STARTING TEENS IN THE DRIVER SEAT®
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

A PEER-TO-PEER SAFETY PROGRAM TO HELP STOP
THE NUMBER-ONE KILLER OF TEENAGERS IN AMERICA
Keep our drive alive.
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 another teenager. Car crashes are the leading cause of injury and death for teens in America.

• About 3,500 teens per year are killed in traffic crashes in the United States. (NHTSA) That’s like loading up a 737 jet with high school students and crashing it every other week for an entire year!
• 16-year-olds are about 4 TIMES more likely to be involved in a fatal crash (IIHS)
• Car crashes are responsible for more than 40% of teen deaths (CDC)
• For every teenager killed, more than 50 others are seriously injured, totalling nearly 500,000 teens who are injured each year in car crashes (NHTSA)

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.

The good news is these injuries and deaths can be prevented.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON FACTORS?

• Driving at night/fatigue
• Speeding/racing
• Distractions — like cell phones, texting and other 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®,” is turning things around, and your school can be part of it.

For years, most driving safety campaigns have been pretty much the same. They’ve been put together by adults — parents, teachers, police officers and politicians…all telling you what you need to do. But this program is different. It is teens, just like you, talking to other teens about the top driving dangers. Don’t let any of your friends die or get seriously injured. Teens in the Driver Seat saves lives, and it can work to save the lives of your friends too.

Start Teens in the Driver Seat® in your community today and make a difference.
### DRIVING FACTORS

**Understand the teen driver safety problem.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVING AT NIGHT/FATIGUE</th>
<th>SPEEDING/RACING</th>
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<tr>
<td>61% of teen crash deaths occur between 6pm and 6am (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety [IIHS])</td>
<td>About 50% of young driver and passenger deaths occur in speed-related crashes (NHTSA)</td>
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<td>90% of a driver’s reaction depends on vision, and vision is very limited at night (National Safety Council)</td>
<td>When teens drive with other teen passengers, they tend to drive faster (National Institute of Health and Westat)</td>
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<td>Being awake for 20 hours has the same effect as being legally drunk (National Sleep Foundation)</td>
<td>Accelerating from 30 mph to 60 mph quadruples the distance needed to stop (Drive and Stay Alive.com)</td>
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<th>DISTRACTIONS — like cell phones, texting and other teen passengers</th>
<th>NOT WEARING A SAFETY BELT</th>
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<td>Two out of three teens that die in motor vehicle crashes are in vehicles driven by other teens (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA])</td>
<td>64% of young drivers and passengers who die in motor vehicle crashes are not wearing safety belts (NHTSA)</td>
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<td>The chances of a fatal crash increase significantly with the addition of each teen passenger (Chen et al.)</td>
<td>Safety belts, when used properly, reduce the number of serious traffic injuries by 50% and fatalities by 60-70% (James Madison University Office of Public Safety)</td>
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<td>Texting and driving causes reaction time to double and those drivers have a harder time staying in their lane and maintaining a consistent speed (Texas Transportation Institute)</td>
<td>Young male drivers, teen passengers in the backseat and people living in rural areas are among those least likely to buckle up (NHTSA)</td>
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<td>A driver who talks on a cell phone is four times more likely to be involved in a serious crash, even when using a hands-free device and texting while driving has been shown to increase crash risk by up to 23 times (Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Virginia Tech)</td>
<td>ALCOHOL/DRUGS</td>
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<td>About three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their life (NHTSA)</td>
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<td>65% of young drivers in fatal crashes who have been drinking are not wearing safety belts (NHTSA)</td>
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<td>16- to 20-year-old drivers with a BAC (blood alcohol content) of .08 or higher are involved in 19% of all fatal crashes (NHTSA)</td>
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Now that you know the facts, where do you go from here?
STEP 1 –
Identify project team.

WHO SHOULD DRIVE THE PROGRAM AT OUR SCHOOL?
Anybody can. It can be the student council, an athletic association or a combination of ten to twelve representatives from 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. 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.

CAN TEENS IN THE DRIVER SEAT BE A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT?
Yes. Your school or student organization may have community service requirements. Teens in the Driver Seat could be just what you and your school need.

DO WE NEED TO WORK WITH AN ADULT?
An adult teacher/sponsor can help drive the program at your school and help with resources you might need. Some examples of a teacher/sponsor are a teacher, counselor, school nurse, student council sponsor, safety officer or any school administrator. Creating a formal “Teens in the Driver Seat Team” at your school with an adult sponsor can help make your program even more successful.

DO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM NEED TO HAVE A DRIVER’S LICENSE?
Each year, about 25% of your school population will receive their learners permit or license. It is never too early to start telling teens about the dangers they will face and passengers also play an important role in safe teen driving. Anyone with an interest in saving teen lives can be involved. Plus, when all age groups are included on the team, the program will be more successful each school year.

