

The Department of Motor Vehicles

**2013 Report on Effectiveness of
Connecticut's Teen Driving
Laws**



Special Section on 10th Anniversary of Teen
Driving Restrictions

The DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving

Commissioner Melody A. Currey

Prepared by William K. Seymour
Director of Communication



Contents

Tables	3
Introduction	4
LICENSING	7
AAA Study on Licensing Delays	9
CRASHES AND INJURIES	12
Connecticut Crashes: Before and After Teen Driving Laws	12
Passengers in Crashes	14
How Parents Can Help Protects Drivers and Passengers	15
Parents as Role Models	16
VIOLATIONS.....	18
The 48-Hour Suspension	19
Distracted Driving	20
UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING.....	23
“The large amounts of alcohol that teens are consuming is staggering.”	23
Issues Hospitals Face.....	24
TEEN DRIVING OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.....	27
DMV Commissioner’s Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving.....	27
Department of Motor Vehicles Teen Safe Driving Center	29
Connecticut Children's Medical Center.....	31
Tim Hollister, author of the teen safe driving blog, Reid's Dad	31
IMPACT (Mourning Parents Act, Inc.).....	32
Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital.....	33
Conclusion.....	34
ENDNOTES.....	36

Tables

Figure 1 - Annual Licensing of 16- and 17-Year-Old Drivers	7
Figure 2 - 16-to-19-Year-Old Driver and Passenger Fatalities 2008-2012	9
Figure 3 - 16-to-19-Year-Old Driver and Passenger Injuries 2008-2012.....	9
Figure 4 - 16- and 17-Year-Old Driver Fatalities 2002-2013	12
Figure 5 - Crashes and Driver and Passenger Injuries 2010-2012 for 16- and 17-Year-Old Drivers	13
Figure 6 - Recent Three-Year Decline (2011-2013) in Convictions for Major Teen Driving Laws.....	19
Figure 7 - Four-Year Decline (2009-2013) in Reports Received on 48-Hour Suspensions.....	19
Figure 8 - High School Students Who Say They Binge Drink.....	24
Figure 9 - Under 21 DUI Arrests Statewide 2007-2012.....	25

Introduction

Connecticut in January, 2014, marked the 10th anniversary of adopting its first set of teen driving restrictions in its Graduated Driver Licensing law for 16 and 17 year-olds. The last decade saw a re-make of the landscape in the ways that parents, teens, school officials, state policymakers and safety advocates confront issues with this young, vulnerable group of drivers killing and injuring themselves and others on the state's roads and highways. It saw tremendous improvement as well as new challenges arising on the horizon. This report will discuss:

- The 82-percent decrease since 2004 of 16- or 17-year-old driver deaths.
- The 64-percent reduction in the deaths of 16- and 17-year-old drivers when comparing Connecticut before and after the adoption of restrictive teen driving laws.
- How safety risks are developing for 18 and 19 year-olds who delayed getting a license and now possibly face increased chances of crashes, deaths and injuries.
- How drivers on a 2-to-1 basis are more often killed or injured in crashes than passengers.
- Reductions in police summonses, but no clear reasons for the downward trend.
- Continued dangers of distracted driving for teens behind the wheel and in the vehicle.
- A new Travelers survey showing parents are significant role models for younger drivers.

Connecticut started its move into Graduated Driver Licensing on January 1, 1997, when the state instituted a learner's permit. Prior to that change, learner's permits were not required for anyone. The new permit mandated various training requirements, including home training for six months or driver's education for four months prior to taking skills test for license. Yet, the permit and its training requirements alone did not reduce the significant number of injuries and deaths for 16- and 17-year-old drivers. In 2003 the state legislature passed the first set of curfew and passenger restriction laws to become effective in January 2004. They stemmed in particular from a fiery crash in Glastonbury in two years earlier in which three seniors in high school as well as a 38-year-old father of three in another vehicle were killed on a December evening on Hebron

Avenue. That crash and its horrific elements, including a finding that the young driver was drunk at the time of crash, added increased attention to a growing debate about curbing the driving privileges for 16 and 17 year-olds. In 2007 another series of high-profile crashes occurred, taking

“OUR recent findings of a 64-percent reduction in 16- and 17-year-old driver deaths after the state adopted driving restrictions shows the true value of them. Many more teens are alive and safe today because of these laws. But, we have more work to do to preserve this trend. “

Melody A. Currey
DMV Commissioner

the lives of teen drivers and their passengers.

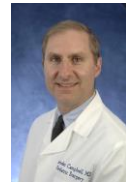
Again the state was riveted to these drivers' behaviors as well as whether training and restriction laws for this age group were doing enough. A Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving, convened in the late fall, recommended during the spring of 2008 extended curfews, passenger restrictions, beefed-up training, enhanced penalties, including fines and license suspensions for violations. It also recommended the first in the nation 48-hour suspension of a license for just a charge of violating the laws and a two-hour joint parent-teen information session required for any 16 or 17 year-old seeking a driver's license.¹ The Governor and the state Legislature adopted these recommendations.

Beginning 10 years ago with the first set of restriction laws and following through with the measures to strengthen them, an industry of public education, public health initiatives and community outreach developed both in Connecticut as well as nationally as other states reacted to the same issues. Teens have a built-in disadvantage: Medical studies show their brains do not fully develop until about 25 years old. This means they have difficulty fully understanding risky situations into which they place themselves.

In Connecticut, a well-spring of involvement in the issue erupted. This included new and ramped up programs at DMV and the Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office, with whom DMV has worked closely on a number of initiatives. The state Department of Public Health began examining the issue. Hospitals increased their attention to the issue. Safety advocates formed groups, including one called !MPACT whose founders included the mother of the Glastonbury teen driver and mothers of sons killed in unrelated crashes around the same time.

High schools and law enforcement teamed up to give educational presentations, including mock crashes. Communities developed programs, including those overseen by the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Corporations, such as Travelers, Allstate Foundation and State Farm, joined with others in the state to lend financial support and other resources to send the message. One book for parents, recently published by Timothy Hollister of Bloomfield, has come from this growing chorus of people trying to curb the tragedies that occur when teens fail to understand the risks with their reckless behavior when behind the wheel.

"We have made significant progress in our approaches to the GDL laws in Connecticut, but we need to remain vigilant in enforcing those laws and letting parents know they save lives," said Dr. Brendan T. Campbell, Director of Pediatric trauma at Connecticut Children's Medical Center and a trauma surgeon. He was a member of the 2007 Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving.



Dr. Brendan T. Campbell

Overall, this report shows in detailed ways with numbers – and explanations from some of the advocates themselves -- the significant progress Connecticut continues to make in preventing these tragedies and fostering awareness among teens and parents for safety precautions. It also points to the direction of approaching issues that await consideration and debate in the public policy arena.

Note: A special thanks for reviewing this report: Timothy Hollister, JD, author of Not So Fast – Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving; Sherry Chapman, President, Mourning Parents Act, Inc.; Mario Damiata, University of Connecticut Transportation Research Center and former regional program manager for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; C. Steven Wolf, MD, Chairman of Emergency Medicine, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Brendan Campbell, MD, pediatric trauma surgeon and Director of Pediatric Trauma at Connecticut Children's Medical Center; David Shapiro, MD, trauma surgeon, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, and advisor to the DMV; Garry Lapidus, PA, Director of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Injury Prevention Center; Pina Violano, RN, Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital; Kevin Borrup, JD, Associate Director of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Injury Prevention Center and Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Vice President, Preusser Research Group, authorities on transportation research issues. Their comments and insights were invaluable. Report prepared and compiled January, 2014, Wethersfield, CT.

LICENSING

Connecticut, like many other states, has experienced issues with delayed licensing based on recent downward economic trends in the last five years and enhanced graduated driver licensing laws for teens. Both of these have led to teens waiting beyond the 16th birthday to obtain a license. In some instances, teens wait until they are 18 or older. This can have effects on the training that teens receive, the kinds of learning experiences behind the wheel and the potential for crashes. Training requirements are not as rigorous for those 18 and older as they are for younger drivers.

