

# Take Action!

## Keep Young Drivers Safe and Healthy

### How to Use?

This Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Action Guide was created in order to assist local MCH programs with developing their MCH plan. The *“Teen Motor Vehicle”* Action Guide is intended to help local health agencies and community partners develop evidenced based Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-framed (SMART) goals and good objectives. This guide identifies strategies and action steps to keep young drivers safe on the roads.

MCH Action Guides are divided into four (4) sections:

- **“How to Use”** - includes special instructions;
- **“What’s at Stake”** - contains background information & data;
- **“What Works”** - outlines best practices or promising strategies;
- **“Resources and Tools”** - lists resources and tools to help keep young drivers safe and write SMART objectives.

Injury Prevention Program staff are available to provide technical assistance to incorporate Action Guide information into local MCH operational plan and consult on specific content material. To contact the Injury Prevention Program about this Action Guide call (303) 692-2589 or email the program manager at [lindsey.myers@state.co.us](mailto:lindsey.myers@state.co.us).



**Tip!**

Find local data and experts

### What’s at Stake?

**Death and Injury.** In the United States (US), thirty-five percent of all teen deaths result from motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1</sup> In Colorado in 2008, 51 teens (15 – 19 years of age) were killed, a 21.5% decrease since 2005.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, 469 teens were hospitalized from motor vehicle crashes, a 6% decrease from 2005.<sup>2</sup>

**Cost.** The US economic cost of police-reported crashes (fatal and nonfatal) involving drivers ages 15 to 20 was \$40.8 billion in 2002.<sup>3</sup>

**Alcohol.** In 2008, 26% of Colorado teens and 29% of US teens died in an alcohol-related motor-vehicle crash.<sup>4</sup>

**Distraction.** Compared to all age groups, drivers 20 years old or less are more likely to be involved in a distraction-related crash.<sup>5</sup> One additional teen passenger in a car driven by a 16-year-old increases crash risk by approximately 50%; crash risk increases fourfold with three or more passengers.<sup>6</sup> For all age groups, cell phone use while driving increases crash rates fourfold.<sup>7</sup>

**Crash Rate.** US drivers 15 – 20 years of age had the highest fatal crash rate of any age group in 2006.<sup>8</sup> This rate is double the rate for age groups 35 years and older.<sup>8</sup>

**Night Driving.** In 2008, 30% of Colorado teen motor vehicle deaths occurred between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m, similar to the US rate of 32.7%.<sup>4</sup>

**Seat Belts.** In 2008, approximately 35% of Colorado teen drivers and occupants killed in a car crash were unbelted.<sup>4</sup> Nationwide, 42% of teens killed in car crashes were unbelted.<sup>4</sup>

**Speeding.** In 2008, 54% of drivers 15-20 years of age involved in fatal crashes were speeding at the time of the crash. These rates are higher than for any other age group.<sup>4</sup>



#### Questions to Ask:

- ✓ What is the cost to your community?
- ✓ What role does alcohol play?
- ✓ What role do seat belts play?

# What Works?

## Keep Young Drivers Safe and Healthy

### Strategy #1: Leverage the Strengths and Assets of Partners

Everyone has a role to play in preventing motor vehicle-related injury among youth. Communities can make change and build solutions by working collaboratively across all sectors. This type of inclusive approach brings multiple perspectives and assets to the table. It is important to align yourself with an existing coalition in order to leverage your communities' strengths and assets! Make sure these perspectives are included in your efforts:

- Youth
- Local Driver's Licensing Offices
- Transportation Programs
- Industry and local businesses
- Law Enforcement
- Faith Communities
- Schools
- Regional Prevention Consultants
- Parents/Families
- Youth Serving Organizations
- Policymakers
- Social Services Providers
- Media
- Civic Organizations
- Tribal Councils
- Cultural-Interest Groups



