

National Teen Driver Safety Week Begins October 20

News

Posted by : Randy

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Missouri teens are settling into the fall routine of school and enjoying good times with friends. Trips to ball games or weekend fun is on their to-do list and they're on the road in record numbers.



Unfortunately, too many teens still aren't following basic driver safety and the Graduated Driver License Law requirement of wearing a seat belt when they get behind the wheel or ride with others in motor vehicles.

Teen Driver Safety Week provides a unique opportunity to focus attention on this national problem. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of fatalities among teenagers in the United States. In 2012 there were 64 teen (15-19) vehicle occupants killed in Missouri traffic crashes, with 81 percent being unbelted. Eleven percent of the unbelted teens who were killed were also impaired drivers.

“Only 66 percent of Missouri’s teens wear their seat belts,” said Leanna Depue, executive committee chair of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. “So many of those tragedies could be prevented, if only teens would take the time to buckle up.”

Teen drivers are more likely to drive distracted or substance-impaired than other drivers. Under Missouri law, drivers age 21 and under are banned from texting while driving and can be fined up to \$200 for this offense. Missouri also has a Zero Tolerance Law, meaning if anyone under 21 is caught driving with even a trace of alcohol in their system their license will be suspended. So as you get behind the wheel, please remember these simple safe driving tips:

- Drive focused, without distraction of talking or texting on your cell phone.
- Drive like you care. Follow the laws of the road.
- Drive alert and substance-free and well-rested.
- Buckle Up. It's your best defense in any traffic crash.

For more information on teen driver safety, go to saveMOLives.com. You can also follow SaveMOLives on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, #saveMOLives and #ArriveAlive.