



# BE SMART. BE SAFE.

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SMART TEEN DRIVING

# Make a Difference in Your Teen's Driving

Welcome to the Parent's Guide to Smart Teen Driving. This guide is designed to help parents educate their teens on how to stay safe and be responsible on Utah roads. Teens who are taught safe driving habits from their parents are much less likely to get in a crash.

In fact, since 1999 when the Graduated Driver License (GDL) program was instituted in Utah, parents have seen a 69% decrease in the number of teens ages 15-17 killed in motor vehicle crashes (Utah Department of Health). Parents play a big role in forming a teen's driving habits, and with this guide, you can make sure your teen makes a habit of driving safe.



# UTAH GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING LAWS

## LEARNER PERMIT REQUIREMENTS BY AGE

Graduated Driver License laws do make a difference. In fact, since 1999 when the Graduated Driver License (GDL) program was instituted in Utah, parents have seen a 69% decrease in the number of teens ages 15-17 killed in motor vehicle crashes (Utah Department of Transportation). Please implement the laws below in your teen’s driving and remember, it is vitally important that your teen get the minimum 40 hours (10 at night) of drive time.

Driver Age	Required Learner Permit Holding Period	Required Test to Apply for License	Co-Signing Adult on Application	Driver Education Course Required	Driving Hours Required
15	6 months and until age 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written knowledge</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> <li>• Eye exam</li> <li>• Medical questionnaire</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	40 (10 after dark)
16	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written knowledge</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> <li>• Eye exam</li> <li>• Medical questionnaire</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	40 (10 after dark)
17	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written knowledge</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> <li>• Eye exam</li> <li>• Medical questionnaire</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	40 (10 after dark)
18	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written knowledge</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> <li>• Eye exam</li> <li>• Medical questionnaire</li> </ul>	No	Yes	40 (10 after dark)
19 or older	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written knowledge</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> <li>• Eye exam</li> <li>• Medical questionnaire</li> </ul>	No	Yes**	40 (10 after dark)

*\*\*If you are 19 years old or older, you can skip the driver education course as long as you can prove you drove 40 hours (10 after dark) and have had a learner permit for at least 3 months.*

## MINOR (FIRST TIME) DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS BY AGE

Please implement these laws AFTER YOUR TEEN HAS THEIR MINOR DRIVER LICENSE.

Driver Age	Nighttime Driving Restrictions	Exceptions to Nighttime Driving Restrictions	Front Seat Passenger Restrictions with a Learner Permit	Other Passenger Restrictions	Exceptions to Other Passenger Restrictions
16	12 a.m. to 5 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accompanied by a licensed driver at least 21 years of age who is in the front passenger seat</li> <li>On agricultural assignment</li> <li>Driving to and from work</li> <li>Driving to and from a school-sponsored activity</li> <li>Emergency situations</li> </ul>	Front seat passenger must be a parent/guardian, driving instructor or adult who co-signed the permit application	If you have a license: No passengers except immediate family until 6 months after receiving a minor license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front seat passenger is a licensed driver at least 21 years of age</li> <li>On agricultural assignment</li> <li>Emergency situations</li> </ul>
17	None	Not Applicable	Front seat passenger must be a parent/guardian, driving instructor or adult who co-signed the permit application	If you have a license: No passengers except immediate family until 6 months after receiving a minor license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front seat passenger is a licensed driver at least 21 years of age</li> <li>On agricultural assignment</li> <li>Emergency situations</li> </ul>
18	None	Not Applicable	Front seat passenger must be a licensed driver at least 21 years of age	None	Not Applicable
19 or older	None	Not Applicable	Front seat passenger must be a licensed driver at least 21 years of age	None	Not Applicable

## REMEMBER

- Teens may get a learner permit at age 15.
- Teens under age 18 must have a learner permit for six months before applying for a driver license. However, if the teen turns 18 during this six-month time period, they can apply for a driver license upon turning 18.
- Teens must have a learner permit before taking a driver education course.
- Teens must be at least 16 before applying for a driver license.
- Parents/guardians must sign for financial responsibility until their teen is age 18.
- Parents/guardians can, at any time and for any reason, withdraw their signature and cancel their teen's driver license.

