about the restriction, why it's important and how to deal with peer pressure.

Getting involved

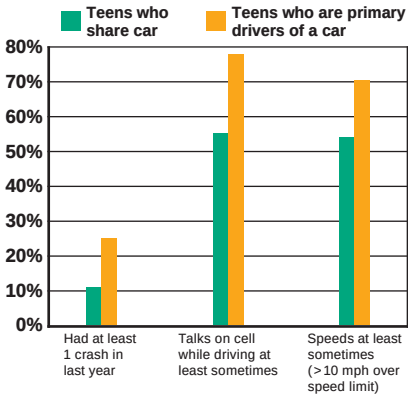
Teens who report their parents are supportive and set clear rules are half as likely to crash. They are also less likely to drive while intoxicated, speed or use cell phones while driving compared to teens who report their parents are uninvolved.

Primary versus shared access

Limiting access increases safety. Teens who have primary access to a vehicle (their own car, or no restrictions on the use of the family car) are more than twice as likely to report being in a crash than teens who share a car.

You can control your teen's access by requiring him or her to:

- ask for the car keys
- tell you where he or she is going and who else will be in the car
- remind you about curfew and passenger restrictions you have put in place.



Risk Factors for Teens Based on Vehicle Access

Source: García-España, Ginsburg, Durbin, Elliott & Winston, 2009

The parent-teen driver agreement

Use the parent-teen driver agreement on page 24 as a guide for helping you set and enforce rules for your teen. As your teen exhibits responsible driving behavior and develops new skills, you can gradually introduce new privileges, such as driving at night or to a high school event. If your teen breaks a rule, be consistent with consequences. (Serious issues include breaking curfew or receiving a driving violation.) While teens may look like adults, they still need limits and rules. Let your teen know these rules are not about control—they're meant to keep him or her safe. Remember, parenting consistency is key to building safe driving habits.

Your supervision and guidance, along with the information in this guide, can help your new driver reduce his or her risk of being involved in a crash.

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Parent-teen driver agreement

This parent-teen driver agreement is meant to help parents and teen drivers work together to help make the driver-training process less stressful for everyone involved. Being clear about what you expect from your new driver, as well as what he or she expects from you, helps you work as a team.

Rules for everyone to follow

I will always:

- make sure everyone in the car uses his or her seatbelts correctly
- maintain a safe speed, including accelerating and decelerating appropriately
- avoid aggressive drivers
- always stop for pedestrians
- change lanes carefully and appropriately.

I will never:

- drive while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or ride with someone else who is impaired
- drive distracted, including using cell phones, texting or listening to loud music
- drive recklessly or aggressively
- pass drivers or merge with traffic when it is unsafe to do so.

For parents

I will:

- be a positive role model
- provide a safe vehicle in good working order
- sign all required documents for a Special Learners or Examination Permit
- help pay all required fees
- be available for practice driving.

For teens

I will:

- take an approved behind-the-wheel driver training course
- pass MVC's Knowledge and Vision tests
- complete the supervised driving period without any suspensions or postponements
- pass MVC's Road Test.

Permit/Probationary License drivers

Use the practice driving log on pages 25-26 to record your time behind the wheel. Remember:

Permit holders and Probationary License drivers:

- may not drive between 11:01 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.
- may transport only one passenger. This restriction is waived if the driver is accompanied by a parent or guardian or if the passengers are the driver's children. (Permit holders and Probationary License drivers over the age of 21 are not subject to passenger or hour restrictions.)

Start date:

_____

Notes/special considerations:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signatures

I will follow all of the above conditions during the driver-training process:

Teen: _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____

For more information about parent-teen driver agreements, visit www.njteendriving.com.

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Practice driving log

Date	Conditions & skills **EX: Night driving, turns**	Amount of time	Initials

Practice driving log, cont.

Date	Conditions & skills **EX: Night driving, turns**	Amount of time	Initials

New Jersey

teendriving

The parent resource for teen driving safety

Visit www.NJteenDriving.com today! Informed parents create safer drivers.

Home | Risk Factors | GDL | Laws and Legislation | Driver Education | Technology | Resources | News | Videos

Why is your new teen driver at risk?

Overconfidence and an "it can't happen to me" attitude.

LEARN MORE ›

For Parents

Being the parent of a new teen driver can be challenging. Here are useful topics to help you.

- Quick Tips for Keeping Your Teen Safe
- Parent to Teen Driving Contracts
- Educational videos
- Parent resources

For Teens

Learn what other teens have to say about driving. Visit our website and join our groups.

- UGotBrains.com
- Facebook®
- Twitter™

BIANJ

Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
825 Georges Road, 2nd Floor, North Brunswick, NJ 08902
732-745-0200 • www.bianj.org

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New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

Motor Vehicle Agencies

Call 1-888-486-3339 toll free in New Jersey, 1-609-292-6500 from out of state or 1-609-292-5120 (TTY) for more information, or visit www.njmvc.gov.

Driver testing centers

Driver Testing Centers (DTC) are generally open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Before your teen takes his or her road test, he or she must:

- purchase a permit at a motor vehicle agency
- pass the vision and knowledge tests at any DTC (no appointment is necessary)
- make a road test appointment at any DTC (may be made online at www.njmvc.gov).

Find more information online.

- To locate **Regional Service Centers, Licensed Driving Schools and other resources** for your new driver, visit www.njmvc.gov.
- For a complete list of **DTC hours and directions,** visit www.njmvc.gov. Click on the county of your choice.
- For more information on safe driving, visit www.njsaferoads.com.

With your support and encouragement, your new driver can learn to drive confidently—and safely.

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