

# TEEN DRIVERS FACT SHEET

## What's the problem?

Motor vehicle crashes are the **number one killer of Kansas teenagers**. In 2008, 51 people were killed and more than 5,400 people were injured as a result of teen crashes on Kansas roads. Per mile driven, teenagers are four times more likely than older drivers to crash.

Although young people represent only 14 percent of the national population, they account for more than 28 percent (**\$26 billion**) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries. Compounding the problem is that almost 85 percent of all medical costs for victims fall on society according to research. Nationally, employers spend more than \$9 billion per year in health care costs associated with crash injuries.



## What are the risk factors?

- **INEXPERIENCE:** Teens are over-represented in car crashes on Kansas roads. In fact, a 16-year-old driver is five times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than a 20-year-old driver. Crash risk is particularly high during the first year teenagers are eligible to drive.
- **PASSENGERS:** The risk of death among teen drivers more than doubles when there are two teen passengers in the vehicle and more than triples when there are three teen passengers
- **NIGHT DRIVING:** Teens are twice as likely to die in a car crash during nighttime hours.
- **LAW VIOLATIONS:** Speeding, drinking and driving, failing to wear a seatbelt and other risky behaviors substantially increase the chances of fatal crashes.

## What are the prevention methods?

There are proven methods to help teens become safer drivers. Research shows that comprehensive **graduated drivers licensing** (GDL) programs have reduced teenage crashes by up to 50 percent in the states in which they were implemented. GDL programs require extended adult supervision and limit night-time driving and the number of non-sibling passengers in the vehicle.

## What will a Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) system mean for Kansas?

Currently, 47 states have implemented licensing systems with restrictions found in GDL programs. Below are the requirements for Kansas teens if GDL is enacted.

- **FOR 1 YEAR:** Hold a learners permit before obtaining a restrictive license or a full license. (A learner's permit, available starting at age 14, allows teens to drive when accompanied by a parent or adult.)
- **FOR 6 MONTHS:** At age 16, a restrictive license is available which limits passengers to no more than one non-sibling passenger under the age of 21 and restricts driving after 9 p.m. unless driving to and from work/school as part of the restrictive license. After successfully completing that six month period, full licensing with no restrictions is available at age 16½.

Kansas restricted licenses and farm permits will remain unchanged if GDL is enacted.



For more information or questions contact KDOT's Traffic Safety Office at (785) 296-3756