In the two years prior to the adoption of tougher GDL laws in Connecticut, an average of nearly 31,000 teens 16 and 17 years-old obtaining a license. In the years that followed, that average has

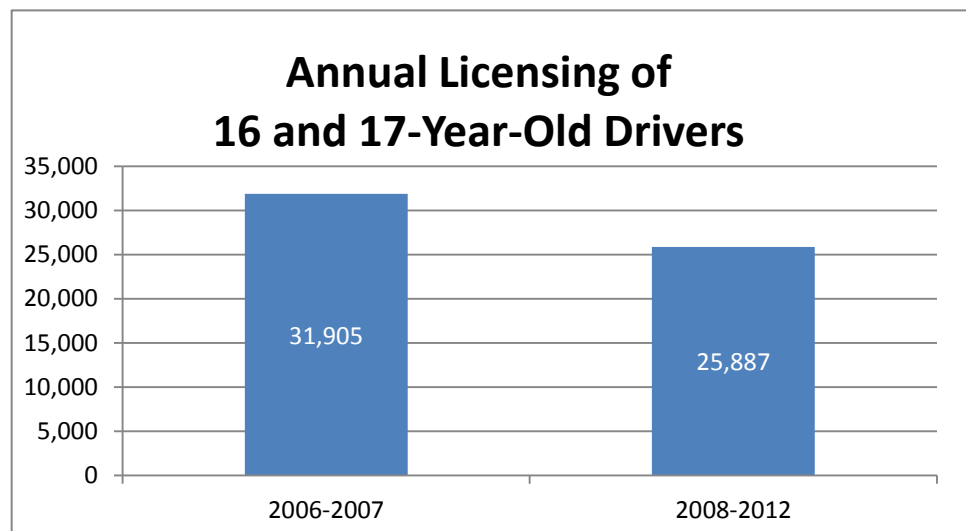


Figure 1 CT Department of Motor Vehicles

dropped to nearly 26,000. Meanwhile, the average for 18 and 19 year-olds has remained about 10,500 per year, except in 2008 and 2009 when there were slight dips.ⁱⁱ Transportation researchers have seen these two dips as anomalies and most likely the result of the economic troubles facing families and young adults. As the country began to recover, the consistency in licensing at this age has returned.

The question arises about the overall 5,000 license decrease in 16 and 17 year-olds after the passage of tougher teen driving laws in 2008. Population in this age group is decreasing slightly, but not enough alone, according to transportation researchers, to cause this decline.

“There is clear evidence for licensure delays in CT,” said Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Vice President, Preusser Research Group, Inc. “But the interesting fact is that there does not seem to

be an increase in the rates of licensure for 18 and 19 years consistent with the reduction of 16 and 17 year licensure rates. It is likely that teens are waiting even longer to obtain their licenses but a more detailed analysis of the rates will be needed to determine how long they wait.”

Transportation researchers have indicated that this age group may delay in obtaining a license because of a poor economy, and the restrictive teen driving laws. Trends indicate that some 16 and 17 year-olds have waited until they were older and likewise some of the 18 and 19

"We also have a duty to expand our prevention efforts to the 18- and 19-year-old group," said Sherry Chapman, president of Mourning Parents Act, Inc., and whose son Ryan was killed in December of 2002.

year-olds delayed until their early 20s mostly because of expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle. The economy has driven older teens to remain at home and a New York Times story in 2010 coined the term, "The changing timetable for adulthood."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In addition, many attend a college or university and many prohibit the parking of vehicles on campus until the second or third year and so a license isn't needed until then. Any licensing delay for the youngest drivers most often brings an escape from Connecticut's strict teen driving laws, including the beneficial passenger restrictions and bans

on cell phone use. It can have far-reaching effects that sometimes pass unnoticed.

“Delayed licensing is an issue that we need to keep ahead of. We don’t want young drivers first getting behind the wheel at 18 and suffering tragic consequences because they didn’t know the safety rules that help to keep them alive and safe,” said Pina Violano, RN, injury prevention coordinator at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital.



Pina Violano,
RN

The line between who is a “teen driver” is getting blurred. More safety advocates, public health professionals and members of the news media are referring to the entire range from 16 to 19 years-old as “teen drivers,” even though a different set of laws distinguish those two groups. The combined injuries and deaths climb to just over 5,300 with this large cohort of young drivers at the wheel. Safety advocates maintain these numbers show that injury prevention activities and laws to help teens become better drivers need to be extended to the older age group. They point to reduced injuries from crashes involving the younger group when tougher restrictions were imposed. Indeed, the Connecticut DMV a year ago started a new learner's permit for anyone 18

or older seeking a driver's license. They must hold it for at least three months before taking a road test for the license. It does not require, though, the training regime for the 16-17 year-olds who are also are required to have a learner's permit.

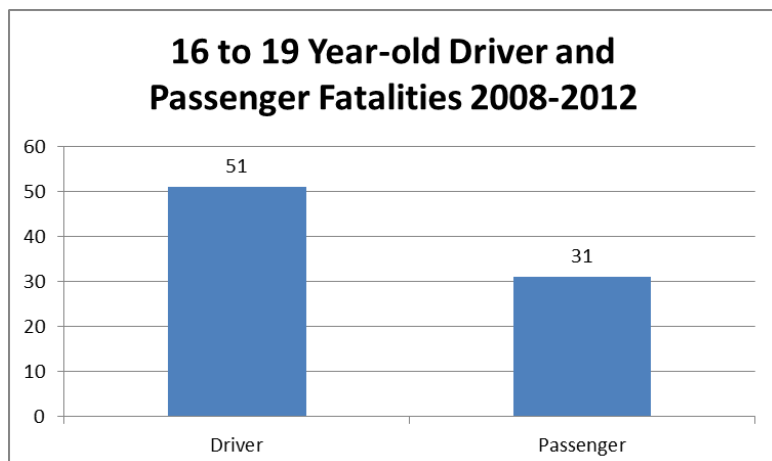


Figure 2 CT Department of Transportation

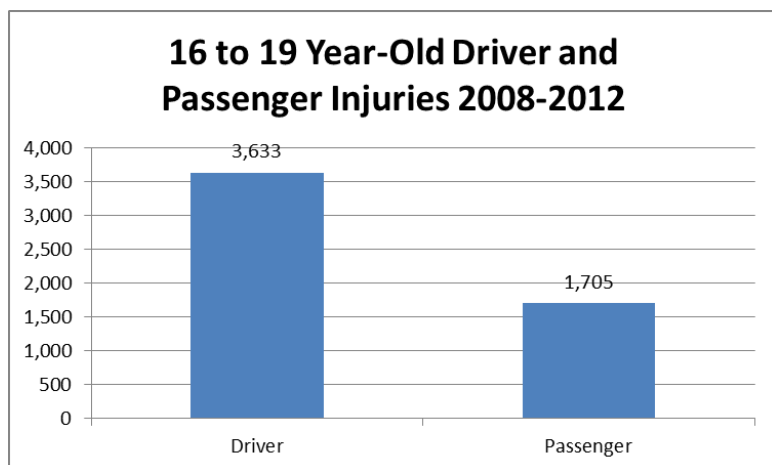


Figure 3 CT Department of Transportation

Chaudhary said, “The fact of delayed licensure does suggest that a new focus of research needs to be on these older novice drivers. Licensure delays are creating a situation where we have moved novice driving from 16 and 17 years to 18 and 19 years and perhaps even older. There is some indication in the research that we may be seeing a rebound in crash rates at the older ages (i.e., a decrease in 16 and 17 year-old crash rates followed by an increase in 18 and 19 year-old crash rates) but most studies suggest that there is a net benefit in overall crash reduction.

“These issues were taken up by the young driver

sub-committee meeting at the national Transportation Research Board’s 2014 meeting. The committee agreed that there needs to be a focus on novice drivers defined as 16-20 year olds instead of 16-17 year olds,” he said.

AAA Study on Licensing Delays

When looking at the national issue, the majority of American teens today delay getting a driver's license, according to a 2013 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Less than half (44 percent) of teens obtain a driver's license within 12 months of the minimum age for licensing in their state and just over half (54 percent) are licensed before their 18th birthday,

causing concern among safety experts that young adult drivers are missing the benefits intended by graduated drivers licensing (GDL). These findings mark a significant drop from two decades ago when data showed more than two-thirds of teens were licensed by the time they turned 18.^{iv}

"With one in three teens waiting to get their license until they turn 18, there's a segment of this generation missing opportunities to learn under the safeguards that GDL provides," said Peter Kissinger, President and CEO, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. "For most, it's about not having a car or having alternatives for getting around that are the top reasons cited for delaying what has traditionally been considered to be a rite of passage."

