

# New interactive website helps parents keep teen drivers safe

June 16 2011

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Summer is the most dangerous time of year for teen drivers, with nearly twice as many teens dying on America's roads each day compared to the rest of the year. But a new online program helps parents keep their teens safe as they gain experience driving without adult supervision.

The Checkpoints Program, presented by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute and Michigan Department of Community Health, is a free, interactive web resource ([saferdrivingforteens.org](http://saferdrivingforteens.org)) that establishes rules in a personal written agreement that ensures parents that their [teens](#) are clear about where and when they can drive.

"Motor vehicle crashes kill more teens than any other cause," says C. Raymond Bingham, a research professor who heads up UMTRI's Young [Driver Behavior](#) and [Injury Prevention](#) Group. "The main reason [driving](#) is more dangerous for teens, is that they are young and not experienced at driving unsupervised. Becoming a safe driver takes years of experience.

"Many parents struggle with wanting to let their teens start driving unsupervised and knowing how to keep their teens as safe as possible when they are not in the vehicle with them. By being actively involved in their teen's driving, parents help increase their teen's safety."

Checkpoints gives parents facts about teen [driving safety](#), shows them things they can do to make their teen's driving safer and gives them an

interactive parent-teen driving agreement that helps them set clear guidelines for driving. The program highlights four driving situations that research has shown to be especially risky for [teen drivers](#): driving with teen passengers, at night, in bad [weather conditions](#), and at high speeds.

The agreement also allows parents to establish rules for teens to follow in all driving situations:

- Never play around with passengers, talk on a cell phone, mess with the radio or do anything else distracting.
- Always call home if for any reason it is not safe to drive or ride with someone else.
- Always call home if going to be late.
- Always wear a safety belt and require all passengers to wear safety belts.
- Always obey all traffic laws.
- Never speed, tailgate or cut off others.
- Never drive after taking any drugs/alcohol or ride with a driver who has taken drugs/alcohol.
- Always tell a parent/guardian where you're going and with whom.

And allow families to establish common rules for parents, such as:

- Provide safe ride home when asked (no questions at that time).
- Consider necessary exceptions to the driving privileges.
- Apply rules fairly and consistently.
- Point out and discuss safe and dangerous driving situations and practices.
- Be a good role model behind the wheel.

Checkpoints, created by Bruce Simons-Morton of the National Institutes of Health, has been tested in several research studies. It is available to parents for free through a grant to the University of Michigan

Transportation Research Institute and the Michigan Department of Community Health from the National Center for Injury Prevention Control, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The program has been tested by parents and teens in several states, including Michigan, and has been shown to help [parents](#) create and use a parent-teen driving agreement during the first months their teens had licenses. Those teens received fewer tickets and reported less risky driving behaviors (e.g., speeding, tailgating, turning fast, unsafe lane changes, cutting in front of other vehicles, going through yellow or red lights).

**More information:** [saferdrivingforteens.org/](https://saferdrivingforteens.org/)

Provided by University of Michigan

Citation: New interactive website helps parents keep teen drivers safe (2011, June 16) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-06-interactive-website-parents-teen-drivers.html>

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