



## Starting Teens in the Driver Seat at Your School



How you can help stop  
the number-one killer of teenagers  
in America

**t-driver.com**



**Help stop the number-one killer  
of teenagers in America.**

# Introduction

**Too many teens are dying. You can help stop that.**



While in high school, you'll probably never do anything more dangerous than drive a car — or ride in one that's driven by someone your age. Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in America.

- About **6,000** teens per year are killed in traffic crashes in the United States. That's like loading up a 737 jet with high school students and crashing it every week for an entire year!
- 16-year-olds are about **5 TIMES** more likely to be involved in a fatal crash.
- Car crashes are responsible for more than 40% of teen deaths.
- For every teenager who dies in a crash, more than 50 others are badly hurt.

## So...why is this happening?

Simple — young drivers just don't have enough driving experience. In addition, most young drivers don't know the dangers they face every time they get in the driver's seat. Since they are not aware of the dangers, they don't know how to avoid them. In just about every crash involving a young driver, you'll find common factors that contributed to the crash.

## What are the common factors?

- **Driving at night/fatigue**
- **Speeding/racing**
- **Distractions** — like cell phones, texting and too many teen passengers
- **Not wearing a safety belt**
- **Alcohol/drugs**

Experts call this an epidemic, and they're right. It's out of control. But this program, **"Teens in the Driver Seat,"** intends to turn things around, and your school can be part of it.

For years, driving safety advertising campaigns have all been pretty much the same. They've all been put together by adults — parents, teachers, police officers and politicians...all telling you what you need to do. But Teens in the Driver Seat is different. It is teens talking to teens about the top driving dangers. The program is saving lives and it can work in your school too. Don't let any more of your friends die.

**Start Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) in your school today and make a difference.**

# Driving Factors

Understand the teen driver safety problem.

## Driving at night/fatigue

- 59% of teen crash deaths occur between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.  
*(Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)*
- 90% of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is very limited at night  
*(National Safety Council)*
- Fatigue has the same effect as being legally drunk, when a teen is driving after midnight  
*(Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)*

## Distractions — like cell phones, texting and too many teen passengers

- Two out of three teens that die in motor vehicle crashes are in vehicles driven by other teens *(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA))*
- A driver who talks on a mobile phone is four times more likely to be involved in a serious crash, even when using a hands-free device  
*(Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)*
- The chances of a fatal crash increase significantly with the addition of each teen passenger *(Chen et al)*



## Speeding/racing

- About 50% of young driver and passenger deaths occur in speed-related crashes *(NHTSA)*
- When teens drive with other teen passengers, they tend to drive faster  
*(National Institute of Health and Westat)*
- Accelerating from 30 mph to 60 mph quadruples the distance needed to stop  
*(Drive and Stay Alive.com)*

## Not wearing a safety belt

- 64% of young drivers and passengers who die in motor vehicle crashes are not wearing safety belts *(NHTSA)*
- Safety belts, when used properly, reduce the number of serious traffic injuries by 50% and fatalities by about 70%  
*(James Madison University Office of Public Safety)*
- Young male drivers, teen passengers in the backseat and people living in rural areas are among those least likely to buckle up *(NHTSA)*

## Alcohol/drugs

- About three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their life *(NHTSA)*
- 65% of young drivers in fatal crashes who have been drinking are not wearing safety belts *(NHTSA)*



Now that you know the facts,  
where do you go from here?



# Step 1—

## Identify project leaders and workers.

### Identify TDS team members.

#### Who should drive the program at your school?

Anybody can. It can be the student council, an athletic association or a combination of several different groups. You could even create a new group altogether. This group can also exist outside of your school — like a city teen court or youth commission.

#### Do you know students who are looking for community service projects?

Maybe your school has a community service requirement. If so, TDS could be just what you — and your school — need.

#### Ask yourself: “Who would other students listen to?”

That’s who should be involved in TDS. Assume that everyone may want to help, even those students who are not currently involved in another program. You need all the messengers you can get, and it’s best to have many different kinds of messengers. Everyone has a peer group, no matter how small it may be. The more peer groups that you involve, the better chance you have to succeed.

#### Do we need to work with an adult?

An adult teacher/sponsor can help drive the program at your school. Some examples of a teacher/sponsor are a teacher, counselor, school nurse, student council sponsor, safety officer or any school administrator. Creating a formal “TDS Club” at your school with an adult sponsor can help make your program even more successful.



## Step 2 –

### Find out what people know.

Before telling your peers about the top driving dangers, you need to find out just how much your classmates know about these problems. This is the measurement process. The measurement is done through short assessments provided by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) — your partner in the TDS program — to find out what your school knows about driving dangers and behaviors among teenagers.

The measurement process is completed in two phases. The initial assessment should be done before sharing the TDS facts with your classmates. Additional assessments should be conducted after you have shared the TDS program with your school.