Contrary to some expectations, survey results suggest that few teens wait until 18 simply to avoid graduated driver licensing. Instead, a number of other reasons for delaying licensure were cited, including:

Low-income and minority teens are the least likely to obtain a driver's license before age 18. Only 25 percent of teens living in households with incomes less than \$20,000 obtained their license before they turned 18, while 79 percent of teens were licensed by their eighteenth birthday in households with incomes of \$100,000 or more. The findings for licensure by age 18 differed significantly by race and ethnicity, with 67 percent for non-Hispanic white teens, 37 percent for non-Hispanic black teens, and 29 percent for Hispanic teens.

"For a range of reasons, young adults increasingly are getting licensed without the benefit of parental supervision, extensive practice and gaining experience under less risky conditions that are the hallmark of a safety-focused licensing system," said AAA's Director of State Relations and teen driver issue expert, Justin McNaull. "Researchers and policymakers should examine whether existing state GDL systems – nearly all of which end once a teen turns 18 – can be

What teens say about why they wait to obtain a driver's license:

- 44 percent – Did not have a car
- 39 percent – Could get around without driving
- 36 percent – Gas was too expensive
- 36 percent – Driving was too expensive
- 35 percent – "Just didn't get around to it"

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

modified to improve safety for these young adult novice drivers."

AAA has worked for nearly two decades to recommend that all states adopt and enforce a comprehensive three-stage (learner's permit, intermediate/probationary license, full/unrestricted license) graduated driver licensing (GDL) system for novice teen drivers. These programs require minimum holding periods and practice requirements for teens with learner's permits, followed by restricted licenses that limit driving at night or with peer passengers. These requirements help novice drivers safely gain the skills and experience needed to become safe adult drivers.

Previous AAA Foundation research found that states with comprehensive GDL systems have experienced a 38 percent decrease in fatal crashes involving 16 year-olds and a 40 percent reduction in injury crashes.

The researchers surveyed a nationally-representative sample of 1,039 respondents ages 18-20. The full research report and survey results can be found on the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety website. Established by AAA in 1947, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit, publicly-supported charitable educational and research organization. The Foundation's mission is to prevent crashes and save lives through research and education about traffic safety. The Foundation has funded over 200 research projects designed to discover the causes of traffic crashes, prevent them, and minimize injuries when they do occur.

CRASHES AND INJURIES

For the 2013 calendar year, a downward trend in lower fatalities for 16- and 17 year-old drivers continues. However, questions among safety advocates are raising the issue about whether more safety awareness is needed for the 16- to 19-year-old age group. This is

based on a growing view that the entire group needs special attention, not just the youngest in the cohort. Fatalities for Connecticut's 16 and 17-year-old drivers are at historic lows. According to statistics compiled by the state Department of Transportation, two drivers in this age group were killed in crashes for 2013. These fewer numbers continue the average trend since 2010 of two deaths per year, an 82-percent decrease compared to 2004.^v The tougher 2008 laws are credited for some of the consistent reduction. Since the passage of new and tougher laws in 2008, the focus of outreach among safety advocates has been 16- and 17-year-old drivers. Drivers in this age group face significant restrictions, rigorous training and harsh penalties for violating the laws.

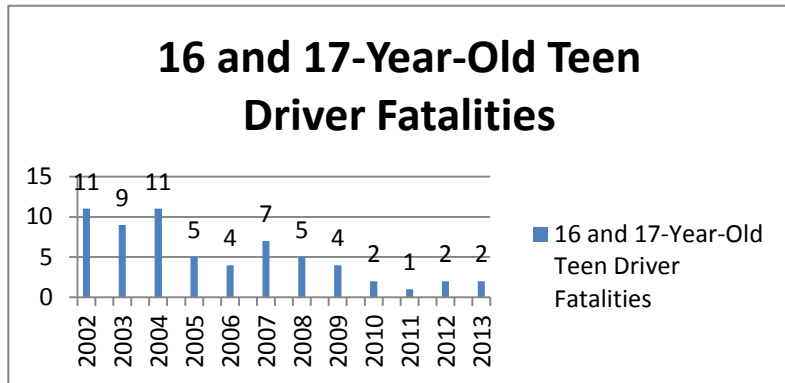


Figure 4 CT Department of Transportation

Connecticut Crashes: Before and After Teen Driving Laws

A look at statistics when Connecticut did not have any special laws for teen driving shows dramatic change since restrictions were imposed. There has been a 64-percent reduction in the deaths of 16- and 17-year-old drivers when comparing for totals for 1999-2003 (the immediate four years before restrictions began) to 2008-2012 (the latest four-year numbers available). From 1999 through the end of 2003 there were a total of 37 driver deaths in this youngest age group. After 10 years of various restrictions, driver deaths dropped to a total of 13 for 2008 – 2012. Crashes saw a 60-percent reduction to 3,049 for these most recent years. Passenger

A 64% drop
has occurred in 16- and 17-year-old driver deaths when comparing four-year totals in Connecticut before it imposed restrictions and after (1999-2003 and 2008-2012).

Source: CT Department of Motor Vehicles

deaths saw a corresponding 67-percent decrease from 34 to 11. Population for this group shows an increase on average for those two time periods. For injuries to drivers and passengers in this comparison, the numbers also show dramatic change: a 56-percent reduction for drivers and 68 percent for passengers. Driver injuries sunk from 2,608 to 1,145 and passengers from 1,713 to 540. These pre- and post-GDL laws statistics show that the laws, outreach and other efforts, along with a poor economy, are helping to blunt crashes.

“This is very good news. While we are meeting less frequently ‘by accident’ in the ER, we need to keep working at this critical issue,” said Dr. David S. Shapiro, trauma surgeon at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. He works with DMV on a variety of teen driving outreach efforts.



Dr. David S. Shapiro

Chaudhary of Preusser Research Group, Inc., said, “I would suspect, in the absence of a controlled study, that some portions of the decreases are causally related to the stricter laws. The mechanism behind their effectiveness may well be that... some teen drivers today are apt to delay their driving for a few years and this results in fewer young folks being involved in crashes. It’s a win for Connecticut. Theoretically, when they do decide to start driving at an older age there is at least some level of increased maturity and we may therefore see a net reduction in crashes across all younger (under 21) novice drivers,” said Chaudhary, whose firm advises the state on transportation safety issues.

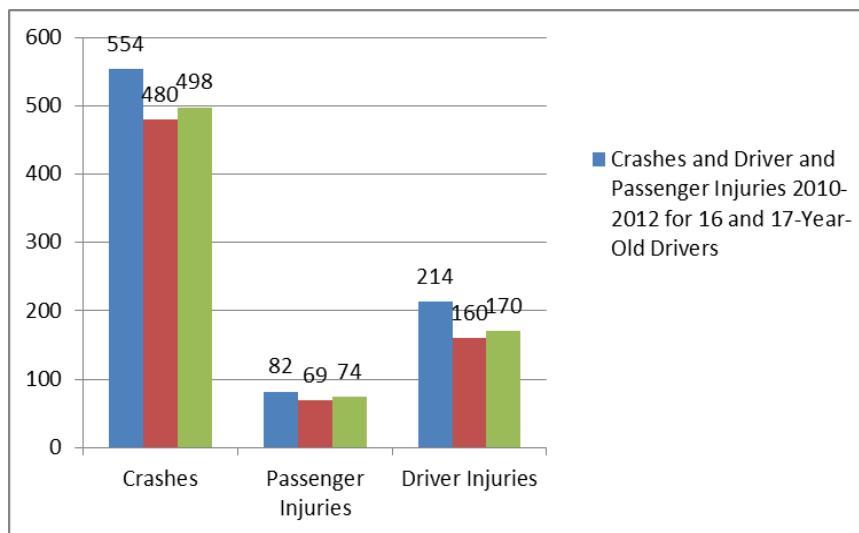


Figure 5 CT Department of Transportation

However, some recent figures for 16 and 17-year-old driver crashes and injuries, note a slight increase from 2011 to 2012. While this fluctuation may be an anomaly, it indicates a need to keep up crash prevention and safety outreach, say long-time safety advocates who have watched the numbers rise and fall.

Passengers in Crashes

There has been an overall positive news for changes in teen drivers in Connecticut and there has been a corresponding increase in discussion about passenger safety. From May through August, a series of fatal crashes occurred that sparked a renewed debate about whether the laws were doing enough to prevent deadly teen crashes. There were seven crashes that killed a total of six passengers and four drivers. Two drivers were 17 and in the other crashes either an 18- or 19-year-old was behind the wheel. Passengers ranged from 15- to 18 years-old.