## OTHER IMPORTANT LAWS

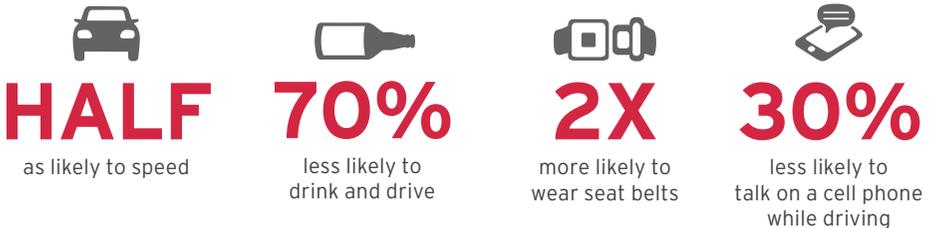
- Everyone in the car must be properly restrained (with a seat belt or child safety seat).
- Absolutely no alcohol or drugs in your system or in the car while driving.
- Operating a handheld device while driving is illegal for all drivers in Utah, regardless of age.
- Any use of a cell phone while driving is illegal for all drivers under age 18.

*Parents/guardians can, at any time and for any reason, withdraw their signature and cancel their teen's driver license.*

## PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

Quality, supervised practice can help your teen gain driving experience and skills needed to be a safe driver and can help prevent teen crashes. Go to [ZeroFatalities.com/learner-permit](https://www.zerofatalities.com/learner-permit) to find researched-based video tutorials that can help you guide your teen through this driving process.

Teens who say their parents monitor their activities in a helpful supportive way are:



## ALARMING FACTS: THE TRUTH ABOUT TEEN DRIVING

- Over 90% of teen crashes happen in the first few months of receiving a driver license (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety).
- Fatal crashes increase by nearly 45% when a 16- or 17-year-old driver has one teenage passenger; it doubles with two teen passengers and quadruples with three or more (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety).
- Per mile driven, drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely to be in a fatal crash than drivers ages 20 and older (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- Teen crashes are preventable, and proven strategies can improve the safety of young drivers on the road (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate or not be able to recognize dangerous situations. Teens are also more likely than adults to make critical-decision errors that lead to serious crashes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).



# BE AN EXAMPLE OF A SAFE DRIVER



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

Give guidance to your teen on responding to peer pressure:

- Role play or talk with your teen about dangerous situations that may arise when driving or riding in the car with other teens.
- Tell your teen driver it's OK to blame you. "I can't ride with you because you just got your license. My parents would ground me."

While you drive, give your teenager a play-by-play:

- Point out examples of unsafe driving.
- Narrate what you are doing and why. For example, why you are changing lanes or how to safely change lanes.

Continue to monitor your teen's driving activities after they have received their driver license.

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Create a parent/teen driving agreement at  
[ZeroFatalities.com/teen-driving-agreement](https://ZeroFatalities.com/teen-driving-agreement)



# ALWAYS BUCKLE UP

The lap and shoulder belt should be worn properly over the hip and shoulder bones at all times. When worn properly, the seat belt prevents severe organ and spinal damage in a crash.

Seat belts are designed to fit adults and can be dangerous to young children. By law, children are required to ride in an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or until the seat belt fits them correctly. Go to [clickIt.Utah.gov](http://clickIt.Utah.gov) for more information.



# LAWS/FACTS

## UTAH LAW

It is illegal to ride without a seat belt, regardless of age, in Utah.

- Law enforcement officers have the right to stop a vehicle if an occupant is spotted unbuckled.
- A seat belt ticket costs up to \$45. Drivers are responsible for enforcement of the rule for any passenger 16 years of age or younger.

## FACTS

- Teens with parents who are involved in their driving education are twice as likely to wear their seat belt (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Center for Injury Research and Prevention).
- Being unbuckled in a crash increases the risk of injury or death to other passengers by 40% (Insurance Institute For Highway Safety, IIHS).



