

Teen Driving Deaths on the Rise; Parents Can Help Reverse Trend

- Parents play a key role in teens' decisions on safe driving. Research for Ford's Driving Skills for Life program (DSFL) shows teens tend to emulate how their parents drive.
- Traffic fatalities are the leading cause of death for American teens. There were more than 3,000 teen fatalities in 2010, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- In 2013, Ford Driving Skills for Life will reach about 200 high schools with its safe driving materials, thanks to Ford Motor Company Fund and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA).

DEARBORN, Mich., March 18, 2013 -- Traffic fatalities are the leading cause of death for American teens. In recent weeks, a number of crashes involving teen drivers have led to more than a dozen teenagers tragically losing their lives. And a recent report by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) shows that teen driver fatalities are on the rise among 16-17-year-old drivers.

Parents can help reverse that trend. Research done for Ford's Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) program shows teens tend to emulate how their parents drive. In fact, more than three quarters of teens and tweens surveyed say they rely heavily on their parents' advice when they start to drive.

"By setting a good example behind the wheel, parents can increase the chances their children will adopt safe driving practices," said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. "While state laws and educational programs are critical, ultimately, parents are the most critical component to keep their teen drivers safe."

Tips for parents

Experts from Ford Driving Skills for Life have tips on what parents can do to help their teens be better drivers:

- **Engage in the driving process** -- As teens get closer to earning/acquiring their learner's permit, parents should actively engage with them about driving. Talk about safe driving behaviors, practice with them, seek educational opportunities, and be clear that unsafe actions won't be tolerated.
- **Buckle up** -- It's the law, and if parents don't wear their seat belts, their teen is more likely to do the same. In a crash, a person not buckled up is much more likely to be injured or killed than someone wearing a seat belt.
- **Never speed** -- Research done for Ford Driving Skills for Life shows that if parents speed, their teens are more likely to do the same. Excessive speed continues to be a factor in about one third of all traffic deaths nationally.
- **Don't drive distracted** -- By setting a tough "no distractions" rule for their teens and modeling this same behavior, parents send the message that distracted driving will not be tolerated.
- **Don't follow too closely** -- Parents should keep the proper distance from the car in front of them. Rear end collisions are common and preventable.
- **Always scan ahead for hazards** -- Parents should remind their teens to be aware of what

is going on around them by scanning to the right and left as they drive

- **Limit the number of passengers** -- Research shows young drivers can easily be distracted by just one additional passenger - increasing the risk of a crash exponentially. Many graduated driver's license programs restrict the number of passengers as a condition of issuing an early license or permit; parents should enforce those restrictions.
- **Never drink and drive** -- Parents should remind teens that drinking and driving will not be tolerated.

Ford Driving Skills for Life

In 2013, Ford DSFL is doubling the number of students it reaches with its hands on driving programs to 40,000. This includes visits to at least 40 high schools in Arizona, California, Illinois, Michigan, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia with an array of activities focused on common driving challenges faced by teen drivers. Teens will be able to experience real-world driving situations in a controlled environment using specially equipped vehicles. The hands-on clinics offer professional drivers and activities that build skills in five key areas: driver distraction, speed management, space management, vehicle handling and hazard recognition.

In addition to the hands-on clinics, Ford Driving Skills for Life will reach an additional 150 high schools with its safe driving materials, Web-based learning, partnerships with state highway safety agencies, fun contests and free educational materials for parents and teachers.

You can find more information online at DrivingSkillsForLife.com.

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Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 171,000 employees and 65 plants worldwide, the company's automotive brands include Ford and Lincoln. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide, please visit <http://corporate.ford.com>.

About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. For more than 60 years, Ford Motor Company Fund has operated with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. The award-winning Ford Driving Skills for Life program teaches new drivers through a variety of hands-on and interactive methods. Innovation in education is encouraged through national programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. Through the Ford Volunteer Corps, more than 25,000 Ford employees and dealers work on projects each year that better their communities in more than 20 countries. For more information, visit www.community.ford.com.

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The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA)® is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. GHSA provides leadership and representation for the states and territories to improve traffic safety, influence national policy, enhance program management and promote best practices. Its members are appointed by their Governors to administer federal and state highway safety funds and implement state highway safety plans. Contact GHSA at [202-789-0942](tel:202-789-0942) or visit www.ghsa.org. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GHSAHQ. Follow us on Twitter at [@GHSAHQ](https://twitter.com/GHSAHQ).