

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Drinking and driving is a preventable crime. Young adults are taking more responsibility for their lives and choices, but it's not enough.



Young drivers, ages 15- to 20-years old, are especially vulnerable to death and injury.

In fact, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in America. Mile for mile, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

Virginia's ZERO TOLERANCE LAW makes driving under the influence of any amount of alcohol or drugs a serious criminal offense for drivers under the age of 21.

The following shows the consequences of drinking and driving. It's a matter of life and death.

- Per mile driven, 16-year-old drivers have the highest rate of fatal crash involvement by a wide margin.
- For every 100,000 licensed drivers, young drivers who are drinking are involved in fatal crashes at approximately twice the rate of drivers who are 21 and older.

What Can Concerned Parents Do?

Virginia's Graduated Driver Licensing laws restrict night-time driving and number of passengers for new teen drivers and can be found at www.statehighwaysafety.org. These laws serve as a good starting place for parents in determining whether parental rules should coincide with the law or be stricter based on the responsibility and experience level of their teens.

It is important to set family rules about driving and outline clear consequences for breaking the rules. Liberty Mutual and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) suggest the following:

- No use of alcohol or other drugs
- No cell phone use, including text messaging
- Limit or restrict friends in the car without an adult
- No driving after 10 p.m.
- Keep two hands on the wheel—no distractions while driving, including eating, changing CDs, handling iPods and putting on makeup

Enforce consequences if a family rule is broken. Liberty Mutual/SADD studies show that parental enforcement bolsters safe driving habits. More than half (52 percent) of teens who say their parents are *unlikely* to follow through on a consequence if they break a driving rule or law report they talk on a cell phone while driving, compared to 36 percent of teens who believe their parents would penalize them.

Serve by example. Exhibit behavior in the car that you would like your teen to emulate. Don't engage in behaviors you have established as off limits for your teen. While young people say overwhelmingly their parents are the biggest influence on how they drive, almost two-thirds (62 percent) of high school teens say their parents talk on a cell phone while driving; almost half (48 percent) say their parents speed; and almost one-third (31 percent) say their parents don't wear a safety belt.



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JUST THE FACTS

DRINKING & DRIVING PREVENTION

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LIFE & FUTURE



The Impact of Drinking and Driving

Taking responsibility behind the wheel could save the lives of many Virginia teenagers each year.

Did you know that in 2009 . . .

- 756 persons were killed—almost an 8 percent decrease from 2008.
- 21 teenagers, aged 15–19, were killed in alcohol-related crashes, 2.78 percent of the total (756) traffic fatalities
- 62,976 persons were injured—an 8.90 percent decrease from 2008.
- 31,434 persons were convicted of DUI—an 0.11 percent decrease from 2008.
- Of those convicted of DUI, 78.68 percent were male and 20.44 percent were female.
- 644 teenagers, aged 15–19, were injured in alcohol-related crashes, 1.02 percent of the total (62,976) traffic injuries.
- 316 persons were killed in alcohol-related crashes—a 10.73 percent decrease from 2008.
- 6,256 persons were injured in alcohol-related crashes—a 10.63 percent decrease from 2008.

Did you know that . . .

- The greatest number of youth fatalities occur in June, July and August.
- About three times as many young people die in alcohol-related crashes, per day, on weekends than on weekdays.
- 71 percent of speed-related crashes occur during clear weather and 58 percent during daylight.

Taking responsibility behind the wheel saves teen lives.

UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL'S EFFECTS

The way the body reacts to alcohol depends on the person's gender, weight, rate of alcohol consumption and mood. The following describes only some of the effects alcohol can have on the body.

- **Alcohol is absorbed directly into the bloodstream, which means the entire body becomes impaired.**
- **Alcohol alters your ability to make decisions.**
- **Alcohol impairs your judgment.**
- **Alcohol gives a false sense of self-confidence.**
- **Alcohol delays reaction time.**
- **Alcohol impairs motor skills, like coordination and balance.**
- **Alcohol greatly reduces your inhibitions, making you do things you would never do when sober.**
- **Regular drinking impairs learning and memory.**



Join your peers. . . .
Take a stand against drunk driving!

Virginia Alcohol Laws

- Virginia's ZERO TOLERANCE LAW makes driving under the influence of any amount of alcohol or drugs a serious criminal offense for drivers under the age of 21.
- Any person less than 21 years of age whose blood or breath alcohol concentration measures .02 or more (but less than .08) is in violation.
- The court may require offenders to forfeit their driver's license to operate a motor vehicle for a period of six months, and the court may fine them up to \$500.
- It is illegal for any person under the age of 21 to purchase, possess, or attempt to purchase or possess any alcoholic beverage. Upon conviction, you could face up to 12 months in jail and/or be fined not more than \$2,500. The court shall order a fine of at least \$500 or a minimum of 50 hours of community service and your driver's license may be suspended for a period of up to a year.
- Violators using a FAKE ID to establish false identity or false age to purchase alcoholic beverages are guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and upon conviction, face a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or one year in jail and a minimum \$500 fine or 50 hours of community service, and can lose their driver's license for up to one year.
- Possessing or consuming alcohol on public school property carries a fine of up to \$1,000 and six months JAIL TIME for anyone, adult or minor.
- It is illegal for any person to purchase alcoholic beverages for another person who is less than 21 years of age. If convicted, the court may order jail time for up to 12 months and/or fine up to \$2,500 and the loss of a driver's license for up to 12 months.

By understanding all of the facts, you have the knowledge to make the right decisions in order to take responsibility for your life!

Save a Life, Save a Friend, Save Yourself

Take a stand against drunk driving! It only takes one person to stand up for what's right to save a life.

- Do NOT get into a car with someone who has been drinking.
- If you see someone who has been drinking, take his/her keys away. Remember, friends don't let friends drink and drive.
- If you find yourself in an environment where your peers are drinking, call a friend, call a cab or call your parents to come pick you up.
- To report suspected substance-impaired drivers on the highway, dial #77 on your cell phone to reach the Virginia State Police. Be prepared to give the location, direction of travel, description of any suspect vehicle and license number and description of the situation prompting the call.
- Buckle up every time you get in a car. It's always your best defense against drunk drivers. Be a HERO: www.herocampaign.org/.

