



Safe driving tips for teens, parents, and all drivers

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[around town](#)

[in the country](#)

[in bad weather](#)

[general tips](#)

[parallel parking](#)

[passing](#)

[crashes](#)

[fatigue](#)

[buying a used car](#)

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Teen Driving Contract

When teens negotiate their own set of car keys, parents worry that they've said goodbye to all control. It's true that teens experience a new sense of freedom when they get their licenses. But they often don't understand the responsibilities that come with the privilege. Parents can help by drawing up a driving contract, before turning over the keys, that clearly states the family rules as well as the consequences for breaking them. A contract should address safety, good driving skills, and particular situations in the following areas:

The car

Parents should make decisions on the following car related items and add them to the contract.

- Which car(s) the teen is allowed to drive: The car should have a driver's side airbag, a good safety rating, and be easy to maneuver
- Car care—including putting gas into the car, oil changes, tire pressure, and regular maintenance requirements
- Car clutter—keeping the car clean inside and out and free of trash
- Paying for insurance. Insurance rates for teens are often twice the ones for adults over twenty five—and for good reason. Teens have an average of three accidents between 16 and 20. Some parents find that having their teens pay the insurance costs with their part time jobs provides some incentive for avoiding reckless onroad behavior that often results in accidents. Insurance rates will rise sharply with each accident—sometimes costing thousands of dollars per year.

Safety:

The contract should also stress safe driving practices, including:

- Always obeying the speed limit and traffic laws
- Always wearing seat belts and making sure that all passengers are buckled up before driving

- No drinking/drug use—Parents should always be vigilant in watching for signs of alcohol or drug use by their teens and talk to their teens and seek professional help if they find indications. Driving while impaired is one of the leading causes of fatality in vehicle crashes—and the numbers are unfortunately on the rise in the last few years. The contract should state that teens are not allowed to drink and drive, have alcohol in the car, or even be a passenger in a car with a driver who has been drinking or using drugs. Assure your teen that they can always call you to come get them if they get stranded at a gathering.
- Not driving with friends in the car. We suggest that teens not be allowed to drive with friends or even younger siblings in the car for the first six to twelve months of having their license unless an adult is also in the car. Many states have instituted graduated licensing programs that also have this limitation. Distractions are one of the main causes of accidents for new drivers. And trying to keep track of conversations, playing around, or trying to act cool could lead to a crash.
- New drivers should let parents know where they are going and when they plan to return.
- Curfews. Night driving is especially difficult for a new driver and more accidents happen in the 9:00 p.m.-2:00 A.M. timeframe than during the daylight hours. Set realistic curfews, but also tell teens that if they are running late, it's always better to drive safely than speed to make up the minutes—and to call you if possible to let you know they are on the way home.

Consequences

The contract should specify what happens if the rules are broken. It's a good idea to get your teen's input on appropriate penalties. For example, a speeding ticket might result in the loss of driving privilege for a week and having to pay for the ticket.

The following is a sample contract that parents can modify by adding their own consequences to meet their needs.

Driving Contract

I _____, agree to the terms of this contract allowing me the privilege of driving my

own car or family vehicles. If, at any time, I violate this agreement, the driving privilege will be forfeited to the extent and degree of

violation.

1. I will obey all traffic laws and the posted speed limits and follow safe driving practices at all times.
2. I will not drink and drive, or use drugs and drive and will not have any liquor or beer or illegal drugs in the car at any time.
3. Should I get a traffic violation ticket, I agree to pay for the ticket as well as the difference in the insurance premium for as long as the premium is in effect.
4. I agree to pay for damages that I incur not covered by insurance including all deductibles.
5. I will never transport more than _____ passengers in the car and will not drive the car until all passengers have buckled up. For the first six months, I will not drive friends and siblings in the car unless an adult is present.
6. I will keep the car that I drive clean, inside and out take care of gas, oil, and maintenance requirements.
7. I will inform my parents about where I am driving, when I plan to return, and if I will be late coming home.

Optional:

- I agree to pay for car insurance.
- I am allowed to drive the following family cars: list car or cars.
- My curfew for night driving is 10:00 p.m.

I have read the above agreement and do sign this in accordance with the rules.

Signed by Teen and Parents on the specific date.

Another tip is to have the contract enlarged and made into a poster for the wall. At the [teendriving.com store](http://teendriving.com/store), we've made a sample contract into a poster. We hope this information helps parents and teens agree on safe driving behavior.

www.teendriving.com

<http://www.teendriving.com/drivingcontract2.htm>