

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

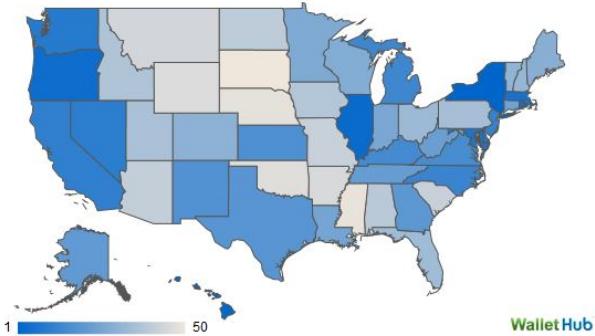
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Best States For Teen Drivers:

Florida Ranks 34th

Main Findings



In a list of best states for teen drivers, Florida ranked 34th according to a survey conducted for Wallet Hub. Wallet Hub is a website designed as a one-stop site to help individuals and businesses make financial

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For Teens and their Parents



decisions, and their teen driver survey is primarily focused on the financial aspect of teen drivers in the home. However, teen driver safety issues and laws designed to keep teen drivers safe play a big part in the total cost of teen driving.

To conduct their survey, the researchers considered various aspects that contribute to cost and safety where teen drivers are concerned. Factors that were considered included:

- The number of teen drivers in each state
- Teen driver fatalities
- Impaired-driving laws
- Graduated driving laws
- Average cost of car repairs
- Cost of insurance

A correlation can be seen between strong graduated driving license laws (GDL) and teen driver safety. Several studies have shown that states with strong GDL laws have lower teen fatality rates. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) created a GDL crash reduction calculator that shows Florida would experience a 20 percent reduction in insurance rates and a 45 percent reduction in teen fatalities if the state were to adopt the strongest GDL laws on the books in other states.

For a complete list of the best states for teen drivers, visit: [2014's Best and Worst States for Teen Drivers](#)

Teens Killed More Often In Older Cars



The older cars passed down to teen drivers may not be the best choice when it comes to keeping teens safe on the road. Research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) shows that most teens killed in traffic crashes were driving a vehicle that was at least six years old and almost half were driving vehicles that were eleven years old or older.

Using data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), researchers compared data for teen drivers 15 to 17 years of age and older drivers 35 to 50 years of age who were killed in car crashes during the years 2008 to 2012. Using the vehicle identification number from the vehicles involved, the researchers were able to determine the make, model, and age of the vehicle driven. The research showed that:

- 29% of fatally injured teenagers were driving mini or small cars,
- 82% were driving vehicles at least 6 years old,

- 48% were driving vehicles at least 11 years old.
- Compared with middle-aged drivers, teenagers' vehicles more often were small or mini cars or older vehicles.

Smaller vehicles such as the "minis" or "smart cars" don't perform as well as larger cars when it comes to protecting vehicle occupants in crash tests. Larger cars incorporate features such as crumple zones to lessen the crash forces and protect the vehicle occupant space.

Older cars may not include features such as side impact airbags or electronic stability control (ESC). ESC, which acts to stabilize the vehicle and prevent rollovers in extreme maneuvers, is now required as standard equipment in all cars manufactured after 2011.

The authors stated that some of the older cars did meet the safety criteria but only three percent of the teens studied were driving vehicles with ESC and only twelve percent had side impact airbags compared with fourteen percent of adult drivers. [Newer vehicles are incorporating more standard safety features](#) than ever and, in spite of stricter standards imposed by the IIHS, more than twice as many new model vehicles received a safety plus rating in crash tests this year than last.

The data didn't account for teen driving behavior such as speeding or failure to use seat belts. Teen drivers are easily distracted and tend to take more risks on the road. To counteract those driving behaviors, teens should drive larger vehicles with the most safety features available. It may be time for parents to consider, instead of buying a new vehicle and passing the old family clunker down to the teen, that the teen drive the newer vehicle. If parents are considering buying an older model used car for their teen, the IIHS has a [list of the safest used vehicles for teens](#).

Read more: [Vehicle choice can exacerbate teen drivers' crash risk](#)

Ready to get your Learners Permit?

A photograph of a young woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue denim jacket, sitting in the driver's seat of a car. She is smiling and holding up a set of car keys towards the camera. The interior of the car is visible, including the steering wheel and dashboard.

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Red Decals For Teen Drivers Reduce Crashes



Red decals used to identify teen probationary drivers in New Jersey have significantly reduced involvement in motor vehicle crashes according to a study conducted by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). In 2010, New Jersey enacted "Kyleigh's Law," an act that required all 16- to 20-year-old drivers who hold a learner's permit or intermediate license to display a red decal on the front and back license plates of any vehicle they drive.

New Jersey has some of the most comprehensive [Graduated Driver License \(GDL\) laws](#) in the nation and the intent of the act was to aid police in the enforcement of the GDL laws. While other industrialized nations have used some sort of identifying marks for teen drivers for quite some time, New Jersey was the first state in the US to implement such a law.

In the first study on the law's effect, CHOP compared teen crash statistics from the four years before the enactment of Kyleigh's Law with crash statistics for the two years after. After eliminating factors such as gender, age, gas prices, month of the year, and crash trends among older drivers, CHOP determined that the presence of the red decals led to an overall reduction of 9.5 percent in the crash rate among teen drivers.

Even more significant was a reduction in the crash rate among older teens with a reduction of 13 percent per year for 18-year-olds and nearly 17 percent for 19-year-olds. In the years prior to enactment of the law, there was no significant reduction in crash rates for those two age groups.

According to the CHOP researchers, an estimated 3,197 fewer intermediate drivers were involved in motor vehicle crashes after enactment of the law.

The red decals not only aid law enforcement in identifying GDL license holders but the teen drivers themselves, with essentially a red target on their back, tend to drive more safely to avoid attention. If it leads to crash reduction rates like those identified in the study and saves lives, it's worth it.

Read more: [New Jersey's Teen Driver Decals Show Sustained Link with Fewer Crashes](#)

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