

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## 2 Teens Killed After Running Red Light

According to the California Highway Patrol, two girls, ages 16 and 17, died about 11:50 p.m. Friday on River Road after dropping someone off.

CHP Sgt. Chris Karr said the 16-year-old made a left turn in her 2000 Lexus RX300 from Las Palmas Parkway onto River Road against a red light.

A 1994 Mazda pickup then broadsided the sport utility vehicle. The CHP said a witness driving behind the truck confirmed that the Lexus had turned without having the right of way.

Source: <http://www.thecalifornian.com> ♦

## Lessons Learned

This was just one of many crashes during the month of April

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For Teens and their Parents



in which teens died or were seriously injured after running a red light, a stop sign, or failing to yield the right-of-way when entering an intersection.

Red light running has become an epidemic in the US in recent years and teens are especially susceptible to this for several reasons:

- They are in a hurry; they have very busy lives between school, after school activities, part time jobs, and their social life.
- They are highly susceptible to distractions from other teens in the car, cell phones, or their CD player.
- They are susceptible to peer pressure and may ignore common sense driving rules to impress their friends.

Unfortunately, teens aren't the only ones who push the limits when it comes to running red lights. People are in such a hurry now that hitting the gas to run a yellow light before it turns red seems to be a commonly accepted practice now. Of course those who try to beat the light often wind up running a red light.

Parents teaching a teen to drive need to determine what kind of example they are setting for their teen. Do you tend to hit the gas when the light turns yellow? Have you inadvertently run a red light while your teen was in the car with you? What explanation did you give for running the light? Are you teaching your teen that the risk of running a red light is OK because it will take too much time to stop and wait for the light to turn green?



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Teens not only learn the good driving lessons that parents try to teach but they have also spent years observing their parents' bad behaviors. Parents who have exhibited bad driving habits need to modify their behavior before teaching a teen to drive and explain to the teen why they are modifying their driving habits.

Teens need to learn that the lessons they learned in pre-school about red lights aren't necessarily true today.

Green lights don't mean "GO". A green light means "**Proceed With Caution**". Check the intersection for anyone attempting to beat the light and make sure the way is clear before entering the intersection.

Yellow lights mean "**Prepare To Stop**". Stop if you can, don't hit the gas and try to beat the light, especially if the light has been yellow for some time.

Stop lights and stop signs still mean "**STOP!**" Running a light or a stop sign means running the risk of a serious collision with a car crossing your path.

Before pulling out into a street from a drive way or a stop sign, a driver needs to look to the left, to the right, and then to the left again before proceeding. You need to make sure that you have plenty of clear space before entering the roadway. Remember also that large vehicles such as trucks and buses appear to be traveling slower than they actually are.

If another driver has to slam on the brakes or swerve to avoid a collision with you, you are guilty of failure to yield.

A driver needs to ask him or herself, is the risk of a collision worth the couple of minutes that it takes to wait for a red light?

## Teen Driving: Girls Behaving Badly

The findings of a recent Allstate Foundation study suggest that girls are racing ahead of boys in their need for speed and "aggressive" driving behavior. Teenage girls also admit to being more distracted than ever while maneuvering their rides.

Source: <http://www.claimsmag.com>

## Lessons Learned

A recent study conducted by the Allstate Foundation shows some disturbing attitude changes among girls when it comes to driving. While statistical data from the National Highway Safety Administration still shows a higher fatality rate among boys, the Allstate study went beyond raw statistical data and questioned teens on their attitudes about driving and their driving habits.

The gender differences are surprising and point to a dangerous trend among teenage girls. Among some of the findings:

### Girls express a new need for speed.

- Nearly half (48%) of girls admit they are likely to speed more than 10 m.p.h. over the limit, versus 36% of boys
- 16% of girls describe their driving as aggressive, up from 9% in 2005

### More girls than boys report that they will drive distracted in the future.

- 51% of girls are likely to use a cell phone to talk, text or email while driving, versus 38% of boys
- 84% of girls are likely to adjust music selection or volume while driving, versus only 69% of boys

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Fewer teens are willing to speak up in risky driving situations.

- Only 59% of teens will speak up if they are scared or uncomfortable as a passenger
- Girls are less likely to speak up than boys - 53% of girls reported they would say something about someone's driving, versus 66% of boys
- Fear of social rejection and being ignored top the list of reasons why teens don't speak up when they feel unsafe as a passenger.

Unfortunately, it seems that gender equality means taking more risks and that is a very unhealthy attitude to take behind the wheel. Girls should be free to participate in sports and to compete just like boys, but they need to know when such competition is appropriate. The aggression that makes a winner on the soccer field can be deadly when driving.

For more information on the Allstate study, visit: <http://www.allstate.com/foundation/teen-driving/Shifting-Teen-Attitudes.aspx>

## Tips for Parents: Best States for Teen Drivers

US News and World Report published a study in their April edition that ranked all 50 states for teen driving safety. The study looked at the following factors:

**Percent of teen population with driver's licenses** - States with lower percentages of teens who are licensed drivers score higher in the ranking.

**Teen driver deaths per year** - States with a smaller percentage of teen driver deaths per licensed teen driver score higher than states with a larger number of deaths.

**Percent of teen driver deaths involving alcohol/drugs** - States with a smaller percentage of alcohol- and drug-related teen driving deaths score higher than states with a larger percentage.

**Teen driver's license laws** - A rating of Excellent means the state has enacted into law six of the [seven Graduated Driver Licensing \(GDL\) provisions](#) recommended by the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

**Motorcycle helmet laws** – A rating of Excellent means the state laws require that all motorcycle riders must wear helmets.

**Safety-belt use laws** – A rating of Excellent means the state's safety-belt laws allow primary enforcement (police may stop and ticket motorists for belt violations alone); fines and/or license points are imposed for violations for all vehicle occupants.

**DUI/DWI laws** - A rating of Excellent means that the state has enacted at least three of the four following requirements: Mandatory ignition interlock for all offenders, separate child endangerment laws for driving drunk with a child in the car, mandatory blood alcohol concentration, or BAC, testing laws for drivers, and open container laws.

**Distracted-driving/texting-while-driving laws** – A rating of Failing means the state does not have a 100 percent restrictive law.

**Red light and speeding camera laws** - A rating of Excellent means the state's laws grant specific statewide authority for camera enforcement.

**Percent of roads rated good/very good** - Ratings of good and very good represent smoother roadways.

**Vehicle miles traveled per capita in the state** - States with a lower number of average vehicle miles traveled per capita score higher.

To see where your state stands in the rankings, visit: <http://www.usnews.com/news/teen-driving>

If your state doesn't rank highly, you can impose many of the same restrictions on your teen yourself through the use of the **Parent-Teen Driving Contract** and hold the teen accountable for not obeying the requirements.



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The advertisement features a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting at a desk with a laptop and a mug. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.