

## THE PROBLEM

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that young drivers (16-20 years old) have the highest fatality and injury rates of all age groups.

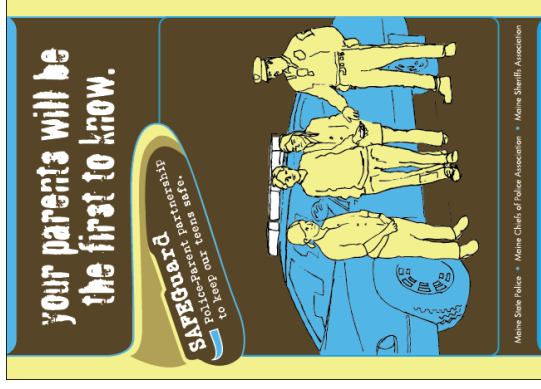
While nationwide, young drivers make up only six percent of the driving population, they are involved in 20 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes.

Teen drivers are three to four times more likely to be involved in a crash, with most teen crashes occurring on weekends and at night. Sixty-five percent of all teens killed in motor vehicle crashes were passengers in vehicles operated by teen drivers.

“State laws play an important role, but no matter where one resides, parents play the most important role in managing their children’s early driving experience.”<sup>1</sup>

*In 2005, 24 Maine teen drivers were involved in fatal crashes resulting in 34 deaths. Seven had positive blood alcohol levels.*

<sup>1</sup> John Ulezycki, Director Transportation Safety Group of the National Safety Council



## THE PARENT

Early intervention is key. A teen’s unsafe driving coming to the attention of police could be an early warning of problems to come. A call to a parent is a golden opportunity to prevent a knock on the door from a police officer that is every parent’s nightmare.

When a parent knows that law enforcement has stopped their teen driver, the parent has the chance to reinforce expectations and set limits to reduce exposure to high-risk situations that can lead to crashes.

## THE TEEN



According to Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), high school and middle school students overwhelmingly say that their parents are or will be the biggest influence on their driving behavior.



The National Center for Injury Control & Prevention reports that “a growing body of research indicates that close parental management of teen drivers can lead to less risky driving behavior, fewer traffic tickets, and fewer crashes.”



Parents need to be the first to know. When parents do not limit the when, where, and how often their teens can drive, teen traffic violations and crashes increase.

***Involvement and communication are the best Teen Crash Preventions.***

## THE LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

The Maine law enforcement community developed **SAFEGuard**.

**SAFEGuard** is a philosophy that shows compassion and concern for the safety of young people – those who are at greatest risk for injury or death on Maine roads.

**SAFEGuard’s** goal is to help safeguard teens by taking the time to talk with parents and guardians when teen drivers and passengers are engaged in unsafe, high-risk behavior like speeding, not using safety belts, aggressive driving, and using alcohol or other drugs.

**SAFEGuard’s slogan – Your Parents will be the First to Know** – is a strong, yet caring, message to teens that the police and parents are working together to prevent injury and death among teen drivers.

***A call from a police officer to a parent (“I thought you would like to know...”) may prevent a highway tragedy.***

**SAFEGuard** encourages the police officer to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parents of teenagers.



Immediate notification should be made when a teen is at immediate risk, such as when alcohol and other drugs are involved.



In situations involving traffic violations and other potentially dangerous situations police should, whenever possible, communicate with a parent within a reasonable period of time. These notifications may depend on several factors, including the circumstances, resources, and officer discretion.

### **EXAMPLES OF WHEN PARENTS MIGHT BE CALLED:**



Teenage driver and passengers stopped by police for traveling 90 miles per hour.



Police respond to a noise complaint at a home and find a group of teens drinking alcohol.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FIRST LICENSE**

Your first license is provisional for a period of two years if you are under 21 and one year if you are at least 21.

If you violate traffic laws during your provisional period, your license will be suspended:

- For 30 days on first offense;
- For 60 days on second offense;
- For 90 days on third offense;
- Longer suspensions are possible depending on the particular violation.

### **A person under 18 years of age who has been issued a driver's license cannot:**

- Operate a motor vehicle between the hours of 12 am and 5 am;
- Carry passengers other than immediate family members unless accompanied by a licensed operator who has held a valid driver's license for the past 2 years, is at least 20 years of age, is occupying a seat beside the driver and is licensed to operate the class vehicle being operated by the licensee. Immediate family members means parent, grandparent, step parent, step grand-parent, spouse, child, step children, brother, sister, step sister or step brother;
- Operate a motor vehicle while using a mobile telephone.

These restrictions are in effect for a period of 180 days from passing the road test. Violation of the conditions of these restrictions will result in a 180-day extension of the restrictions noted above which may extend beyond the 18th birthday.

# **SAFEGuard**

***A Police – Parent Partnership  
To Keep Our Teens Safe***



- Maine State Police**
- Maine Chiefs of Police Association**
- Maine Sheriff's Association**
- Bureau of Highway Safety**
- Bureau of Motor Vehicles**
- Maine Transportation Safety Coalition**