**ACT!**

- ✓ Include diverse perspectives in your community coalition.
- ✓ Use the information and strategies in this MCH Action Guide to develop and implement a culturally responsive, action plan with goals and S.M.A.R.T. objectives addressing teen driving safety. The Community Toolbox web site offers free information and instructions for starting and sustaining a coalition as well as more detailed action planning recommendations. [www.thecommunityguide.org/mvoi/default.htm](http://www.thecommunityguide.org/mvoi/default.htm)



#### Questions to Ask:

- ✓ *What coalitions exist in your area?*
- ✓ *What is the value of working with a variety of partners?*
- ✓ *What are you trying to accomplish?*
- ✓ *What tangible results will mean you are meeting your goals?*
- ✓ *What will your group actually do to create these outcomes?*

### Strategy #2: Promote Healthy Youth Development

Adolescence is an unprecedented time of growth and opportunity. Adolescents experience changes in the way they look, think, feel, and interact with others. These changes are accompanied by a new set of societal roles and responsibilities. One of the most significant new roles for an adolescent is that of automobile driver. While driving fosters autonomy and greater decision-making, it comes with newfound risks to adolescents' safety and overall wellbeing. While laws can help, a broad vision and strategic plan must also include mobilizing attitude and behavior changes in youth. Teens who engage in risky driving behaviors also are likely to be taking risks in other areas. Research shows that understanding risky behavior is best understood in terms of underlying motivation.



**ACT!**

- ✓ Ensure abundant youth involvement! Create meaningful roles for youth in coalitions and initiatives addressing teen driving safety.
- ✓ Invest in Youth! Fully engage teens in activities that build their confidence, competence, connections and character.
- ✓ Engage youth in problem solving to learn prosocial behavior and how to resist inappropriate peer pressure.
- ✓ Involve youth as part of your collective; listen to them and avoid making decisions for youth – make decisions *with* them.



#### Questions to Ask:

- ✓ *Do all youth have access to developmentally appropriate experiences and relationships?*
- ✓ *What activities or programs offer youth opportunities to practice decision-making and problem solving?*

# What Works? *(continued)*

## Keep Young Drivers Safe and Healthy

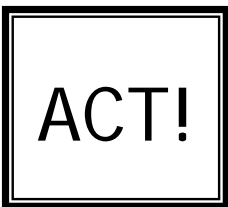
### Strategy #3: Support Enforcement of Existing Laws and Policies, While Striving to Implement Additional Effective Laws and Policies

**Graduated Drivers Licensing** – Colorado's Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) law is a three-stage system (learner's permit, restricted or provisional license, and full licensure) for phasing-in on-road driving so that beginners obtain their initial driving experience under low-risk conditions. In addition to the three stages Colorado's law includes passenger and nighttime restrictions.

**Zero Alcohol Tolerance** – Colorado has adopted zero tolerance BAC laws for youth. These laws make it illegal for persons under the age of 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their blood.

**Standard (primary) Safety Belt Law** – Standard enforcement means that police can stop and cite a driver solely for safety belt law violations; secondary enforcement means that they can only cite a driver for safety belt non-use after they have stopped the driver for some other infraction. Teen belt use is higher in states with primary belt laws and considerably lower in states without, including states with GDL belt provisions. Colorado currently has no standard primary seatbelt law.

**School Policies** – It is recommended that individual schools and/or districts adopt policies supporting the above-mentioned laws.



- ✓ Partner with parents, law enforcement and schools to ensure enforcement of the GDL law.
- ✓ Support a standard primary seatbelt law.

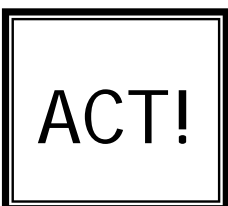


#### Questions to Ask:

- ✓ How well are these laws enforced in your community?
- ✓ What is being done to sustain them?