**TTI will help you conduct assessments at your school to measure what students know about driving dangers.**

It's very important that most of the students in your school participate in the assessments. For large schools, having at least 500 students participate is helpful. Try to include a variety of students — to include all grade levels, and both drivers and non-drivers.

#### Why is this measurement process important?

- Doing assessments at the beginning of the project helps you decide what messages you need to spend the most time on. Every school is different, so this step helps you customize your TDS program so it will do the greatest good.
- After sharing the TDS program with your peers, the additional assessments help you know if the program was successful. These assessments will be taken several months after the program is in place, and the results will be compared with the initial assessment to see how your awareness level and behavior has changed. As an example, you might want to take the pre-program assessment at the beginning of the school year and then take the post-program assessment in April.

### TIP

Assessments can be done during class times:

During study hall  
During a computer class  
During English/math/science classes



## Step 3 –

### Tell them what they need to know.

Now it's time to share TDS with your classmates. This is the step where most of the really visible work happens.

**Jumpstart your free program with these existing tools:**

- The TDS website, **t-driver.com**, which has lots of information, from teen stories to school highlights, and so much more
- **Promotional materials**, like neon-green wristbands, temporary tattoos, vinyl banners and air fresheners to help spread the word
- **T-shirts and jerseys** for your TDS team members
- **TV messages and radio spots** that you could ask your local stations to use on the air
- **Links to information** on teen driving statistics and recent legislation
- The **TDS logo** for you to use in creative and new ways

In addition, your TTI-TDS regional rep will always be available to assist you.



TDS website



Up to 1,000 free promotional items are provided in start-up kits for teens in Texas.



Promotional materials, like neon-green wristbands, temporary tattoos, vinyl banners and air fresheners, are available to help spread the word.





# • • • • • Ideas to help you get started

## Looking for ways to help get the TDS message out in your school?

Consider these ideas suggested and implemented by TDS teams:

- Announce TDS to your local news media
- Advertise the TDS program at sports events and school programs by printing the TDS logo and t-driver.com web address on event programs or on the back of admission tickets
- Have random safety belt checks in your school parking lot and give out a promo item to those wearing their safety belts
- Put TDS flyers on cars at school during a Safety Week
- Ask a local billboard company to sponsor a TDS billboard
- Draw a chalk outline of a body in the hallway of your school with a TDS message inside
- Construct a paper chain to display in a common area to show how many teens die each year
- Write about TDS in your school newspaper or yearbook
- Highlight TDS on your school's website
- Add a link to the TDS website on your personal social networking web page
- Read a "tip of the day" on the PA system at your school promoting safe driving
- Work with different organizations to help spread the TDS message (Scouts, churches, clubs, driving schools, etc.)



### Seasonally themed ideas

- o **Football Season:** Pass out cardboard fans at football games with the top five dangers listed on the back.
- o **Halloween:** "You thought Halloween was scary!" Warn classmates about top driving dangers.
- o **Valentine's Day:** Set up a booth to send candygrams or flowers to their crush and include a card with a catchy safety slogan, like "Don't break my heart, drive smart."
- o **St. Patrick's Day:** "You may not always be so lucky." List the top five driving dangers on shamrocks and post them around your school.
- o **Prom:** Have parents valet park cars at prom and then leave a TDS air freshener in the student's car.
- o **Graduation:** Kiss a senior goodbye — and give candy kisses to seniors with TDS safety messages attached.



Get creative with these tools and come up with your own ideas — this is your TDS program!



## • Step 4 –

### Keep the program going.

By getting the right message to others, you can help stop the epidemic that kills more young people in this country than any other cause. But, it's not a one-time effort.

It's not enough to get the right message out — you have to get the message out time and time again so that your classmates are reminded about the dangers and what to do about them. New teens are learning to drive nearly all the time in your community.

Now that you've been working on the program for several months, find out how much progress you have made by conducting an additional assessment. This assessment can help you decide if you need to adjust your TDS program and spend more time on certain messages or activities. You might find that people really get the message about nighttime driving and cell phones, but that they still don't get the message about having too many teens in the car. After receiving your assessment results, you may need to adjust your message, but it still needs to focus on the five major teen driver dangers:

- **Driving at night/fatigue**
- **Speeding/racing**
- **Distractions** — like cell phones, texting and too many teen passengers
- **Not wearing a safety belt**
- **Alcohol/drugs**

**This tragedy didn't become an epidemic overnight. We won't solve it overnight, either. But the sooner you get started, the sooner you can make a difference.**

## TIP

Use your existing school resources to best fit your program for your school:

Theater/drama class  
Art class  
Video technology class  
Health class  
School nurses  
School resource officers