*For more information on car seats, booster seats and seat belts, visit [Clickit.utah.gov](http://Clickit.utah.gov)*



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Set the example: Always wear your seat belt.
- Discuss the consequences, laws and safety for not wearing a seat belt.
- Remind your teen to buckle up whenever they get into a vehicle.
- Remind your teen to buckle up even when driving alone.
- Make it a rule that the vehicle doesn't move until everyone is buckled correctly.



# DRIVE CALM. AVOID AGGRESSIVE DRIVING.

Aggressive driving doesn't just mean road rage – it includes operating a vehicle in a way that could endanger people or property. Most actions connected with aggressive driving are illegal, such as speeding, running red lights and stop signs, failing to yield, tailgating and weaving in and out of your lane.



## UTAH LAW

Two moving violations within a single, continuous period of driving are classified as careless driving and three are classified as reckless driving. Both are punishable by fines and points will be added to the violator's driving record (See page 26).

## FACTS

- One in three fatal, teen-driver crashes in Utah involves speeding (Utah Highway Safety Office).
- Speeding increases the chance that a crash will result in injury (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety).
- Over two-thirds of vehicles in fatal, speed-related crashes are traveling 60+ mph (Utah Department of Public Safety).

*Two moving violations are classified as Careless Driving, and three are classified as Reckless Driving.*



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

When discussing aggressive drivers, tell your teen:

- Relax and ignore the other driver; it's not their job to teach other drivers a lesson.
- If you can do so safely, contact police with a vehicle description, license number, location and direction of travel.
- Driving is not a race.
- Discuss consequences and enforcement when rules are broken.



# DRIVE SOBER. NEVER IMPAIRED.

Alcohol and drugs impair a person's ability to concentrate and make decisions while slowing their reaction time.

Alcohol and drugs – including legal, prescription and illicit – may affect motor skills, reflexes and judgment.



# LAWS/FACTS

## UTAH LAW

- The Not a Drop Act emphasizes that drinking, possessing or attempting to purchase alcohol is illegal before age 21 (ParentsEmpowered.org).
- Persons under 21 may not operate a vehicle with detectable alcohol in their body.
- If alcohol is suspected, drivers are subject to the following:
  1. Chemical tests (blood/breath)
  2. Sobriety tests
  3. DMV license hearing and decision
  4. Suspension of license or operating privilege
  5. Fees
  6. Judicial review
  7. Referral to local substance abuse authority/program

*For more information, visit [PublicSafety.utah.gov](http://PublicSafety.utah.gov)*

## FACTS

- Underage drinking can affect a youth's physical, emotional and neurological health (ParentsEmpowered.org).
- Alcohol-impaired driver crashes are four times more likely to be fatal than other crashes (Utah Department of Public Safety).
- Teens with involved, supportive parents are 71% less likely to drive while intoxicated (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Center for Injury Research and Prevention).



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Set underage drinking and drug-use rules early.
- Explain the dangers of alcohol.
- Give appropriate consequences.
- Tell them to NEVER get in a vehicle with someone who has been drinking or is impaired in any way.
- Let your teen know that no matter where you are or what time it is, they can call you for a ride home.



# DRIVE FOCUSED. DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED.

Anything that takes a driver's attention off the road is a distraction.

Common distractions include: cell phones, eating and drinking, navigating, reading, changing music, talking to passengers or tending to children, adjusting car settings, applying makeup and looking away from the road.



## UTAH LAW

It is illegal to manipulate a handheld wireless communication device while operating a moving motor vehicle. This includes any of the following listed below:

- Writing, sending or reading a written communication
- Texting
- Instant messaging
- Emailing
- Dialing a phone number
- Accessing the internet
- Viewing or recording video
- Entering data into a handheld, wireless communication device

## FACTS

- Drivers ages 15-19 have the highest rates of driver distraction crashes.
- Cell phones and passengers are the top two distractions for all distracted driving crashes (Utah Highway Safety Office, 2013).
- If you are texting while driving, you are just as dangerous as someone who is intoxicated at double the legal alcohol limit. If you are talking on your cell phone, even hands-free, you are as dangerous as a drunk driver (University of Utah).



