



Maine DOT Flash Facts

Topic: Teen Driving

Make sure your prom experience is fun and safe!

- Make a plan and let your parents know what that plan is.
 - Stay alcohol and drug free.
 - If drugs or alcohol are present in a vehicle, or if the prospective has been drinking, find an alternate safe ride.
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Crash data shows that teenagers are the age group most at risk on the road. They are four times as likely as 21-40 year-olds to be in a car crash. According the MaineDOT, this means that one in four 16 and 17 year olds will be involved in a crash this year.

Driver distraction is the leading contributing factor in teen crashes – reported in about 7,100 crashes that resulted in 20 fatalities and 4,100 injuries during the past three years.

- Pay full attention to the driving task – situations change constantly on the road. Watch the road ahead, scan the roadside, and regularly check your mirrors.
 - Changing a CD or using a cell phone may take only two seconds, but in a car going 50 mph, that's 150 feet. A lot can happen in that time and distance.
 - Make cell phone calls only when you are parked at a safe location, away from traffic.
 - Pay attention to driving only – don't let others in the vehicle distract you. As the driver, YOU'RE responsible for their safety.
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Car crashes are the leading cause of unintentional death for people under age 24. The leading cause of these fatal crashes --- forty percent involving teen drivers -- is unsafe speed (4,800 crashes during the past three years that resulted in 60 fatalities and another 3,000 injuries).



Teen speed-related crashes are increasing. More than 70% of teen drivers involved in fatal speed related crashes are MALE. The MaineDOT has some tips to help teenagers be safer on the road:

- Adjust vehicle speed to driving conditions. Drive slower in bad weather, at night, and on unfamiliar roads.
 - Unsafe Speed can cause a driver to lose lane discipline. Lane Departure Crashes (meaning Run Off Road and Head On crashes) are often serious. From 2002-2004, teens were involved in 4,500 speed-related Lane Departure crashes that resulted in about 60 deaths and 2,800 injuries.
 - Slow down prior to curves, hill crests and turns.
 - Maintain at least a 3 second gap between you and the car ahead.
 - Most crashes with large animals occur at **night**, so slow down, watch the road and roadsides well ahead and don't overdrive your headlights.
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Driver inattention is the most common cause of crashes among teen drivers. Other top concerns with teen driving are excessive speed, inexperience, fatigue alcohol and drugs. The MaineDOT wants parents and their kids to share safety tips to help reduce crashes.

- Know your limitations. Inexperience of newer drivers results in improper and potentially dangerous decisions.
- Maintain a safe speed - even if it's slower than the speed limit.
- Make sure you're rested and alert when driving.
- Drive with full attention on the road.

Teens...**Be A Road Model** Don't speed and make sure you and your friends always wear seat belts.