

May - Young Drivers

I. Key Messages

The following key messages can be used to support the Young Drivers Communication Campaign:

- Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death and injury among Alberta's youth.
- Parents and guardians can set rules for young drivers to reinforce good driving behavior.
- Young drivers need to take responsibility for their own actions on the road.
- You've got a lot to lose. Drive responsibly.
- You can lose your license. Insurance costs will increase. You will wreck or lose your car.
- You will have to live with the guilt for the rest of your life.
- A criminal record is forever.
- Live to see your graduation – do not drive drunk or high.

II. Fact Sheet

Over the five years, 2005 – 2009, 256 young drivers (between 14 - 24 years of age) were killed and 17,064 young drivers were injured in collisions. Although young drivers represent only a small percentage of the province's licensed drivers, they have the highest casualty collision rates.

Facts to Know

- One in every five new drivers is involved in a collision in their first two years of driving.
- Crash rates for young drivers are highest when there are teen passengers in the vehicle and at night.
- In terms of involvement per 1,000 licensed drivers, males aged 18-24 are consistently more likely to have consumed alcohol prior to a casualty collision than any other age group.
- Another high-risk behaviour that significantly contributes to young driver road crashes in Alberta is driver intoxication (including drugs and alcohol).
- Other factors associated with young driver road crashes:
 - **Driver inexperience:** Often young drivers don't realize that it takes time and a lot of practice to develop safe driving skills.
 - **Overconfidence and risk taking:** Young drivers can be over confident about their driving ability and underestimate dangers on the road.
 - **Having friends as passengers:** Young drivers may be distracted by passengers or may feel pressured to take risks, such as speeding.

- **Alcohol and other drugs:** Young people often do not understand that alcohol and other drugs affect a driver's skills, mood and most importantly behaviour, putting the driver at greater risk of crashing. Safe driving requires clear judgment, concentration and the ability to react to what's happening on the road.
- **Busy lifestyles:** Work, study and extracurricular activities often mean busy lifestyles for young people, which may cause them to drive when tired – especially late at night. Driving tired significantly impairs driving, even if the driver does not feel sleepy.

III. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

When do collisions involving young drivers occur?

Almost one-half of casualty collisions involving a young driver (aged 14 - 24) occurred in the warmer months of June through October. Fatal collisions involving a young driver occur more often in the month of July.

More casualty collisions involving young drivers (aged 14 - 24) occurred on Friday than on other days. More than half of the fatal collisions involving young drivers occurred on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Approximately one third of casualty collisions involving a young driver (aged 14 - 24) occurred during the afternoon rush hour period between 3:00 pm - 6:59 pm. Roughly, 35 per cent of fatal collisions involving a young driver occurs between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

What are the common mistakes that young drivers make?

Young drivers aged 14 - 24 are more likely to commit a driver error than other drivers. The most common errors committed by young drivers include following too closely, running off the road and making a left turn across the path of an oncoming vehicle. Running off the road and driving left of centre are common improper actions of young drivers involved in fatal collisions.

Are young drivers wearing seatbelts?

Over one third of young drivers killed in a collision were not wearing their seatbelt.

What is Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)?

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is a program designed to improve road safety by creating a low risk, controlled environment for new drivers, regardless of age. The GDL program ensures that the new drivers get the support, skills and experience they need to handle the complex task of driving.

What are the goals of the GDL program?

- To reduce collisions, injuries and deaths in Alberta.
- To reinforce driving as a privilege **not** a right.

- To foster a generation of safe young drivers by giving them the opportunity to practise responsible driving with a licensed mentor.

All provinces that have implemented a GDL program have experienced significant decreases in the collision rates of new drivers.

What will happen if GDL program conditions or restrictions are violated?

Violating a program condition or restriction may result in a new driver being charged with an offence as outlined below:

<u>Violation</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
Alcohol consumption	Immediate 30 day suspension
More passengers than seat belts	More passengers
midnight (learners only)	Driving after \$100 fine and two demerit points
accompanying driver	No \$100 fine and two demerit points
	\$200 fine and two demerit points

Where can I find more information about Alberta’s GDL program?

Additional information and resources can be found on the Saferoads web site at: http://www.saferoads.com/drivers/drivers_newdrivers.html.

IV. Advertising for Young Drivers

To be determined



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