State statistics show, however, that more 16- to 19-year-old drivers than their passengers, by a nearly 2-to-1 margin, are either killed or injured in crashes. The numbers involved increase with the 18- and 19-year-old drivers because of the larger number of drivers in that age group and the lack of a passenger restriction law. From 2008 through 2012, statistics for this 16- to 19-year-old age group show 51 drivers and 31 passengers died. Nearly 3,640 drivers were seriously injured compared to 1,700 passengers.

This was not surprising to Chaudhary. He said that studies show drivers will have larger numbers of injuries and fatalities because more often they are alone in a car than with passengers. In addition, backseat passengers often are protected from a collision's impact and thus suffer fewer injuries. They also more often are wearing seat belts. Passengers in the front seat have the most risk for injury or death, yet often also wear a seat belt more often than the young driver, he said.

Nonetheless, crashes bring collateral injuries and death to passengers. Connecticut's Graduated Driver Licensing (teen driving) laws do little to address issues with young passengers in these vehicles driven by inexperienced drivers. It is time to focus on a campaign for educating teens that they are "not just along for the ride," many safety advocates say. That trip, if the car is driven unsafely, could be deadly. With these young drivers there's clearly different maturity levels and levels of parental involvement. The teen brain does not fully develop until about 25 years-old. This means risky behaviors by drivers and passengers are not fully understood. Here are suggestions offered to help address the passenger issue:

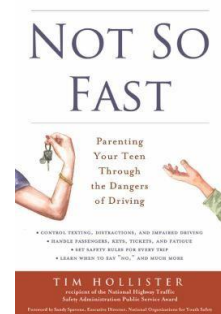
- Parents need to know who is driving their teen and the extent of his or her driving experience. Did that driver gain driving experience under Connecticut's GDL law or did the

driver bypass this requirement and get a license at 18 years-old?

- Parents need to continuously monitor and guide their teenagers driving activity, and limit their travel to purposeful driving. Once teens begin to engage in "joyriding" their crash risk increase dramatically and more so with each additional teenage passenger in the vehicle.
- A statewide outreach and advertising program, similar to the one in 2008 for drivers, needs to be undertaken regarding passengers.
- Communities and high schools should consider a voluntary vehicle decal program that identifies novice drivers, and helps police identify vehicles that should not have passengers. Schools should examine permission forms for vehicles on campus to ensure GDL laws are followed. Parents should enforce its use with their young drivers and municipalities should set up community service programs that go hand-in-hand with the summons that police issue for those who must follow passenger restriction laws.
- Parents must be aware that driver's education is not the panacea for making teens safer drivers. The best way to provide teens with experience is to have parents drive with them under variable conditions (inclement weather, night time driving).
- Prosecutors and courts should consider some novel approaches to passenger education and awareness when drivers are convicted of violating any of the teen driving laws.
- Pediatricians, family physicians and other health care professionals need to stress both driver and passenger safety during wellness visits and encourage the use of parent teen driving contracts that set the driving rules and consequences for violations in advance
- Police need to enforce Connecticut's GDL laws. Statistics across the board show significant drops in both summonses and convictions, yet there's no evidence to show teens have significantly changed a traditional risk-taking behavior that is consistent with that age group.

How Parents Can Help Protects Drivers and Passengers

With many more teens living at home while working or attending post-secondary schools, some professionals in the driving safety field say that parents need to take a stronger role in overseeing their teen's driver training and performance on the road, even at 18- or 19-years old. Timothy Hollister of Bloomfield, whose teenage son was killed in a crash, recently completed a book for all parents: *Not So Fast - Parenting Your Teen*



Through the Dangers of Driving. He was a member of the 2008 Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving. Most driving literature for parents focuses on how to teach a teen to drive, without explaining why teen driving is so dangerous in the first place or giving parents a plan to preempt the hazards teens face. By contrast, *Not So Fast* empowers and guides parents to understand the causes and situations that most often lead to teen crashes and to take specific, proactive steps--before and each time a teen driver gets behind the wheel--to counteract them. This guide tackles hot button issues such as texting and distracted driving, parenting attitudes (conscious and unconscious), and teen impairment and fatigue--and includes a combination of topics not found in other teen driving guides.

Parents as Role Models

DMV has partnered with Travelers in the last several years on a number of teen-safe driving related safety projects. DMV and Travelers has looked at the effects of role models, especially parents, on these youngest drivers. Travelers recently released the results of its Parent/Teen Safe Driving Survey, which found teens who feel parents are good driver role models are half as likely to have been in an accident. The survey also found that the vast majority of teens (96 percent) have had conversations with their parents about safe driving. This rate is much higher than the number of teens who report having talked with their parents about alcohol/drug use (84 percent), safe sex (78 percent) or bullying (67 percent).

"The results reinforce that parents who actively discuss safe driving habits can have a strong positive influence on teen driving," said Doreen Spadorcia, Vice Chairman of Travelers. "It's critical that parents and teens are on the same page about driving dangers and are clearly communicating the consequences for not following the rules of the road."

Key Survey Findings

Parents as Role Models.

Parents play a critical role in influencing teen driving behavior. Teens who report their parents are not good driving role models are more than twice as likely to be involved in an accident.

- **Accidents.** Twenty-four percent of teens who report their parents are not good driving role models have been in more than one accident as a driver, compared to 10 percent of teens who report their parents are good role models as drivers.

- **Tickets.** Fifteen percent of teens who report their parents are not good role models as drivers have been issued more than one ticket (speeding or other moving violation), compared to six percent of teens who report their parents are good role models as drivers.

Disconnect over top driving concerns.

The survey found that parents and teens do not always see eye-to-eye when it comes to certain driving-related risks. Among the largest disconnects:

- **Driving under the influence.** Sixty-six percent of teens are concerned about driving under the influence of alcohol, compared to 14 percent of parents.
- **Distracted driving (mobile/smartphone).** Fifty-six percent of teens are concerned about distracted driving as a result of mobile/smartphones, versus 35 percent of parents.
- **Staying aware of other drivers on the road.** Fifty-two percent of teens are concerned about staying aware of other drivers on the road, compared to 31 percent of parents.

“The Talk.”

Ninety-eight percent of parents report they have had conversations about safe driving with their teen drivers, while 96 percent of teens report they have had conversations.

Reaching Teens at a Younger Age.

Younger teens are more receptive to safe driving conversations than older teens. Among those who have not had a safe driving conversation with parents:

- Sixty-seven percent of 16-year-olds would like to have the conversation, compared to 29 percent of 18-year-olds.
- Of that 67 percent, half are waiting for their parents to initiate the conversation.

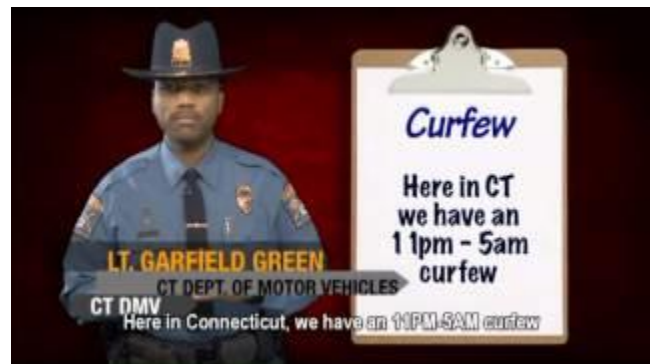
Travelers has created the [Let's Talk Safety Parent/Teen Safe Driving Coaching Guide](#) to help facilitate open communication between parents and their teenage drivers on the importance of safe driving. The Guide equips parents with information for how to initiate the safe driving conversation; ways to educate young people about the dangers of speeding, drunk driving, and distracted driving; and provides parents with a sample “driving contract” they can sign with their children.

VIOLATIONS

One measure of the effectiveness of teen driving laws is convictions for violating them. Though summonses are issued first, a variety of circumstances surround allegations of a violation. However, a conviction in court brings the official stamp on a driving record about the violation occurring. We look at this measure to examine the laws' effectiveness in terms of how often various behaviors have occurred. In turn, summonses and convictions send powerful messages to teens that a society governed by laws will not tolerate certain behaviors behind the wheel that endanger themselves, their passengers and others on the road.

Statistics show a steady drop in convictions since the state started enforcing the new laws in August 2008. In nearly every category - from seat belts to passenger restrictions and curfew to cell phone use and distracted driving - the numbers of convictions each year steadily decline.