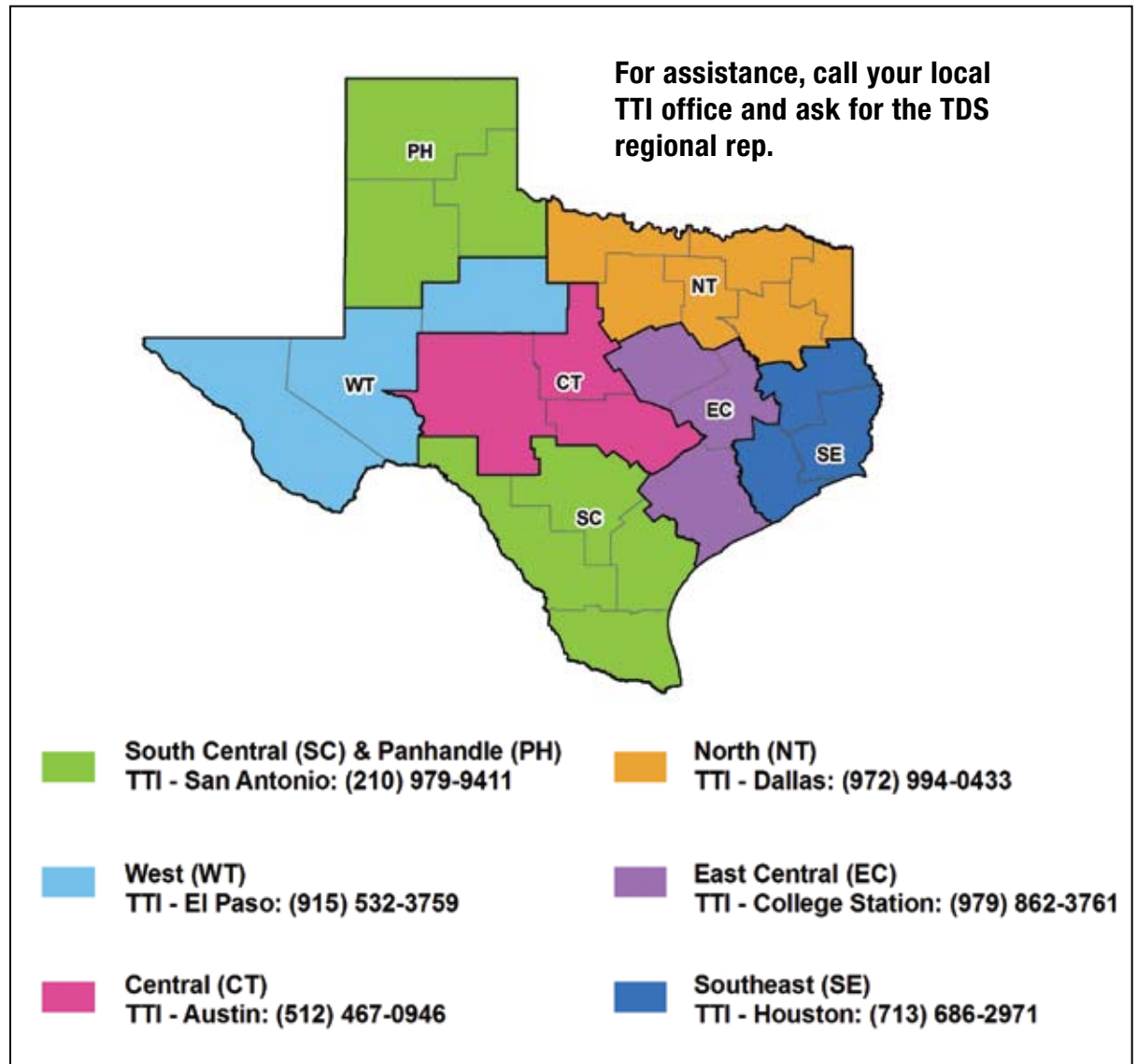
### Did you know that next year you can continue the TDS program?

Begin planning for the new school year now. Remember that new students will start next year that have not yet heard the TDS message. TTI will also continue to support your TDS program by providing additional promotional items, updated website content, regional rep assistance and much more.



# Notes

Contact your regional rep and brainstorm ideas for your TDS program here.



For assistance outside the state of Texas, please contact the TTI - San Antonio office.

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# Keep Thinking

**Exchange**  
**(when it gets darker ear**

**Winter holiday break**

**Spring break/prom/gradua**

**promo items?**  
**e purchased through**  
**You can raise**

**Do you need more promo items?**  
Additional items can be purchased through  
TTI at a discounted rate. You can raise  
money to purchase more items by:

- Having a car wash or bake sale
- Checking school budgets for additional funding
- Finding a local company to sponsor you

**Don't forget,  
you drive the  
message.**





# Help stop the number-one killer of teenagers in America.



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**t-driver.com**