

## Risk Management Notice

---

### **RE: Young Drivers**

School administrators, boards and parents with high school age students share concerns over young drivers.

Such concerns centre on issues of student safety, both that of the drivers, and of fellow students, as well as potential liabilities that may be imposed upon schools as the legal environment in our society changes.

Questions arise as to whether or not students should be permitted to drive to and from school, to and from extra curricular activities and what responsibilities, if any, schools have in regulating such matters.

Crash rates among young drivers are much higher than the average. Inexperience, lack of vehicle control skills, and a tendency to engage in risky driving practices, are all factors in increased crash rates.

The issue certainly raises some Risk Management concerns.

### **What are some of the facts?**

- ❑ Drivers ages 16 – 21 represent a very small percentage of license holders; however, they represent a much higher and disproportional percentage of all drivers involved in a car crash.
- ❑ One study found that 77% of drivers killed in accidents were young drivers.
- ❑ Another study found male drivers between the ages of 15 to 24 are 2½ times more likely to have an auto related death than the national average, whereas auto related deaths of female drivers of the same age group were in keeping with national averages.
- ❑ Accident avoidance skills are not as well developed in a new driver. Some research suggests that it takes in excess of 100 hours to become a competent and safe driver. However, young drivers often over estimate their driving ability.
- ❑ Studies have shown that statistically that young drivers deaths more frequently occur:
  - after Dark or in poor weather conditions.
  - with passengers other than family members - a 16-year-old with three passengers faces nearly three times the risk of a fatal wreck as one driving alone.
  - following use of alcohol
  - with recreational driving rather than work related use.

- These facts are based on both Government studies as well as studies conducted by insurance companies.

### Risk reduction methods:

- ❑ Driver's Education courses have been demonstrated to decrease the frequency of accidents of those who have taken them.
- ❑ New drivers should be encouraged to be accompanied by an experienced adult driver with a good driving record for the first three to six months after obtaining a driver's license. The experienced driver can note any problems and assist the new driver in correcting them.
- ❑ New drivers should not carry passengers, as they represent a source of distraction, as well as added responsibility and potential liability.
- ❑ Restrict after dark driving

### Possible risk management steps:

- ❑ Have rules and stick with them. The school should encourage this to apply at home as well as at school.

Such rules could include:

- A requirement that all young drivers and their parents sign and agree to adhere to a *School Contract* or other such document outlining rules and responsibilities regarding driving to and from school.
  - Prohibited driving practices and consequences of violating rules.
  - Minimum driving experience requirements verified by parents before a student may drive to school.
  - A requirement that parental permission slips for passengers of young drivers be obtained. This could include a statement on passenger conduct and hazards to ensure all parties are aware of risks and responsibilities.
  - Requirements that all young drivers attend some form of orientation class or formal discussion regarding risks and safety.
- ❑ Establishment of a school based pre-driver awareness program.
  - ❑ Driver education and training by accredited driving schools.
  - ❑ Establishment of geographical boundaries by parents of young drivers as to where a driver is allowed to go.
  - ❑ Use school buses or similar vehicles for hire to transport students to and from extra-curricular school functions. studies have indicated that students are more at risk traveling to and from school or events in cars, especially those driven by teenagers, they are in school buses.

### Additional Information:

- ICBC: - "Navigating the Teen Years" brochure.  
- [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com) - "For Educators"; - "For Parents"; "Geared 2 Youth".  
- [www.ipromiseprogram.com](http://www.ipromiseprogram.com) - The *I Promise Program*