

Traffic Safety News

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Back to School Issue

Getting into a school routine is a challenge for all of us, particularly the teen driver. Many young motorists will be driving to school, often with friends or siblings. While sometimes it is unavoidable for teen drivers to transport younger siblings, parents should be aware that

the crash risk increases for young drivers who are carrying teen passengers. Junior licensees aren't permitted to carry more than two passengers under the age of 21 unless they are immediate family members. This is a good time of year for parents to review their expectations with the teen driver.

It is important to make sure the teen is aware of the laws and will promise to obey them. Below are some great suggestions for teenagers who will be driving to school. Many of these tips are useful for *anyone* who is getting back into a commuting routine.



Advice for Driving to School from NETS

Used with permission from the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (www.trafficsafety.org)

READY, SET, DRIVE TO SCHOOL

Make your drive to school a safe trip every day. Being prepared saves more than just time. Staying safe is all a matter of being "road ready." Drive focused. Stay safe.

Road Ready Checklist for School:

At home

- ◆ Check your gas gauge? Can you get to and from school safely?
- ◆ Set your alarm a few minutes early and get to school before the mad rush into the school parking lot.
- ◆ Getting up a few minutes earlier will also allow you time to attend to your morning grooming and eat your breakfast before you're behind the wheel.

In your car

- ◆ Pull all seat belts out from between the seats so they're ready for use by all your passengers.
- ◆ Pre-set your favorite radio stations for your drive to school.
- ◆ Pre-load your selected CD(s) or tape.
- ◆ Cell phones should be preprogrammed with commonly called numbers.
- ◆ Clear the vehicle of unnecessary objects.
- ◆ Place in the trunk, any item or loose cargo that is not properly secured.
- ◆ Set your mirrors for the best all-around visibility.
- ◆ Make sure your windshield is clean and your wiper blades are functional.

On your trip to school

- ◆ Obey the rules of the road.
- ◆ Watch for students getting on and off school buses.
- ◆ If a passenger is distracting you, pull over where it is safe, and get the situation under control.

At school

- ◆ If possible, try to park in perpendicular spaces that you can pull straight out of instead of having to back out. Backing out in crowded parking lots is risky.
- ◆ At the end of the day, hang around 5 extra minutes and avoid the mass exodus.



Roll with Caution



What's the most popular fad rolling into classrooms? Sneakers with wheels are the latest footwear craze. Wheeled shoes are sometimes called skate shoes, roller shoes or by the brand name Heelys®. Most models have just one wheel in the heel area of the shoe, although there are also models with extra wheels in the toe area.

Regardless of the particular model, there are some safety concerns with these products. The World Against Toys Causing Harm (WATCH) group listed rolling shoes in its 2006 annual "worst toys" list. The WATCH list targets toys with potential to cause childhood injuries and deaths.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, wheeled shoes were responsible for about 1600 emergency room visits during 2006. A study by the American Academy of Pediatrics indicated roller shoes are responsible for an increase in upper body injuries, including fractures and dislocations. More than half of the injuries occurred the first time the child used the rolling shoes. Children from about 6 to 15 were injured, and girls were more likely to sustain injuries than boys. Physicians from Ireland and the UK also warned consumers on the risks of this type of footwear.

In response to these concerns, the company that manufactures Heelys® hired Heiden Associates, a product

"Heeling" or Rolling Safely

Safety Guidelines

- .. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for safety gear, including protective helmet, elbow, wrist and knee pads.
- .. Remember there is a learning curve when attempting a new skill.
- .. If you are walking with wheels in, make sure your toes are touching the ground first, and don't lean back on your heels.
- .. When "heeling," stagger your feet with strong foot in front. If you put your feet next to each other, your feet may slide out from under you.
- .. Practice shifting your weight to stop and regain balance.
- .. Don't try to heel faster than you can walk.
- .. Avoid rolling in or near traffic. If you come to a crosswalk, obey traffic signals, stay to the right, and don't weave in and out of crowds.
- .. Heel on smooth surfaces, since debris and uneven terrain can cause sudden stops or falls.
- .. Do not let a young child "heel" unsupervised.

Common Courtesy

- .. Teach your child to respect the rights of others.
- .. Don't allow your child to roll in crowded spaces, where it could cause inconvenience or danger to others.
- .. Follow the rules of public spaces. If rolling is not allowed, make sure to remove wheels.

safety consulting firm, to study risks of their rolling shoes. That study, based on data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, reported that Heelys® are safer than many other children's activities, such as skateboarding, basketball, soccer and tennis. Their results have been publicized on their web site (address listed below).

Because there are mixed reviews about rolling shoes, parents should take time to become informed about

safe use of these products. Since wheeled shoes are essentially a type of skate, safety advocates advise that a helmet and safety gear be used when the shoes are in the rolling mode. Even the manufacturer of the most popular brand "highly" recommends the use of protective pads and helmet. Parents should also advise children not to roll near the bus stop, parking lots, or other places where traffic is near. The web sites below offer more information.

Sources for this Article

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<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/03/03/earlyshow/living/parenting/main1365761.shtml>

Heelys® Safety Gear and Tips - Official web site with safety recommendations and tips

<http://www.heelys.com>

How to Heel: Instructions and Safety Tips - Sports Unlimited, Inc. on-line

<http://www.sportsunlimitedinc.com/heelys-safety-tips.html>