

# Traffic Safety News

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## **RIDE LIKE A FRIEND: DRIVE LIKE YOU CARE**

This year, like every year, more than 5,000 teens will likely die on America's roads. These deaths could be prevented. National Teen Driver Safety Week was established by Congress last year to focus attention on the nation's epidemic of teen car crashes and to find solutions.

There are many well-known factors that raise a teen driver's risk of getting in a fatal crash: speeding, drinking, talking on a cell phone and driving at night are among them. Yet there's another dangerous factor that recent research shows few teens recognize: peer passengers.

Just one teen passenger doubles the risk a teen driver will get into a fatal crash; three or more

passengers quadruples the risk. Yet a recent study by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and State Farm Insurance Companies® found that only 1 in 10 teens knows that giving a friend a ride is dangerous.

The risk is not just for the driver: another CHOP and State Farm study released this year found that starting at ages 12 to 14, a child passenger's risk of dying in a crash with a teen driver doubles, and the risk continues to rise for each teen year. Most teen passengers who die in crashes are riding with a teen driver.

Based on this research, National Teen Driver Safety Week 2008 is focusing on increasing teens' awareness of how passengers contribute to driver distraction, a leading



cause of crashes for teens. Teens have helped develop this year's Ride Like A Friend campaign, including practical tips on how passengers can be helpful. Buckling up, limiting cell phone conversations, and respecting the driver are some of the tips the campaign will offer to teens.

This research also supports the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for graduated driver licensing laws and parents to

require that teens not transport passengers under age 21 for the first six months of licensure and no more than one passenger under age 21 for the second six months. New York State's Graduated Licensing Law permits drivers with 'junior licenses' to carry two unrelated passengers.

National Teen Driver Safety Week 2008 takes place Oct. 19th to 25th. For information about the campaign, parents can visit [www.ridelikeafriend.com/parent/](http://www.ridelikeafriend.com/parent/) or call SLC Traffic Safety at 379-2306.

### **KEY MESSAGES FOR PARENTS AND TEENS**

- 1. Distractions are deadly for teen drivers.** Distractions are the No. 1 reason new drivers crash, and car crashes are the leading killer of teens.
- 2. Peer passengers are a major factor in fatal teen crashes.** Just one teen passenger doubles the risk a teen driver will get in a fatal crash. Having three or more peer passengers quadruples the risk.
- 3. Few teens know about this risk.** Only 1 in 10 teens consider the presence of peer passengers to influence their safety.
- 4. Teens can "ride like a friend" by wearing a seatbelt, reducing distractions, respecting the driver, and helping the driver if asked.** These safe passenger behaviors will help reduce crash risk and injuries and death due to crashes.
- 5. Teens should limit peer passengers during the first year of independent driving.** Fatal crash risk hits a lifetime high in the first six months of independent driving. Teen drivers should have no passengers under age 21 during the first six months after licensure, and no more than one peer passenger for the second six months.
- 6. Teen passengers should not ride with novice drivers.** Most teen passengers who die on the road are riding with teen drivers. Teens should not ride with peers for at least the first six months of independent driving.

# New State Law for Personal Mobility Devices

In July 2008, the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law added regulations related to “Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Devices.” These include conveyances such as the Segway Human Transporter and similar motorized scooters that transport individuals using an electric propulsion system. Their maximum speed is approximately twelve and one-half miles per hour.

While these devices are prohibited in New York City, there are now rules where and how they should be driven in other parts of the state. The law limits their use to designated bike and in-line skating lanes. If there aren’t bike lanes available, they can be driven on public highways that have posted speed limits of 30 mile per hour or less. Localities will have some authority to set limits on use in specified areas, and can allow the use of these devices on sidewalks. Potential purchasers and users should check with their local government to learn if there are regulations that apply.

In the upstate region these devices are exempt from the definition of “motor vehicle,” so they require no license, registration or insurance. However, the laws define rules of operation and required equipment so that these devices can be operated safely.

There is no fine for the first violation of the rules, but subsequent violations can result in a fine of \$50.00. First-time helmet violations can be waived by the court if the violator provides proof that a helmet was purchased after the violation. Fines may also be waived if the court finds that the lack of a helmet is the result of financial hardship.

## Other Components of the New Law for Electric Personal Mobility Devices (EPAMD)

Every operator should be 16 years or older.

Parents or guardians must not permit their children to violate any of the regulations that apply.

Helmets are required and must be worn properly.

The device must be equipped with a braking system, and must have a bell or horn.



One model of electric personal mobility devices

The device must also have a front light that is visible 500 feet, and a rear light that is visible for 300 feet. At least one of the lights must be visible for 200 feet from the side.

In addition to having a light, operators must wear reflective clothing or clothing that is of a light or bright color when gliding 1/2 hour before sunrise or 1/2 hour after sunset.

The operator must yield the right of way to pedestrians and motor vehicles.

No passengers are allowed, and drivers should not carry any packages that would interfere with operation of the device.

Gliders must travel in a single file when on the road, but may travel two abreast in a bike lane if there is room.

If a personal injury incident occurs, the person operating the EPAMD must exchange personal information and/or report the incident to the police. Leaving the scene of such an incident without reporting is a class B misdemeanor.