Safe Summer Driving Tips for Teens and Everyone Else

Last year, Montana high schools trained more than 8,500 teens in the driving skills needed to stay safe on our roads and highways. Young drivers are crashing less than in previous years, but summertime continues to be the season when teen crashes rise. School is out and teens are on the go.

It doesn’t hurt to remind teens and everyone how to drive safely in summer:

**DON’T SPEED:** Critical teen driver errors include driving too fast for conditions and failing to detect and respond to hazards in time. Consider your own close calls with the curve in the road, the deer in the headlights, or the time you looked, but didn’t see the other truck at the intersection. *Slow down and enjoy the view.*

**EYES ON THE ROAD:** Montana high school students reported 58% used a cell phone while driving and 54.6% texted while driving during the past 30 days. *Cars still need attentive drivers, even with fancy technology.*

**TAKE THE NEXT RIDE:** The more passengers in a car, the more distracted the driver. *Say no to extra passengers, especially if they can’t all buckle up.*

**STAY SOBER AND ALERT:** Drunk and drugged driving increases in the summer. Drowsy driving in the heat is also a summer risk. *Designated drivers save lives!*

**BUCKLE UP:** The majority of teen drivers and teen passengers who died in crashes were not wearing seatbelts. *We can’t say it enough: Seat belts save lives.*

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE:** During driver education, teachers and parents work together to help teens build safe driving habits. Even after licensing, we can lead by example by following the rules of the road. *Steer through summer safely!* 

*Summer driving resources from NHTSA:*
https://www.nhtsa.gov/summer-driving-tips-2017

Montana Legislature Expands Supervised Teen Driving

The first step of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) requires that teens with a Learner License drive supervised for at least six months (and 50+ hours) before they can receive a first-year restricted license. The 2017 Montana Legislature revised licensing laws with the passage of HB 144. These changes went into effect on May 4, 2017 and some of these changes affect traffic education programs.

The Traffic Education Learner License (TELL) is now a Learner License issued by a CDTP instructor or driver examiner (amended 61-5-106 MCA). This Learner License allows parents/legal guardians to supervise a teen driver during Step 1 of the GDL.

The parent/legal guardian signing the Driver License Application is still financially liable for damages or losses resulting from a crash caused by the teen driver. Teens with a Learner License (even those issued prior to May 4, 2017) can now drive with other authorized, licensed adults such as stepparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and adult siblings. Seat belts are required.

Visit the OPI Traffic Education webpage to download a new GDL Factsheet and Driving Log and Module 1 of the Teen Driver Curriculum (for your Parent Meeting).

If you would like more information or have questions, contact Fran or Patti at the Traffic Education Office.
Traffic Education Deadlines for Summer Programs and Year-End Reports

Submit your **TE06 Year-End Report** to the OPI before **July 10** for an estimated reimbursement of $90-$100 for each student who completed a traffic education course at your school between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. The actual reimbursement amount will be determined when all TE04 Student Lists and TE06 Year-End Reports have been received and the number of students is divided by the percentage of driver license fees allocated for reimbursement to schools. Reimbursements are issued in mid-August.

Please make sure your program is approved by the OPI before the start of your summer program. For classes ending before or on June 30, submit your **TE01 District Application** in the 2017 school year. If your course will end in July, August or September, it must be entered in school year 2018.

Use the Traffic Education Data & Reporting System (TEDRS) to enter and submit these forms to the OPI. You can also use TEDRS to check your school’s Student Count Report and search for students who completed traffic education since 2012.

Contact Fran or Patti for more information or assistance with submitting forms and reports via TEDRS. To receive important Traffic Education reminders and updates, sign up for OPI Traffic Education e-news: [http://opi.mt.gov/Subscriptions/](http://opi.mt.gov/Subscriptions/)

Montana DRIVE One-Day Summer Workshop

Montana DRIVE Workshops in Lewistown are filling up this summer. Operated by the Office of Public Instruction and on track in Lewistown since 1979, these popular one-day behind-the-wheel workshops help drivers learn and practice techniques for managing and avoiding risky driving situations.

For registration details and workshop calendar, visit [http://montanadrive.mt.gov](http://montanadrive.mt.gov), call the Traffic Education Office at (406) 444.4432, or email montanadrive@mt.gov.