

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## Ask The Driving School Instructor: Interstate Driving



Question: When should a permit driver drive on the interstate for the first time?

Answer: Driving on the interstate should be a required part of every new driver's training but when to attempt

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For Teens and their Parents



it will be different for each driver.

The first thing to know is that, scary as they may seem, driving on interstates or limited access highways, is actually safer than driving on a country road. More fatal crashes occur on country roads than on interstates. However, interstates do require special skills.

Interstates require that a driver drive at high speeds. Driving too slowly on the interstate can be dangerous. Interstates also require that a driver know how to merge smoothly into traffic and the new driver may be dealing with a lot more traffic than he or she is used to.

As far as when to get on the interstate for the first time, the new driver should have a lot of driving experience including driving at higher speeds. After getting experience in driving in heavier traffic, the new driver should first practice on multi-lane highways with speeds above 50 mph.

Instead of jumping into city interstate traffic, it's best to expose the new driver to the interstate in a rural area where traffic may not be so heavy. After getting experience there, the driver can be slowly exposed

city traffic.

When entering the interstate, it's important to remember that you need to get up to interstate speeds on the entrance ramp. As you near the end of the ramp, watch for an opening in traffic and then adjust your speed to merge into that opening. Never stop on an entrance ramp unless traffic just won't give you enough clear space to merge. After merging into traffic, keep at least a two second following distance between you and the vehicle ahead.

Once you're on the interstate, you should practice merging and changing lanes. Remember to stay out of the far left lane unless you're passing slower traffic. Once you've passed, move back into the center or right lane.

Pay attention to speed limit signs. Speeds on rural interstates may be as high as 70 mph but can go down as low as 55 mph when nearing a city. Driving with the flow of traffic doesn't mean you should go over the speed limit. Driving too fast limits the reaction time you need to make decisions to avoid a crash.

If you miss your exit, never try to stop and back up. Go to the next exit and reenter the interstate in the other direction to get back to your exit. When exiting the interstate, get into the correct lane at least one-half a mile before the exit. Don't slow to exit until you enter the exit ramp.

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## Parents Text More Than Teens



Parents text more than teen drivers according to a newly released study sponsored by Straight Talk's Safe Driver Initiative. The results of a poll of 1,000 licensed teens conducted by KRC Research revealed, among other things, that thirty-three percent of parents text as compared to twenty-four percent of teens.

Among their other findings

- Almost one-third of respondents admitted that they nearly were in a crash as a result of texting while driving in the past year.
- Forty-two percent of respondents said they were more likely to admit to pointing out others texting while driving than were likely to admit doing it themselves.
- For parents, texting and driving is the third most significant worry behind academic achievement and alcohol and drug use; and 88 percent of parents have had a frank discussion with their teens about texting and driving.
- More teens have had a frank discussion

- More teens have had a frank discussion around texting and driving with their parents (74 percent) than have had discussions about teenage drinking (73 percent), drug use (71 percent), or sexual health (61 percent).

We wrote about the “Do as I say, not as I do!” phenomenon as far back as 2007. Teens look to their parents as their biggest influence and, when learning to drive, if they see their parents act in a way that, at the time, seems to have no negative consequences, the teen is more likely to follow that example.

Research has shown that more than eighty percent of crashes involved driver distraction within two or three seconds of the crash. If they want their teens to drive safely, parents need to put down the phone and be the role model for safe driving.

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## Ask The Driving School Instructor: Left Turn On Green



Question: I’m confused by the “left turn yield on green”. Who is supposed to turn first when the light turns green?

Answer: This can be a little confusing for a new driver.

Drivers. This sign is most often posted where there is a combination of both a left turn arrow and a standard traffic light as in the photo shown. It allows traffic to turn during those periods when the green turn arrow isn’t working.

During normal or low traffic periods, the green left turn arrow won’t be used at all. However, during times of heavier traffic, such as rush hours, the left turn arrow will be used along with the regular green light. The turn arrow will allow traffic in the left turn lanes to turn left. When the turn arrow turns red, the standard, round green light will light up allowing traffic in the right lanes to proceed. The sign, “left turn yield on green,” means that traffic in the left turn lane is allowed to turn but only if the oncoming lane is free of traffic.

If you’re in the left turn lane facing a standard, round green light with the “left turn yield on green” sign posted, you must wait or “yield” until the opposite lane is clear or there is a wide enough gap in the oncoming traffic to give you enough clear space to make a turn. If the left turn arrow isn’t working and traffic is heavy in the other lane, you may have to wait through the red light until the next green light before traffic is light enough to allow you enough clear space to turn left.

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