For instance, from August 2009 through July 2010 -- the first full year the laws were in effect -- there were 852 convictions of 16- and 17-year-old drivers for violating the passenger restrictions and curfew laws. That number dropped to 466 for August 2012 through July 2013, a decrease of 386 convictions, or about 45 percent, according to an analysis by both the DMV and The Hartford Courant.^{vi}



There has been no detailed research on enforcement of the revised laws and effectiveness of the laws due to enforcement. The Hartford Courant, however, undertook a similar analysis as DMV of 16- and 17-year-old teen drivers' records. Both DMV and The Courant found questions about how vigorous law enforcement agencies were applying the laws.

"Experts say the reason for the drop in convictions is multifaceted, but they say that it's not as simple as teens driving more safely, and that a lack of enforcement may be partly responsible," wrote Kelly Glista in her September 2013 story, *Stricter State Laws Translate Into Fewer Tickers to Teen Drivers*. Police and lawmakers remarked on a range of reasons including an inability to enforce all laws, the risk of illegal profiling because someone looks young and shouldn't have passengers, the reluctance of officers to write tickets, a lack of police resources to focus on young

drivers to the exclusions of others, and a general concern about balancing good police community relations with enforcement.

"I would love to be able to say (enforcement of) these laws have been effective in that [they] are changing behavior," said Chaudhary of Preusser Research Group. "But, there are likely

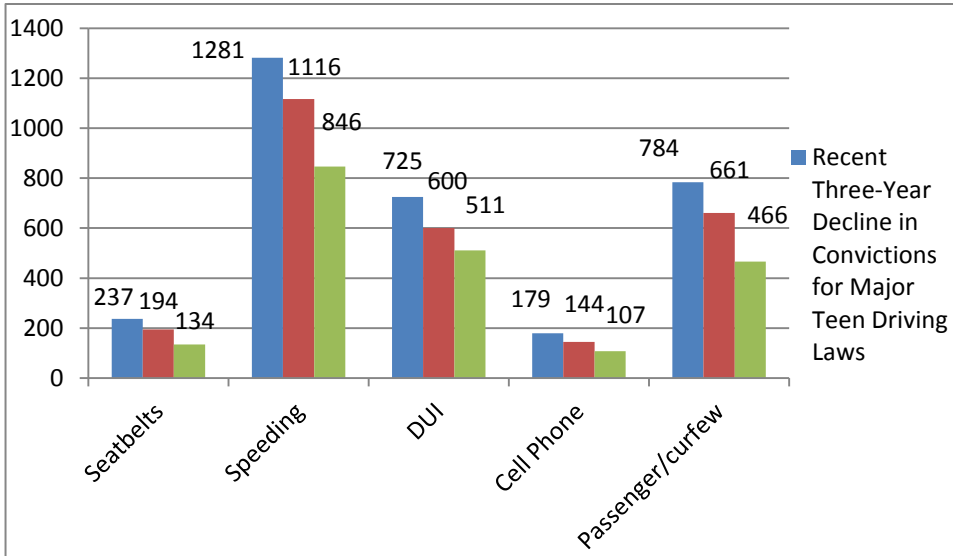


Figure 6 CT Department of Motor Vehicles (2011-2013)

other reasons for the relatively low ticketing rates. For example, the police may not be able to enforce these laws effectively, other emerging issues shift the focus of ticketing or the economy may have impacted overall manpower reducing

all ticketing rates. This is not to say that that the laws are ineffective, merely that the ticketing rates, without detailed analysis, cannot be used to determine whether or not the restrictions are effective. That said, crash rate reductions are pretty impressive and suggest, even after controlling for many factors, that laws are having a positive effect on teen driving.

The 48-Hour Suspension

Another measure is instances in which police issued the required immediate 48-hour suspension of the license for a 16- or 17-year-old driver dropped nearly 40 percent in 2013 compared to just after the new laws were passed. State law

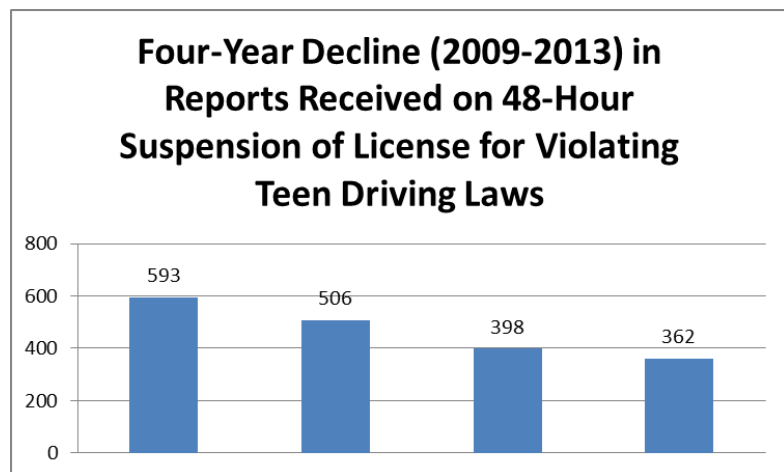


Figure 7 CT Department of Motor Vehicles

requires that the suspension be given for violating the teen driving laws and those violations numbered over 700 in 2012-2013. In just a little over 50 percent of those violations was the suspension issued. More work is needed to encourage police to issue these suspensions. The Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving saw the suspension as a deterrent to violating the laws because teens would not be able to drive a car home and parents would need to sign for the license's return.

Distracted Driving

Distracted driving remains one of Connecticut's -- and the nation's -- top concerns for drivers, especially younger drivers. Connecticut has strong laws for 16- and 17-year-old drivers to prevent distractions. Cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited from use by them as well as wireless connections to them or so-called "hands free." Tougher laws in 2013 were also extended to the overall driving population. Governor Dannel P. Malloy, joined by Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, Attorney General George Jepsen, state Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) Commissioner James P. Redeker, state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commissioner Melody A. Currey and executives from AT&T and Travelers Insurance, September 19 kicked-off a statewide campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving by proclaiming September 19th "Don't Text and Drive Day in Connecticut".^{vii}

"As long as motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for American teenagers, everyone needs to do their part to ensure our youngest, most inexperienced drivers



have the knowledge to make responsible decisions when they get behind a wheel," said Governor Malloy. "We are issuing a call to action to all drivers, new and experienced, to help reduce the number of crashes, injuries and deaths associated with distracted driving by remaining focused on the task at hand – operating your motor vehicle safely when under your control."

Distracted driving can occur for any number of reasons. These include failure to pay attention while texting, tuning a radio, a GPS device, shuffling papers, talking on the phone, talking with passengers, etc. It has two primary causes: passenger distractions and use of cell phones or electronic devices, such as iPods, iPads and other similar devices on which music is often played while driving.

DMV's teen advisers chose the theme Teen Safe Driving: Put Your Brakes on Distractions for the 2013-2014 DMV - Travelers teen safe driving video contest. It was the oldest and first in the nation sponsored by a state motor vehicle department. Hundreds of teens in the fall prepare videos which are submitted in early January. The high schools of the top five winners share in \$15, 000 in prizes and students in first place win iPads from AT&T.

In July, Governor Malloy signed legislation that expanded Connecticut's prohibition on using cell phones while driving to include using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle at a temporary standstill, such as waiting in an intersection or at a red stop light. The legislation also requires the driver's license knowledge test to include at least one question on distracted driving. Governor Malloy also signed separate legislation that increased the fines for distracted driving, requires that the record of such a violation appear in the violator's driving history and be made available to motor vehicle insurers, and creates a task force to study distracted driving issues and report to the Transportation Committee by January 1, 2014. Both laws and fines went into effect on October 1, 2013.

Teen drivers are very cautious behind the wheel when they first start driving, but as time passes they begin to engage in potentially risky behaviors such as talking on cell phones, eating and talking to other passengers. That's according to a new study by researchers at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, which has conducted some of the nation's most important research on distracted driving, and the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development^{viii}.

"Novice drivers are more likely to engage in high-risk secondary tasks more frequently over time as they become more comfortable with driving," said Charlie Klauer, group leader for teen risk and injury prevention at the institute's Center for Vulnerable Road User Safety. "The increasingly high rates of secondary task engagement among newly licensed drivers in our study are worrisome as this appears to be an important contributing factor to crashes or near-crashes."

