



GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier, people.

I'm Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you are the parent or guardian of a teen driver, it's likely you were worried when they first sat behind the steering wheel. You may still be anxious, even though they've been driving for several months, and you have good reason to be concerned. After all, the risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, and cause more than a third of all deaths in this age group.

The good news is that motor vehicle crashes can be prevented. But it does take effort. If you're responsible for a teenager, you can make a difference. You can teach your teen driving skills, supervise their driving, and manage their access to motor vehicles. We know your involvement can lead to less risky driving behavior, fewer traffic tickets, and fewer crashes among teens.

Your state's graduated drivers licensing, or GDL, system is another proven way to reduce teen crashes. GDL systems are designed to help new drivers learn under low-risk conditions. While GDL laws differ by state, teen drivers in most states are required to go through three stages: first, a learner's permit that requires driving supervision by a licensed adult; then a provisioned license that temporarily restricts unsupervised driving; and, eventually, full licensure. As teen drivers progress through each of the learning stages, they get additional driving privileges, such as driving at night or with multiple teen passengers. Research suggests that the most comprehensive GDL systems are associated with almost 40 percent lower death rates and 40 percent fewer injuries among 16-year-old U.S. drivers.

CDC recognizes that GDL systems are the most effective method we have to help teens drive safely, and that's why we are spotlighting the benefits of GDL systems during the first United Nation's Global Road Safety Week, April 23rd to the 29th (2007).

Globally, 1.2 million road traffic deaths that occur each year and 40 percent of these are among children and young adults. CDC is joining with partners around the world to increase awareness about the need for road traffic safety among youth. The slogan for Global Road Safety Week is "Road Safety is No Accident," and this highlights how individuals, organizations, governments, and societies can work together to improve road traffic safety.

CDC is excited to take part in this effort by raising awareness about the key role that parents and guardians play in keeping their teen drivers safe. In particular, you can use GDL systems to guide and support your teen's safe driving habits. Find out what the GDL requirements are in your state and build from there.

CDC can help. We have developed a website that provides links to drivers licensing information for your state. You'll also find information about teen drivers and strategies you can use to manage their risks. You can access the website at www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/GRSW.

One of CDC's goals is for people to be safe and healthy in every stage of life. For adolescents, this means we must give them the skills and experience to be safe on the road so that they can become safe, healthy, independent, and productive adults.

Help us keep the spirit of Global Road Safety Week alive every day. Get involved when your teens learn to drive, and remain involved, even after they've been licensed. Thank you.

[Announcer] To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit www.cdc.gov.