

Press Releases

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Press Release: Insure.com 2018 teen driving survey finds parents need to do better job

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Foster City, CA (Oct 23, 2018) –Nearly one-quarter of parents aren't enforcing teen driving safety laws for their children, according to a new Insure.com teen driver survey.

Insure.com commissioned a survey of nearly 1,000 parents of teen drivers asking if they enforce Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws, and if not, why, which laws they allow their teens to disregard, as well as how familiar they are with GDL limits. Additionally, the survey also reveals which types of cars parents prefer for their teens and whether or not parents are comfortable with teens using driverless vehicles.

GDL laws put limits on teen drivers, for instance by restricting nighttime driving and the number and age of passengers that can be in the car. The Governors Highway Safety Association says GDL laws are key to keeping teen drivers safe.

"Teenage drivers have the highest crash risk per mile driven, and car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, so it's extremely important for these novice drivers to adhere to the requirements of a graduated license and gain experience with some oversight," says Penny Gusner, consumer analyst for Insure.com. "Teens overestimate their abilities and parents should be the ones to recognize that their teen driver needs limitations and enforce them, otherwise they are putting the health of their children at risk. At the very least they may end up with a crashed car and years of paying higher car insurance rates."

This survey found that five percent of parents never enforce GDL laws, while 17 percent said they sometimes don't enforce these laws. This equals approximately 22 percent of parents who are NOT fully enforcing these laws to

protect their children.

Why wouldn't parents always enforce these laws?

It turns out that it may not be totally the parents fault. According to the survey, 33 percent of parents said that their teen doesn't always listen to them. So even though parents may be trying to enforce these laws, teens aren't listening.

"Another 29 percent of parents said they don't know the GDL laws, which is troubling to hear, because the GHSA has told us that GDL laws are the most the most effective countermeasure its seen that contributed to the decline in teen driver fatalities," says Gusner. "Parents are the ones typically allowing the teen to drive a household car and pay for the teen's insurance, it seems like a smart idea to know what rules your teenager should be following when learning to operate a vehicle."

Here are the results for why parents may not be enforcing GDL laws:

- 33% said the teen doesn't always listen to them.
- 29% said they don't know GDL laws.
- 25% said they don't think GDL laws are fair.
- 23% said they pick and choose what laws their child follows.
- 20% said the teen's friends always need transportation and so it's hard to say no.
- 6% said GDL laws aren't necessary.

What laws are being broken?

The survey found that nearly half of the respondents said that they don't enforce any cell phone restrictions while their teens are driving. This was only slightly higher than the percentage of parents who let their teens drive with friends.

"It's disconcerting that nearly half of the parents that don't fully enforce GDL rules don't impose cell phone restrictions when distracted driving is such a hot topic due to the amount of accidents it is causing," says Gusner. "It seems many parents need to pay more attention to restrictions that cause distractions – phones, electronics of any type, and passengers – to help train their novice driver to be safe, defensive drivers – not distracted ones."

The survey showed that

- 49% don't enforce cell phone restrictions.
- 45% don't enforce passenger restrictions.
- 36% don't enforce time restrictions.
- 30% don't enforce electronics ban.
- 18% don't enforce supervised driving hours (i.e., they fudge the hours).
- 7% allow their teen to drive alone though it's against the law.

While this survey focused on teen driving, the Insure.com survey also found that more than 50 percent of parents text while their teen is at the wheel. Additionally, while nearly a quarter of parents don't fully enforce the GDL laws, many parents plan to continue enforcing laws after their teen is no longer restricted by GDL laws.

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