Klauer is first author of an article on her group's research that appears in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The researchers compared the results of a one-year, 100-car study with drivers ages 18-72 with an average of 20 years of experience, and the results from an 18-month study of 42 teens who had drivers' licenses for less than three weeks when the study began. Participants in both studies drove vehicles equipped with data acquisition systems

developed at Virginia Tech's Transportation Institute, including a minimum of four cameras and sensors that collected continuous video and driving performance data during the studies. Researchers watched the video of the drivers and noted any distracting behavior before or during a crash or near-crash.

The researchers found that during the first six months behind the wheel, novice teen drivers engaged in secondary tasks less frequently than experienced drivers. But they matched experienced drivers between months seven and 15, and were engaging in the distracting behaviors more frequently than experienced drivers during months 16-18. The young drivers logged a two-fold increase in risky distractions during the last three months of the study.

One of their findings: The teens were engaging in distracting behaviors beyond just using their cellphones.

"Many states have adopted graduated driver licensing provisions that limit cell phone use," said Tom Dingus, director of the institute and a co-author of the paper. "However, it is not the only risky behavior for novices." He added that dialing increases the risk for all groups.

Bruce Simons-Morton, a senior investigator with the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development, said the study is the first to measure how much multi-tasking distracts novice drivers and how that compares to more experienced drivers. Among the findings from institute researchers: Engaging in tasks associated with the use of hand-held cellphones and other portable devices increases the risk of crashing by three times; sending or receiving a text message takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent of driving the length of a football field while blindfolded at 55 mph; behind the wheel use of hands-free cellphones is not substantially safer than hand-held use.

Klauer says she hopes the new study will remind parents of teen drivers to continue monitoring their children's behind-the-wheel behavior as they gain experience.

UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING

Underage drinking and driving was a topic for statewide discussion in the summer of 2013. While the discussion focused on concert goers and parties attended by minors, the issue of drinking and driving frequently arose. Dr. C. Steven Wolf, chairman of emergency medicine at

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford, expressed serious concern about the rising risks to young people.

From the View in the Emergency Department



Dr. C. Steven Wolf,
Chairman of the
Emergency
Medicine, Saint
Francis Hospital
and Medical
Center

**“The large
amounts of
alcohol that teens
are consuming is
staggering.”**

“The large amounts of alcohol that are being consumed at one time by teenagers at concerts, college parties and private homes is staggering and can result in emergency room visits, accidents of all kinds, and death,” said Dr. Wolf, who frequently patrols the Hartford concert venues with police to observe the behavior of teens consuming alcohol as part of his prevention work at the hospital.

“Parents and communities need to find innovative strategies to confront this issue, and this includes government, school, interfaith and other community stakeholders putting their heads together to address the matter,” he added.

Dr. Jeff Finklestein, Chief of Emergency Medicine at Hartford Hospital, tells this story: It's 11 p.m. on a Saturday night. An ambulance stops outside

the hospital emergency room and doctors immediately roll a stretcher through the doors and to a treatment room. A young girl, uncommunicative and combative, is throwing up. A team of medical professionals, well aware that her vomit may soon choke her, puts a tube down her throat to breathe for her. She is 15 years old and all alone. Her parents will soon receive a phone call. They'll forget about her missed curfews and delayed responses to their text messages. They will simply be thankful their daughter is alive. Her parents may have dropped her off a few hours ago at a friend's house, a concert or the beach. But, they'll learn that soon after they left, she consumed a lot of alcohol quickly and passed out. They'll want to blame someone else, but be

thankful that her friends -- also inebriated -- decided to call 911.

This is a real story. This young girl was lucky she ended up in an emergency room where she was safe, cared for and would recover. This girl and her family are also lucky that she did not attempt to drive before passing into unconsciousness and that her inebriated friends called 911 rather than driving her to a hospital.

Issues Hospitals Face

Hospital emergency departments across Connecticut have experienced this scene and sometimes frequently. Underage binge or high-risk drinking that has a high level of toxicity is a

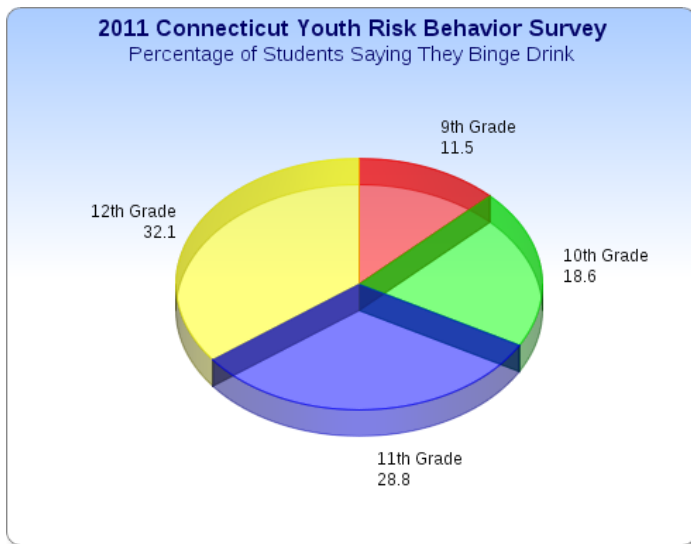


Figure 8 CT Department of Public Health

real public health problem, especially if someone gets behind the wheel of a vehicle. Too often teen driver fatalities involve the use of alcohol by the driver, passengers or both. The impacts can be life-long if not devastating and life-threatening. It is also entirely preventable. Underage drinking as well as binge drinking occurs at significant rates in this state. The state's 2011 Connecticut School Health Survey – the most recent - surveyed high school students with an anonymous questionnaire across the

state. It found that 41.5% of high school students had at least one drink of alcohol, 22.3 percent binge drank, **6.9 percent drove after drinking alcohol and 25.2 percent rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.** In Connecticut, 15.6 percent of high school students drank alcohol (other than a few sips) for the first time before age 13 years.

State law prohibits anyone under age 21 from driving with a blood alcohol content of .02% or more. The laws specify criteria for alcohol and drug tests to determine it and criminal penalties and driver's license suspension penalties for violations. State records show a 39-percent decrease in charges for underage drinking (Conn. Gen. Stat. 30-89). In addition, they show a

28-percent decrease in arrests (Conn. Gen. Stat. 14-227g) for driving while intoxicated from 2008 to 2012. Various safety advocates and law enforcement report that the decreases stem from police having increased responsibilities for pursuing more serious crime, the use of community

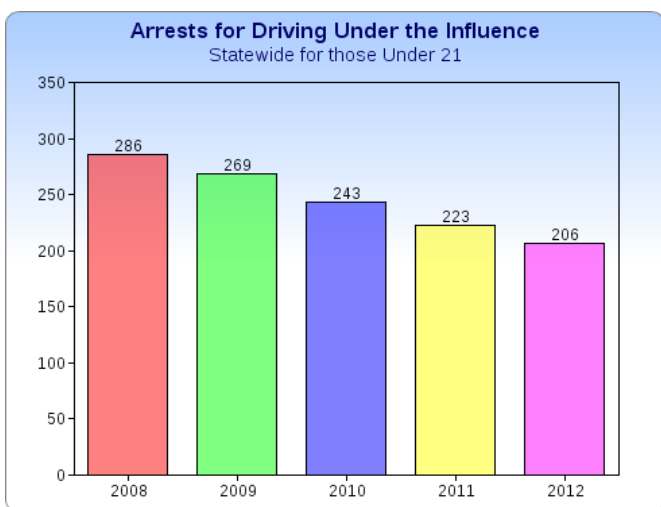


Figure 9 CT Judicial Branch

courts in Connecticut, and a general malaise in communities to address the problem of underage drinking.

The survey reports that unhealthy behaviors often established during childhood continue into adulthood. They also can stem from a family culture of permissive alcohol use and excessive drinking by adults who are role models.

The potential for this kind of excessive drinking and driving rises with trips to summer concerts, drives to the beach, parties in the woods near homes, house and pool gatherings while parents are away or even asleep. We want to remind parents of this serious issue and equip them with prevention tools.

Parents need know that alcohol consumption can adversely affect their developing adolescents' brains and have long-term health consequences. And that teens binge drink – possibly including their own. Studies also show the teen brain doesn't fully develop until about 25 years old and underage drinkers often cannot fully understand the risky situations they invite. This behavior is not simply a rite of passage in contemporary society or some other family's problem. Teens and young adults are also using innovative strategies, as Yale-New Haven Hospital reports, such as soaking tampon applicators in alcohol to avoid traces on the breath. In addition to death that can result from alcohol poisoning, driving drunk or with an impaired driver, the studies show that youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience problems in school; unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity. Families could face a litany of legal problems from intoxicated youths' actions.

