

ROLE MODELS FOR THE ROAD

Parent Tips

The Driver's Checklist

November 2004

Parents and their teens need to review some basic automotive tips for safe driving. Driving is dangerous business, and teens are sometimes impatient. So parents: supervise, correct, and set a good example.

Before you start

- **Before** every trip, your teen should do all of the following:
 - Fasten seatbelt
 - Adjust seat position
 - Adjust rearview mirror and side mirrors
 - Adjust steering wheel
 - Lock doors
 - Take a careful look in all directions
- **While** your teen is driving:
 - Know the speed limit on the road. Keep speed at or below the posted speed limit.
 - Focus forward—but constantly check rearview mirrors and side mirrors. Know what is behind you and how far it is from your back bumper.
 - Concentrate on the job at hand and do not get distracted. The job is about paying attention!
 - Look down the road as far as you can see and then concentrate on the flow of traffic and the vehicles in your lane.
 - On larger multiple lane highways, stay to the right unless passing.
 - Position your car in the middle of the lane by aligning the middle of the hood with the right shoulder of the road.
 - Be a defensive, alert driver. Don't be surprised. Watch other drivers and pay attention to the direction of their front wheels and lights. Be especially careful around vehicles that are towing a trailer.
- **Special Dangers** to discuss with your teen:
 - Never cross a railroad track unless it is clear in all directions.
 - Maintain legal speeds and do not engage in provocative gestures or comments to other drivers. If other drivers are harassing you, take the first available turnoff.
 - When approaching cyclists, share the road, slow down when passing, pass only if there's plenty of room, and don't crowd.
 - If you can see the other driver in his or her side mirror, then he or she can see you. If you can't, the driver may not know you're there.
 - Passing on a two-lane road requires special vigilance. Passing is permitted only when there is a broken center line in your lane. Make absolutely sure the way ahead is clear. Make sure the approaching vehicle is not going to turn, then signal, accelerate strongly, and don't move back into your lane until you see the passed vehicle's headlights. Ease back to legal driving speed.

