



Safety check: Get there safe and sound

Car crashes remain a leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S., with nearly 100 people killed on our roadways every day. Fortunately, these crashes can be prevented if we all take steps to ensure one another's safety.

On the road, off the phone

Cell phone use – texting or talking on a handheld or hands-free device – is involved in an estimated 26 percent of all crashes each year. Hands-free is not risk-free, either. Even if your hands are on the wheel and your eyes are on the road, your brain is distracted by the cell phone conversation.

Before you set out, make sure:

- Your cell phone is turned off and put in a purse, trunk or glove compartment
- To designate a passenger to answer the phone for you if you're expecting a call
- To schedule breaks to check voicemail, texts and emails

Get plenty of sleep

An estimated 1,550 people are killed each year in crashes involving drowsy drivers. You should never get behind the wheel if you are tired or have been taking certain medications.

To make sure you don't get tired during the drive:

- Take a pre-drive nap, and pull over for a "power nap" if you get tired
- Drive with a partner, and switch drivers every two hours
- Schedule frequent breaks to get out and stretch your legs

Protect your new teen driver

Half of all teens will be involved in a car crash before graduating from high school. Many of these crashes will be simple fender-benders, but too many others will claim precious young lives. Parental involvement can significantly reduce teens' crash risk.

When your teen gets a license, make sure to:

- Practice driving with him or her for at least 30 minutes each week
- Outline household rules in a New Driver Deal, available at DriveitHOME.org
- Limit the number of passengers your teen can drive with
- Limit nighttime driving, when visibility is low and crash risk is higher

Fast Stat:

More than 35,000 people are killed each year in traffic crashes, with alcohol, speeding and distraction being leading crash factors. (*Injury Facts*®)

Green Cross Tip

Drive the way you want your fellow motorists to drive. Turn off your cell phone, get plenty of sleep, never drive after drinking and spend time teaching your teen how to drive.

Sources: National Safety Council, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration FARS data