

Are you really giving them a break?

New Jersey's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program is a three-step process designed to help teen drivers gain experience and build skill while minimizing those things that cause them the greatest risk -- distraction prompted by passengers and the use of cell phones and other devices, as well as driving late at night, and driving or riding unbelted. Addressing these risk factors is essential -- car crashes are the leading cause of death for children, teens and young adults up to the age of 35. Teens are four times more likely than older drivers to crash and when they do crash, three out of every four deaths involve the teen's passenger(s) or someone else on the road.



New Jersey crash and fatality data clearly show that GDL is the most effective tool for improving teen driver safety

- ✓ Twenty teen drivers were killed in 2010, a 44.4% reduction over 2009 (36 killed). That's half as many as the average number of drivers in this age category (16-20) who died in each of the preceding six years. And there were actually three months in 2010 -- May (prom time), September (back to school) and November (earlier darkness) -- when no teen driver was killed on our roadways. This only occurred once in the past three years, February 2008.
- ✓ The stricter passenger, earlier curfew (11 p.m. versus midnight) and decal requirements that took effect on May 1, 2010, are positively impacting teen driver safety. Nine teen drivers were killed in the four months prior to the GDL law change, meaning an average of 2.25 drivers were killed in each month. That average dropped to 1.375 teen deaths between May and December -- a 40% monthly decline.
- ✓ Statewide GDL enforcement rose nearly 50% starting last May, when average monthly tickets jumped from 862 pre-reform to 1,275 post-reform, according to the Administrative Office of the Courts. When the GDL law is enforced, teens are more likely to obey the law, and when they obey the law, their crash risk decreases.



The next time you stop a teen holding a permit or probationary license for a motor vehicle violation, write the ticket ... prevent a crash ... save a life!