Here's what they need to look for and do. First, they need to monitor their own alcohol use and show responsible behavior. Lock up alcohol in the house. Next, they should look for any signs

of teens abusing alcohol. These include a decrease in former interests and appearance, taking and hiding alcohol from the house, academic failures and unusual aggressive, secretive or rebellious behavior. It is vital for parents share information with their teen about health dangers and other risks of drinking alcohol as well as driving while drinking alcohol. Parents must have clear expectations given to their teens on what to do when a teen faces the choice to drink and be with friends who are drinking, especially when driving. Consequences for violating the expectations must be swift and certain to send a message. That message could save a teen's life.

TEEN DRIVING OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

A number of outreach activities have occurred among safety partners around the state. The activities have varied from testimonials and presentations to mock crashes and special projects undertaken by students to raise awareness in their communities and high schools. Prior to the state creating a task force in 2007 and ramping up public awareness of issues related to teen driving, there were just a handful of groups doing educational efforts. Major teaching hospitals were conducting research, but there was little public outreach from them. This landscape changed in 2007-2008. Through the Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving, the issue became a call to action for more aggressive efforts. Since then, state agencies, advocacy groups, hospitals and even one Connecticut blogger have raised the flag about this public health issue.

DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving

The DMV has established a Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving. The following are members:

Safety Advocate Members:

- Pina Violano, RN, Injury Prevention Program, Yale-New Haven Hospital
- Kevin Borrup, JD, MPA, Injury Prevention Program, Connecticut Children's Medical Center
- Mario Damiata, Univ. of Conn., Transportation Safety Research Center, and former staff member National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Richard Hastings, JD, Ridgefield, Parent
- Timothy Hollister, JD, Bloomfield, parent, blogger, Reid's Dad, on teen safe driving,
- Sherry Chapman, Mourning Parents Act, Inc.
- Joseph Cristalli, Governor's Highway Safety Office, Department of Transportation,
- Chief John Daly, Southington Police Department, President, Conn. Police Chiefs Asso.
- Paul Vance, Lt., and Spokesman, Connecticut State Police,
- Francis J. Carino, JD, Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney, Office of the Chief State's Attorney
- Steven Wolf, MD, Chairman of Emergency Medicine, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

- Garry Lapidus, PA, Director of the Injury Prevention Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center
- Jason Germain, JD, Senior Assistant State's Attorney
- Steve McNeish, AAA Driving School
- Sebby Giannone, Frank's Driving School
- The Hon. John Nazzaro, Superior Court Judge
- Faith VosWinkel, Office of the Child Advocate
- Susan Naide, JD, former prosecutor, and current professor at the University of New Haven in Criminal Justice,
- Angie B. Byrne, MPH, Program Manager, NHTSA-Region 1, Cambridge, Mass.,
- Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Preusser Research Group, Inc., a transportation research study firm, Trumbull, CT,
- Andy Groher, JD, Riscassi and Davis, Conn. Trial Lawyers Associaton
- Stephanie Ford, Connecticut Association of Schools
- David Shapiro, MD, trauma surgeon, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

Student Members

- Katie Cimini, Mercy High School
- Ama Appiah, Mercy High School
- Allie Caselli, Nonnewaug High School
- Stephanie Lewis, Nonnewaug High School
- Hannah McCollam, Nonnewaug High School
- Juhi Gupta, Mercy High School,
- Patrick Kudej, Norwich Free Academy,
- Luke Edwards, Daniel Hand High School, Madison,
- Michael Brainerd, East Haven High School,
- Daniyal N. Khan, Quinnipiac University freshman, Berlin High School

Staff Assistants:

- Bill Seymour, Ernie Bertothy, Communications Office and DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving
- Joseph Ciotto, DMV Driver Education Unit

Technical and Consulting Associates

- Tony Cashman and Bill Greer, Cashman & Katz and In-Focus research group, Glastonbury, CT,

The Committee meets twice a year to discuss issues related to teen driving. It also finished production of a video^x sent to all driving schools to be shown during the required two-hour joint information session for all those with a learner's permit seeking a license to drive. NBC 30 in Connecticut helped to underwrite production and funding for other aspects came from Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. The committee also advised the Commissioner on a number of issues both legislative and policy related. The members of this group independently conduct myriad safety activities throughout the year. To give a sense of the many activities, below is a sampling from just a few safety advocates on advisory committee:

Department of Motor Vehicles Teen Safe Driving Center

- A teen safe-driving video contest co-sponsored with Travelers. Teen Safe Driving: Are You In? It's the question that five teens designed for their peers as well as parents and other role models across the state as the theme for the 2013 contest. More than 125 videos were submitted and over 500 students statewide participated for the 2013 contest. For the 2014 contest, a new set of teen advisors chose: Teen Drivers: Put Your Brakes on Distractions. The deadline for entries is January 15, 2014.
- A new parents guide brochure, co-sponsored with AAA Allied Group, Hartford, was distributed to parents of teens obtaining a learner's permit. It is also posted to the website for the DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving.
- Updated laws and training brochure funded by Travelers and distributed throughout the state.
- The website for the DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving was revamped and redesigned for easier navigation.
- DMV led an underage drinking coalition to look at underage drinking as well as its coupling with drinking and driving.
- Continued roll out of specific learner's permit test by appointment and now available in all major DMV office operations statewide.

The DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving offers the following tips for parents to prevent crashes, injuries and deaths from crashes involving their teens. These

tips appear in a brochure Travelers underwrites for distribution statewide and on the DMV Teen Safe Driving website.

- The Number 1 cause of death for 15-19 year-old teenagers. Most teen crashes occur during the first two years of having their license. The first six months are most dangerous for the newly-licensed teen. Provide as much supervised practice as you can during the licensing period.
- Brain Development: Research shows that the portion of the brain that assesses risk and danger does not fully develop until the mid 20's. Teens are risk-takers, lacking the experience, judgment and maturity to recognize many potentially hazardous situations.
- Passenger Restrictions: Enforce at home the state laws on passenger restrictions. Crash risk goes up when teens drive with other teens in the car. This risk also increases with the number of passengers; whether siblings, family or friends; in the vehicle.
- Restrict Night Driving: Fatal crashes are more likely to occur at night. Young drivers are at higher risk for drowsy driving, which causes thousands of crashes each year. Enforce the state curfew.
- It's the Law - Require Your Teen to Buckle Up: Teens have the lowest rate of seatbelt use. The simplest way to prevent car crash deaths and serious injuries is to buckle up.
- No Drinking and Driving: Connecticut has a Zero-Tolerance Law for teens drinking and driving. Even one drink impairs a teen's driving ability and increases the risk of a crash. Be a good role model: Don't drink and drive, and reinforce this message with your teens.
- Teach Your Teen About Distracted Driving: Talking on the phone or with passengers, texting, dialing radio stations, unrestrained pets and other distracting activities in the car increase the risk of a serious crash.
- Vehicle Selection Matters: Avoid having your teen drive high performance vehicles or older model vehicles that lack improved safety technologies.
- Financial Liability: Make your teen aware of the financial consequences of a crash or a citation, including higher family insurance rates and liability for injuries or damage.
- Know Connecticut Teen Driving Laws: The teen driving laws are explained in this brochure.
More information, including teens-talking-to-teens videos created as part of the DMV teen safe driving video contest, can be found at ct.gov/teendriving.
- Get Involved: Be a role model. Establish your own household rules and consequences. Stick to them no matter the hassle you receive from your teens. Your determination could

save their lives.

Connecticut Children's Medical Center

The Injury Prevention Center (IPC) at Connecticut Children's Medical Center has made road safety one of its priorities, with a particular focus on teen driving safety. The IPC is currently working with Connecticut's driving schools to examine the mandatory 2-hour parent class in an effort to aid driving schools in making the 2-hour parent class as effective as it can be. In addition, the IPC has a number of programs that work to educate teens and parents on road safety:

- Push4safedriving.com – This Allstate Foundation funded initiative engages teens in crafting safe driving messages targeting their peers.
- Drive It Home Connecticut – This Allstate Foundation funded initiative engages high school students in putting on a comedic show on teen driving written and produced by the National Safety Council and the Second City comedy troupe. The show engages parents and teens in a conversation on what it means to drive responsibly. Interested schools can contact us at 860-837-5309.
- Pediatric E-Network – This network of pediatric practices provides tablet based education on teen driving safety at the 15, 16, and 17 year doctor's visit.
- Kohl's Road Safety Campaign – The Kohl's Cares funded initiative seeks to reduce the risk for families, children, and teens while they are out and about on Connecticut's roads. See www.kohlsroadsafety.org. The Kohl's Road Safety campaign is also sponsoring a book tour in Connecticut for Tim Hollister's newly released "Not So Fast: parenting your teen through the dangers of driving."

