

A PEER-TO-PEER SAFETY PROGRAM FOR AMERICA'S YOUTH



TOO MANY TEENS ARE DYING.

Car crashes kill more young people than any other cause, accounting for nearly half of all teen deaths in America each year. Over 3,000 U.S. teens die each year in car crashes; that's the equivalent of a commercial jet loaded with teenagers crashing once every other week for an entire year.

On a per-mile driven basis, teens are far more likely to die in a car crash than experienced drivers. The majority of teen passenger deaths happen when another teenager is driving.

For every American teen killed in a car crash, about 100 more are injured. Every 15 minutes, another teenager becomes a statistic.

Car crashes involving teenage drivers cost our nation about \$40 billion every year; the annual cost in Texas is more than \$3.5 billion.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHY.

The most common causes of teen driving crashes are the ones that young drivers (and their parents) know the least about. Combined with a lack of driving experience, the top five dangers are:

- **Driving at night**
- **Speeding and street racing**
- **Distractions, such as cell phones / texting and too many teen passengers**
- **Low seat belt use**
- **Alcohol use**

Alcohol is a factor in only 13 percent of the crashes involving the youngest drivers on the road.

Most teens are unaware of the driving restrictions imposed on them by the Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws.

Serious crashes are more frequent for teens learning through parent-taught driver education.

TEENS ARE A KEY PART OF THE SOLUTION.

Started in 2002, Teens in the Driver Seat® is the first peer-to-peer program for teens that focuses solely on traffic safety and addresses all major risks for this age group.

Teens help shape the program and are responsible for implementing it; TTI provides the science, guidance and project resources.

Teens in the Driver Seat® is available to schools and youth groups at no cost in Texas, California and Georgia.

TEENS IN THE DRIVER SEAT® WORKS.

Teens in the Driver Seat® program assessments show risk awareness levels increasing by up to 200 percent. Cell phone use at Teens in the Driver Seat® program schools has been shown to drop by 30 percent, and seat belt use has gone up by over 14 percent.

In Texas, the number of teen drivers involved in fatal crashes has dropped 40 percent and is the only state where fatal crashes involving teen drivers has decreased every year since Teens in the Driver Seat® began. By comparison, fatal crashes involving drivers 20 years of age and older has only dropped 14 percent in Texas.

The city of Garland, Texas experienced 12 teen traffic fatalities in the four years before launching a Teens in the Driver Seat® program; the same city has seen only one teen traffic death in the four years since launching Teens in the Driver Seat®. Before Teens in the Driver Seat®, teen involvement in all crashes was 28 percent; after Teens in the Driver Seat® the teen involvement in crashes dropped to 16 percent.

More than 500 schools now have implemented Teens in the Driver Seat® programs, reaching more than 500,000 teens per year. The program has also been deployed in states outside Texas, including California, Connecticut, Georgia and North Carolina.

The impressive growth of Teens in the Driver Seat®, coupled with the rapid growth of social networking among teens, creates the potential for a "safety culture" among young people and the prospect of saving hundreds of lives each year.

TEENS IN THE DRIVER SEAT® PARTNERS:

Texas Department of Transportation
Georgia Department of Transportation
California Office of Traffic Safety
State Farm Insurance, Texas Zone
Houston-Galveston Area Council

CONTACT:

Russell Henk
Texas Transportation Institute
210-979-9411
r-henk@tamu.edu