CAN WE WORK WITH OTHER SCHOOLS IN OUR COMMUNITY?
Yes! Schools in your area may already have an established Teens in Driver Seat program. If not, you can introduce the program to them and work together to deliver messages and hold community activities.
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 a short assessment provided by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) — your partner in the Teens in the Driver Seat program — to find out what your school knows about driving dangers and behaviors among teenagers.

The measurement process is completed in two phases. The pre-assessment should be done before sharing the Teens in the Driver Seat facts with your classmates, ideally in the fall. Post-assessments should be conducted after you have shared the Teens in the Driver Seat program with your school, near the end of the school year.

WHY IS THIS MEASUREMENT PROCESS IMPORTANT?

• Doing pre-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 Teens in the Driver Seat program so it will do the greatest good.

• After sharing the Teens in the Driver Seat program with your peers, the post-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 pre-assessment to see how your awareness level and behavior has changed.

• Schools that complete and return both pre- and post-assessments can be recognized as an Outstanding School. Visit t-driver.com for more information.

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 — all grade levels, and both drivers and non-drivers.

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

Assessments can be done during class times:
- Study Hall
- Computer class
- English / Math / Science
- Health
STEP 3 –
Tell them what they need to know.

Now it’s time to share Teens in the Driver Seat with your classmates. This is where most of the real work happens.

Jumpstart your program with these free tools:

• **t-driver.com**, the Teens in the Driver website, has lots of information, from teen stories to school highlights, and so much more

• **Free promotional materials**, like wristbands, temporary tattoos, thumb rings and banners to help spread the word

• **T-shirts** for your Teens in the Driver Seat team members

• **TV messages and radio spots** that you could ask your local stations to use on the air or play on your school’s closed-circuit station

• **Information** on teen driving statistics and recent legislation

• The **Teens in the Driver Seat logo** for you to use in creative and new ways

In addition, your regional rep is always available to assist you. Find your regional rep on page 10.

**Free promotional materials are provided each school year for teens in Texas.**

Use free promotional items, downloadable posters and media to help spread the message.
IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

Consider these ideas to help you spread the word.

- Announce your new Teens in the Driver Seat program to your local news media
- Deliver safety messages at sports events and school programs by printing them with the Teens in the Driver Seat logo and t-driver.com web address on 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 Teens in the Driver Seat flyers on cars at school during a Safety Week
- Ask a local billboard company to sponsor a Teens in the Driver Seat billboard
- Draw a chalk outline of a body in the hallway of your school with a Teens in the Driver Seat message inside
- Construct a paper chain to display in a common area to show how many teens die each year
- Write about Teens in the Driver Seat in your school newspaper or yearbook
- Highlight Teens in the Driver Seat on your school’s website
- Add a link to the Teens in the Driver Seat 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 community organizations to help spread the message (Scouts, churches, clubs, driving schools, etc.)

SEASONALLY THEMED IDEAS

- Football Season: Pass out cardboard fans at football games with the top five dangers listed on the back.
- Halloween: “You thought Halloween was scary!” Warn classmates about top driving dangers.
- 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.”
- 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.
- Prom: Have parents valet park cars at prom and then leave a Teens in the Driver Seat air freshener in the student’s car.
- Graduation: Kiss a senior goodbye — and give candy kisses to seniors with Teens in the Driver Seat safety messages attached.

Get more ideas at t-driver.com and on our Facebook page or get creative and come up with your own ideas.
STEP 4 –

Keep the program going.

By getting the right message to others, you can help stop the epidemic that kills more teens 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 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 the post-assessment. This assessment can help you decide if you need to adjust your Teens in the Driver Seat 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 other 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 other teen passengers
• Not wearing a safety belt
• Alcohol/drugs

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

CONTINUE THE PROGRAM EVERY YEAR

Begin planning for the new school year now. Remember new students will start next year that may not have heard the Teens in the Driver Seat message. TTI will also continue to support your Teens in the Driver Seat program by providing additional promotional items, updated website content, regional rep assistance and much more.
WE’RE HERE TO HELP

Contact your regional rep to brainstorm ideas for your Teens in the Driver Seat program.

FOR ASSISTANCE OUTSIDE OF TEXAS, CALL 210–979–9411
Brainstorm your activity ideas.

TIP

Get involved with Teens in the Driver Seat by becoming a board member. A new Teen Advisory Board is selected each spring to serve for the next school year. Go to t-driver.com for details.

Don't forget, YOU drive the message.

TIP

Remember the Teens in the Driver Seat program can be continuously implemented throughout the entire year, especially during these dangerous times:

- Fall time change (when it gets darker earlier)
- Winter holiday break
- Spring break / prom / graduation
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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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R-HENK@TAMU.EDU
210–979–9411

MY REGIONAL REP: ________________________

EMAIL: ________________________

PHONE: ________________________