Tim Hollister, author of the teen safe driving blog, Reid's Dad

- Publication on September 1, 2013 of Not So Fast. Related activities: at the Lifesavers Conference in Denver in April, a focus group of parents who read the final manuscript, offered comments, and universally said that it is an excellent resource unlike anything else available on the market; and in August 2013, at the Governors Highway Safety Administration conference in San Diego, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Kohl's Stores, and Ct Department of Transportation paid for and distributed the book to the senior leadership of NHTSA and the other 49 state's Highway Safety Offices.
- In May and June 2013, my daughter Martha, now 21, appeared in a safe teen driving PSA

paid for by Kohl's and produced by Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

- From October through December 2013, Gary Lapidus, head of the Injury Prevention Center at CCMC, and I conducted a Connecticut Library Tour, with our stop in Simsbury recorded on Ct-N and now available as an On Demand video under "Friends of Simsbury Library, Nov 14, 2013." In addition, I have published guest posts on Huffington Post Impact; the Century Council's IKnowEverything program; the National Safety Council's Drive It Home website; and IDriveSafely, one of the nation's largest online driving schools. All of the national media coverage of Not So Fast is collected on www.nsfteendriving.com under "Book/Media Coverage."
- I am working to try to interest several national organizations in revising their parent-teen driving agreements to follow the national model that appears on my blog, www.fromreidsdad.org, and which Ct DMV used as a resource in its new model adopted in 2012.
- Lastly, I continue to post on my blog, which in November 2013 attracted nearly 18,000 visitors.

!IMPACT (Mourning Parents Act, Inc.)

- Rebranded its safe teen driving presentation -- now known as !IMPACT's Drive 4 Tomorrow Program
- Reached thousands of teens through !IMPACT's Drive 4 Tomorrow Program, which in 2013 was presented in 32 separate forums, including high schools and St. Francis Hospital.
- Expanded its membership.
- Took preliminary action to expand its billboard awareness program to broaden--
 - a. the messaging by addressing specific teen driving safety concerns and
 - b. the territory covered by adding more locations.
- Advocated for teen driving safety policy changes at the state and federal levels by, among other things, participating in a national press conference in Washington DC urging states to adopt primary safety laws recommended by Advocates of Highway and Auto Safety.
- Commenced an evaluation of safety issues relating to older teen drivers, specifically 18 and 19-year-olds, and the feasibility of expanding certain GDL laws to address the high incidence of crashes, fatalities and injuries among that age group.
- Continued to serve as an active participant on Connecticut DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Safe Teen Driving and as a member of the Connecticut Safe Teen Driving

Partnership.

- Participated as a judge in the Connecticut DMV's annual video contest.
- Was instrumental in establishing December 1-8, 2013 as Safe Teen Driving Awareness Week in Connecticut, which was designated by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital

- Even though there has been ample research performed on the increased crash incidence for novice teen drivers with passengers, little has been done in regards to the effects that different types of passengers. With funding from the Allstate Foundation, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital's Trauma Center conducted a study to identify the effects on the behavior of novice teen drivers dependent upon the type of passenger (parents/guardians, siblings, other teens or no passengers) in the vehicle. The data collected from roughly 3,500 surveys will allow for light to be shed upon the effects of the passenger on the teen driver and will ultimately lead to the development of effective education and behavior change interventions. The results are currently underway with the help of Preusser Research Group.
- Four underage drinking and driving forums at Monroe High School (150 students/200 parents), Trumbull High School (425 students/ 450 parents), and Foran High School (175 students/200parents) and Johnathan Law High School (150 students/175 parents) both in Milford. These schools have made this a top priority and a mandatory requirement with students having to attend the forums with at least one parent or they have to write a 10-page paper on driving and drinking. Speakers consisted of a trauma surgeon, Dr. Gary Kaml, sharing an experience of having to tell families about their loved one's injuries or worse death, as well as those from law enforcement, experts describing the use of the internet to check on teens, and most importantly teen and young adult drivers sharing the consequences they experienced because of driving under the influence.

Conclusion

The 2013 report offers policymakers, parents, safety advocates and teens many reasons to praise the benefits of the overall efforts in the last decade to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths among 16- and 17-year-old drivers. The patchwork efforts of groups statewide have contributed to the growing discussions about the benefits of strong laws and strong training requirements. It shows how the progression of recognizing this vulnerable group of drivers in 1997 with the start of a learner's permit to the adoption of initial restrictions in 2004 and further restrictions in 2008 has saved lives, limited injuries and reduced crashes and the costs associated with them. There is also no question that a poorly performing economy, which developed about the time the additional restrictions occurred, helped to aid in lowering the instances of deaths and injuries in this age group by reducing both the number of teen drivers and the number of miles driven by teen drivers. However, the changes are so dramatic that the economy alone did not cause them. It is clear, according to transportation researchers, that enhanced laws, more parental concern and rules at home, more conversation and adherence by teens to home rules and driving laws, various efforts at enforcement of the laws, a cottage industry of public health and other safety advocates talking about the need for better safe driving practices and an attentive group of state policymakers have in the last 10 years turned teen driving into a clear and present safety concern that resonates with communities.

Yet, there is more work to be done. Many communities through their high schools embrace the issue, but many more could to join that league. There also are communities scarred by tragedy from the death of a teen driver and possibly passengers. With the passing of time as that jarring sense of loss recedes, communities return to business-as-usual. With each new crop of 16- and 17-year-old drivers that come every year, communities need to renew their commitment to road safety. They need to make good on their pledge to work in their own unique ways to keep the safety discussion invigorated. New parents and new teens enter this vulnerable period of both risk and testing boundaries that pave the way toward adulthood. Community spirit has had the power in the last decade to help make that journey a little safer and reduce tragedies and all their painful effects through persistent advocacy on teen safe driving. The next decade needs to see these efforts to continue.

The report also sets a compass reading for safety advocates and policymakers to consider regarding the regulation of 18- and 19-year-old drivers. The growing body of statistical evidence, medical studies and cultural understandings is that this group continues to retain

serious vulnerabilities behind the wheel. As stated earlier in the report, trends indicate that some 16 and 17 year-olds have waited until they were older for licensure and likewise some of the 18 and 19 year-olds delayed licensure until their early 20s mostly because of expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle. The economy has driven older teens to remain at home and a New York Times story in 2010 coined the term, "The changing timetable for adulthood." Getting a license is not seen as the rite of passage that it once was. In addition, many attend a college or university that prohibits the parking of vehicles on campus until the second or third year, removing any immediate need for obtaining a license. Any licensing delay for the youngest drivers most often brings an escape from Connecticut's strict teen driving laws, including the beneficial passenger restrictions and bans on cell phone use. It can have far-reaching effects that sometimes pass unnoticed. This remains an issue for consideration in the coming years and a subject for further study.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Laws and requirements for 16 and 17 year-olds holding a learner's permit or driver's license.

<http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=805&q=424252&teendrivingPNavCtr=|#48954>

ⁱⁱⁱ What Is It About 20-Somethings, The New York Times, August 18, 2010

^{iv} Teens Delaying Licensure - A Cause of Concern?, AAA Foundation,
<http://newsroom.aaa.com/2013/08/teens-delaying-licensure-a-cause-for-concern/>

^v Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation Office of Highway Safety

^{vi} Stricter State Laws Translate Into Fewer Tickets To Teen Drivers, Hartford Courant, September 28, 2013

^{vii} Governor Malloy, State Officials and Business Executives Launch Campaign to Promote Teen Safe Driving and Reduce Distracted Driving, September 19, 2013,
<http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?A=4010&Q=532102>

^{viii} Teen Drivers Start Cautiously, Grow Careless With Time, USA Today, January 1, 2014

^{ix} Video on Connecticut Teen Driving Laws, Department of Motor Vehicles, 2013,
<http://youtu.be/lkqt55Qkxll>