

Road Trip Safety Tips for Teen Drivers

Mercury Insurance provides driving safety tips for teens and their parents

LOS ANGELES, Calif. ([PRWEB](#)) July 26, 2017 -- Summertime is the most anticipated time of year for a road trip – the temperature is warmer throughout the country, kids are out of school and parents can turn in unused vacation days for a much-needed break from the office. Each year, millions of families pack up their cars and hit the roads. However, as children grow into licensed teen drivers, the idea of taking a road trip with their friends becomes more enticing than spending hours in the car with mom and dad.

As only a parent can understand, it's difficult to relinquish your car keys to your teen driver and let them go off on their own, but you also don't want to hinder their growth and independence. If you decide that your "baby bird" is responsible enough to leave the nest for a few days without being under your watchful eye, here are some helpful tips – for parents and teens alike – to get them road-ready and help keep them safe during their travels.

Tips for Parents

- Establish ground rules. If you haven't already done so, have your teen sign a driving contract with you. This helps reinforce the driving behavior they're expected to demonstrate behind the wheel and makes it clearer when they'll need your permission to deviate from the rules. Just because you'll be out of sight doesn't mean the contract should be out of mind.
- Know the planned route for the trip. Regardless of whether your teen's idea of the ultimate road trip is a two-hour drive to the beach with an overnight stay, or something more ambitious like driving cross-country, it's important to know their planned stops ahead of time in case of an emergency. Be sure to keep a record of the names, numbers and addresses of any hotels, campgrounds, parks, landmarks or other sites they plan to visit. And, since most teens love photo apps like Snapchat and Instagram, share in the fun and encourage them send you pictures as they stop along the way.
- Teach teens how to read a road atlas. Your son or daughter may look at you like you're from another planet when you present them with this ancient artifact, but GPS isn't always reliable and cell service can be lost when driving in certain areas. Another option is to have your teen print out directions for each leg of their trip ahead of time.
- Check your insurance limits with your agent. States have different requirements for auto insurance. If your teen plans to drive across state lines, be sure you have enough coverage to protect them in the event of a collision.

Tips for Teens

- Inspect your vehicle. There are several engine fluids (engine oil, transmission fluid, coolant, power-steering fluid, brake fluid and windshield wiper fluid) to check regularly to help your vehicle's performance, especially before a road trip. Ensure these are topped off before you leave. Check your wiper blades to see if they rest against the glass and don't scrape or leave streaks when used – you don't want impaired vision if you encounter rain on your travels – and replace them if they aren't functioning properly. Make sure your tires are

inflated to their recommended pressure and the tread hasn't worn down too low. (Hint: the recommended tire pressure is usually listed on the inside edge of the driver door.)

- Prepare a vehicle emergency kit. Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle that includes a first aid kit, flares, jumper cables, a jack and lug wrench, a tire gauge and your roadside assistance phone number if you have one.
- Don't succumb to driving distractions. The stark reality is one in 10 teen driver fatalities is attributed to distractions, so stow your phone where you won't be tempted to text or use Snapchat. If you're using it for directions, some apps and phone systems can send an auto response to texts letting everyone know you're driving and unable to respond. Your parents have entrusted you to go on a road trip without them, but drive like you would if they were in the car with you.
- Don't log too many hours without a break. Driving drowsy can be just as dangerous as driving drunk and the National Sleep Foundation reports that it causes 1,550 deaths and 71,000 injuries annually. There are many ways to stay healthy on the road. If your eyelids are drooping or you're yawning frequently, pull over at the next rest stop and take a break. If you have fellow road trippers along for the ride, let someone else take the wheel for the next stretch of driving.
- Check in often. Let your parents know that you're safe and sound. Whenever you stop for gas, to sightsee or arrive at your final destination, give them a call or shoot them a text.

Safe driving could make the difference between reaching your destination, as well as staying alive. For more tips and advice on teen safety, visit the Mercury Insurance Drive Safe Challenge.

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