

# before the wheel™

*communities supporting safe teen driving*



Winter/Spring 2013

## teen drivers are watching you!

When I introduce myself as a Safe Teen Driving Advocate, I often hear this response. "Oh, I don't have any teenagers right now." My response is "Great, it is a perfect time for you to make a significant difference by practicing safe behaviors and being an example for teens who are watching other drivers.

Imagine attending a sporting event at a local high school and hearing the following announcement.

"This announcement only applies to students. Swearing, roughhousing and yelling at players and referees is not allowed. We expect good sportsmanship for all students attending this event".

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***We have never heard this announcement because everyone attending the event is expected to display courteous and respectful behaviors, not only the students.***

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When we go downhill skiing, we wear all the right clothing including the right hat, ski jacket and pants, gloves and goggles. We use all the right equipment, boots that are durable and have warm lining and skis and poles that are sturdy enough to take all the bumps.

We know that there is a very high risk of injury and frostbite if we do not prepare in advance and utilize the right equipment. We make the same decisions on clothing and equipment whether we our skiing with adult friends or children.

Today is the day to take action and apply the same rules to driving.

We should be wearing our seatbelt for every trip in the vehicle. We should

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***Is giving up a little of our own personal comfort important enough for us to save teen lives?***

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always be focused on driving, not eating and drinking, never leaning over to pick up something, applying make-up or talking or texting on the cell phone.

Be bold and spread the word to your own community of friends, relatives and business associates. Ask them to help you make a difference for the teens in your own community. ■



Your teen has recently received his/her driver license. For many parents,

it is the first time the teen will be completely independent of monitoring and free to make decisions that have serious consequences.

It is important to decide early in the process what you are going to do this week, this month, and this year to ensure that your teen has the best possible safety information, decision making abilities, and technical driving skills, before he/she gets behind the wheel or enters a vehicle as a passenger of another teen driver.

The first step is to support your teen by providing clear guidelines. Your teen is anxious about the next few months. The decisions you make will affect your teen's short and long term attitudes about driving. It is great that he/she passed the driver test, but it does not mean the teen has a right to take the car without permission or drive anywhere at any time.

Communication should be relaxed and relevant. Potential situations and scenarios should be discussed with your teen. Parents need to clarify and attain agreement from their teen that there are restrictions that are non-negotiable.

Frequent communication, leading by example, and phasing privileges are the best way to direct your teen on a safe driving path.

I look forward to hearing from you. Contact me if you would like the newsletter to be distributed at your high school or community event. I am available at 262.617.3139 or [annescallon@aol.com](mailto:annescallon@aol.com)

Sincerely,

Anne Scallon  
Publisher & Editor

# empower teen drivers with strategies!

## Don't say Don't.

Telling a teen don't without providing an alternative option does not help your teen driver. Your teen will most likely be in one or more of the situations listed below. It is your responsibility as a parent to coach and guide your teen and develop a couple of options on how to respond to each different situation, ***before the teen gets in the vehicle with friends.***

Your teen has learned technical skills in the driver education class. You must augment your teen's training for the first year of driving. This will include practice, practice and more practice on the technical skills. Preparing your teen to be a good decision-maker for unexpected developments on the road and peer pressure situations is crucial to your teen's safety. The first year of driving should also include a defensive driving class designed specifically for teen drivers, go to [www.beforethewheel.com/links.html](http://www.beforethewheel.com/links.html).

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***It is not an "if it happens", it is most likely "when it happens" is your teen prepared?***

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***Here are few scenarios to discuss and practice with your teen***

Challenge & Options  
A driver moves quickly in front of your teen's car in the lane that he or she is driving in. A defensive driver may be

able to avoid this entirely. Train your teen to be more aware of what other drivers are doing. When stopped at a stoplight, it is a good time to look around and notice the behaviors of other drivers. Are they distracted? Is anyone talking on a cell phone or texting, eating or leaning over to pick up something? That is the driver to watch out for. A quick unplanned maneuver is often the result of a driver who is focusing on something other than driving.

Practice this with your teen driver. Have your teen driver be aware of what is going on with other drivers and how the traffic is flowing. Coach your teen to leave openings in other lanes and be prepared to safely slow the car or move into another lane. Quick maneuvers are more dangerous.

### Challenge & Options

Your teen attends a party with a trusted friend who is driving and the friend decides to drink. Are you, the parent available anytime anywhere to pick up your teen? The teen must be aware of what choices are available to avoid reentering the vehicle with the teen that drank alcohol.



***Also Remember To Always Lead by Example and let your teen know the 5 non-negotiable restrictions:***

- Seatbelts must be worn by the driver and all passengers
- Follow Graduated Driver License Restrictions
- Park safely in a parking lot and be at a complete stop for all cell-phone communication and texting
- Speed limit must be followed at all times
- Absolute Sobriety – not a drop of alcohol

Go to [www.beforethewheel.com](http://www.beforethewheel.com) for more great information on how to work with your new teen driver. ■