

The Department of Motor Vehicles

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SAFE DRIVING PRECAUTIONS FOR TEENS

WETHERSFIELD - With the holiday season here the DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving wants to remind parents and teens that extra caution is needed as young drivers learn to operate a motor vehicle, especially during high-traffic times.

While the causes of accidents vary, novice drivers may not have the ability to know how to react to situations that can become dangerous very fast. Various studies have shown that teenagers' brain development evolves over time and decision-making functions of the teenage brain are not finely tuned until about 25 years age.

"Our youngest drivers need to remember to be careful at all times when driving under any circumstances, to pull over if they are having difficulty, and they and their parents need to be following all of our teen safe driving laws," said DMV Commissioner Robert M. Ward. "These laws are designed to help keep them safe while learning to drive."

Dr. David S. Shapiro, trauma surgeon and Associate Director of Surgical Critical Care at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, said, "Being at the wheel is a great responsibility, not to just keep the passenger and driver safe, but to pay heed to others sharing the road. Give yourself extra driving time, extra room near you, and always concentrate on the driving as your priority. I'm the last one you want to meet at the holidays."

In August 2008 Connecticut enacted tough new teen driving laws that brought an extended curfew, longer periods of passenger restrictions, more comprehensive training and increased fines and penalties. Safety experts and medical researchers advise that an important role of parents is to provide their teenagers with as much supervised driving experience as possible.

DMV's Center for Teen Safe Driving (ct.gov/teendriving) has detailed information for parents and teens on the laws, restrictions and training information.

In addition to the teen-specific laws, new drivers and experienced drivers should also remember these other important cautions:

Lane blocking. Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to overtake you. If someone demands to pass, allow them to do so.

Speeding. Obey the speed limits at all times and drive more slowly than the speed limit if road, weather or other conditions apply.

Drinking and Driving. Driving under the influence is illegal and carries strong punishments, including fines and license suspensions.

Distracted Driving. Pay attention at all times. Teens are prohibited from using any hand-held electronic devices while behind the wheel.

Tailgating. Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations began when one driver tailgated another.

Signal use. Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off.