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Teach your teens to make adjustments to the vehicle's mirrors, temperature settings, seat positioning, etc. before hitting the road.
- The only safe time your teen can use a cell phone in the car is when they have reached their destination and stopped. Complete any calls or texts before starting the car. While driving, pull over for urgent calls; otherwise let them go to voicemail.
- Discuss consequences and enforcement if laws are broken.
- Remember that passengers are one of the top two distractions for teens. Enforce the GDL passenger restriction law to keep your teen free of distractions (See page 1).
- Practice eliminating distractions while you drive; remember that your teen will model your driving behavior.

A young woman with long blonde hair is smiling broadly while driving a car at night. She is wearing a red patterned top and has her seatbelt on. The background is dark with blurred lights from other vehicles and streetlights.

# DRIVE ALERT. NOT DROWSY.

Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. Most people know not to drink and drive, but they don't realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal. Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of crashing ([drowsydriving.org](http://drowsydriving.org)).

Sleepiness or fatigue causes the following:

- Impaired reaction time, judgment and vision
- Decreased performance, vigilance and motivation
- Problems with information processing and short-term memory
- Increased moodiness and aggressive behaviors

## WARNING SIGNS THAT YOU MAY BE TOO DROWSY TO DRIVE:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking or heavy eyelids
- Daydreaming or wandering thoughts
- Trouble remembering the last few miles driven
- Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Drifting from your lane, tailgating or hitting a shoulder rumble strip
- Feeling restless and irritable



## LAWS/FACTS

### UTAH LAW

Drowsy driving falls under careless driving, is a Class C misdemeanor and could result in a revocation of a violator's license.

### FACTS

- Being awake for at least 18 hours is the same as someone having a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.05% (Center of Disease Control and Prevention).
- Drivers ages 15-24 years have the highest drowsy driving crash rates (Highway Safety Office).



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

When discussing how to prevent drowsy driving, teach your teen:

- Get adequate sleep – most adults need 7 to 9 hours to maintain proper alertness during the day.
- Arrange for a travel companion – someone to talk with and share the driving.
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medications.
- If you need to pull over because you are drowsy, call and let someone know where you are.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### UTAH DRIVER POINTS SYSTEM

If drivers are convicted of a moving violation, points are added to their driving record as follows:

Reckless driving	80	Red light	50
Speeding (depending on severity)	35-75	Stop sign	50
Failure to yield right-of-way	60	Improper lookout	50
Following too closely (tailgating)	60	Improper passing	50
Wrong side of road	60	Negligent collision	50
Wrong way on one-way street	60	Other moving violations	40

Drivers age 21 years or over who accumulate 200 points for traffic violations in a period of 3 years will be asked to appear for a driver license hearing and may be placed on probation or have their license suspended or revoked. For individuals under age 21, just 70 points provoke a hearing and possibly the suspension or revocation of their license.

### CAN I CLEAR OR REDUCE MY POINTS?

The state will remove half of the points on your record if you drive one year without a traffic violation. If you drive two years without a violation, all of your points will be deleted. Points are automatically removed three years after the date of the violation. You may also attend a defensive driving course for an additional 50-point deduction once every three years.



# IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN A CRASH

1. If it is clear, safe and legal, stop your vehicle. Move the vehicle out of the roadway if necessary.
2. Turn off the ignition of the cars involved.
3. Make sure everyone involved in the crash is OK.
4. Call 911.
5. If you have reflective triangles or flares, set them around the crash site.
6. Gather the names of witnesses of the crash.
7. Take a picture with a camera and/or draw a quick diagram. Also note the date, time and weather.
8. Write down the driver's name, license and plate numbers.
9. Exchange insurance information. Do not discuss "fault" or make statements about the crash.
10. Get a copy of the police report of the crash from the investigating law enforcement agency.

# zero<sup>®</sup> Fatalities

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*A Goal We Can All Live With*

DRIVE ALERT | DRIVE FOCUSED | DRIVE CALM  
DRIVE SOBER | DRIVE BUCKLED

*ZeroFatalities.com*