



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW TEEN DRIVING LIMITATIONS IN EFFECT AUGUST 1

ST. PAUL —New laws taking effect August 1 will help newly licensed teens hone their driving skills during the first year of licensure by reducing exposure to two high-risk situations: driving late at night and carrying multiple teen passengers.

According to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), Minnesota teen drivers are overrepresented in traffic crashes each year due to driver inexperience, distractions, nighttime driving, speeding and seat belt non-use. In the last three years (2005-2007), 16- and 17 year-old drivers were involved in 116 fatal crashes, resulting in 133 deaths.

“These laws will help teens become safer drivers and, as a result, prevent deaths and injuries on Minnesota roads,” says Michael Campion, commissioner of DPS.

A nighttime driving limitation during the first six months of licensure prohibits teens from driving midnight –5 a.m., unless the teen is accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older. Other exceptions include driving between home and place of employment, for employment purposes, and to/from home and a school event for which the school has not provided transportation. Mile for mile, 16 and 17 year-olds are about three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash at night than during the day.

A passenger limitation for the first six months of licensure allows only one passenger under the age of 20, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. During the second six months of licensure, no more than three passengers under the age of 20 are permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Passengers under age 20 who are members of the immediate family are permitted for both periods.

In the last three years in Minnesota, 2005–2007, 41 percent of the teen passengers killed in traffic crashes were in vehicles driven by 16 or 17 year olds.

These laws also apply to teens licensed before August 1. For example, a teen licensed on July 1 would have the nighttime limitation for five months beginning August 1, the one passenger limitation for five months, and the three passenger limitation for six months.

Violating these laws is a misdemeanor.

DPS recommends parents reinforce these laws and continue to monitor and train teens, even after licensure, as new drivers need supervised exposure in a variety of driving conditions and environments. DPS also urges parents to be a positive role model behind the wheel.

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