### Strategy #4: Encourage and Support Parents' Protective Role

Fifty-nine percent of teen drivers say that their parents have the most influence on their driving, according to a survey by the Liberty Mutual Group and Students Against Destructive Decisions. Parents driving behavior and expectations strongly influence how their children drive. Parental modeling and clear, positive, and convincing messages about driving expectations can make a difference.



- ✓ Always include youth and parents in decision-making.
- ✓ Host a "Teaching Your Teen to Drive" class, which includes a 6-month follow-up evaluation survey. (Contact your MCH Consultant for details!)
- ✓ Encourage parents to fully implement the Parent-Teen Driving Contract available on [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)



#### Questions to Ask:

- ✓ How can you get youth and parents involved in your efforts?
- ✓ What is the value in youth and parent's active participation?

# Resources and Tools

## Keep Young Drivers Safe and Healthy

### Data Resources

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1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, United States Department of Transportation.  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)
2. Colorado Health Information Dataset (COHID)  
*COHID has local-level health data compiled by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to help users determine health status of a neighborhood, community, county or region.*  
[www.cdphe.state.co.us/cohid](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/cohid)
3. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Dept. of Transportation (US). Traffic safety facts 2002: young drivers. Washington (DC): NHTSA; 2003  
[www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/TSF2002/2002ydrfacts.pdf](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/TSF2002/2002ydrfacts.pdf).
4. Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)  
*Using data, FARS is a crash census; data from FARS assists communities in the identification of traffic safety issues and assists with the evaluation of motor vehicle and highway safety standards and initiatives.*  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/ncsa/fars.html>
5. The Role of Driver Distractions in Traffic Crashes. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, May 2001.  
*A peer-reviewed objective report on the association between crashes and distractions.*  
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/distraction.pdf>
6. Chen L, Baker SP, Braver ER, Li G. Carrying passengers as a risk factor for crashes fatal to 16- and 17-year old drivers. JAMA 2000;283(12):1578–82.  
*Assesses the association between teen crash risk and passengers.*  
[http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen\\_drivers/teendrivers\\_factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html)
7. Redelmeier, Donald; Tibshirani, Robert (February 1300, 1997). "[ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CELLULAR-TELEPHONE CALLS AND MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISIONS](#)" (PDF). *The New England Journal of Medicine* **336** (7): 453–458.  
*Assesses the association between teen crash risk and cell phone use.*
8. Teen Driver Crashes, A Report to Congress, July 2008. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.  
*A summary of teen driver crashes and a review of contributing factors associated with the high crash rate.*  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Traffic%20Injury%20Control/Articles/Associated%20Files/811005.pdf>

### Fact Sheets & Toolkits

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- In the Driver's Seat: Colorado's Teen Driving Resource  
*Colorado's main teen driving resource hosted by the Colorado Department of Transportation.*  
[www.coteedriver.com](http://www.coteedriver.com)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
*Where you will find the "Deaths and Hospitalizations Involving Teen Drivers in Colorado" Fact Sheet.*  
<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/injepi/index.html>

# Resources and Tools *(continued)*

## Keep Young Drivers Safe and Healthy

### Reviews & Reports

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- CHRONIC – A Report on the State of Teen Driving, 2005  
*Allstate Foundation*  
[www.allstate.com/Community/Documents/chronic.pdf](http://www.allstate.com/Community/Documents/chronic.pdf)
- Ready Guide for Teens and Parents-English and Spanish  
*DaimlerChrysler*  
[www.roadreadyteens.org](http://www.roadreadyteens.org)

### Technical Assistance

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- Regional Prevention Consultants provide FREE consultation that help communities in planning, implementing, and evaluating effective prevention programs.  
[www.omni.org](http://www.omni.org) and Click on "Regional Prevention Services"
- To develop goals and S.M.A.R.T. objectives, visit this interactive website:  
[http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dashoet/writing\\_good\\_goals/page002.html](http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dashoet/writing_good_goals/page002.html)



**SMART!**

**Specific**  
**Measurable**  
**Achievable**  
**Realistic**  
**Time- framed**