

## 'Money \$ense': Best practices for keeping teen drivers safe

By Marc Hebert  
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FOR TEENAGERS getting their license it is an exciting time. A license may represent being one step closer to becoming an adult. However, having a teen driver can be a time of concern for parents given the increased risk of accidents that teen drivers are prone to. If you have a teen driver, here are a few best practices to think about as you contemplate your child taking the wheel.

Parents might want to take measures to reinforce safe driving concepts with their teen. This serves to not only help protect the safety of your teen but can also reduce possible insurance claims from accidents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a sample driving agreement that outlines the expectations and limits of being a driver. This tool clearly states the rules of driving and the consequences of not following them. It is available for download at [cdc.gov/parentsarethekey/agreement/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/parentsarethekey/agreement/index.html). Both parents and the teen driver will sign the agreement.

Although the laws differ, each state has some form of graduated driving licensing program. These programs give young drivers the chance to practice skills under low-risk circumstances. For example, late-night driving may not be allowed, and the number of passengers is limited. Full driving privileges are earned along with greater responsibility.

The GDL program typically has three driving stages. The first is a learner's permit. The next step is a provisional license, and the last step is a full unrestricted license. It is best to know your state's laws in this area. Your teen driver will have to follow them. The child may find some inconvenient, such as allowing only one passenger in the car, for example.



A driving teen will bring changes to the parents' insurance. Having a new driver needs to be discussed with your property and casualty agent. The cost to insure a brand-new driver may shock the parent. Adding a teen driver can be expensive since insurance companies have targeted young drivers as being more likely to drive recklessly and take risks.

Often, as a driver gains more experience and develops a good driving record, the costs of insurance will go down. Some other cost reducers may include discounts through safe driving incentive programs. If you have a child with good grades, an academic discount may also be offered. You might also be able to get a discount if you use a mobile app to monitor the driving habits of your teen.

As you update your auto insurance to account for your teen driver, it may be a good idea to review your policy's major coverage areas. Bodily injury liability coverage pays for the expenses arising from another person's injury in the event you (or your teen driver) cause an auto accident. Property damage covers the costs of damages caused to another person's property while driving. Medical payments help pay for the medical costs associated with any injuries to the driver or the driver's passengers as a result of an accident. These coverage areas are very important to keep updated with a new teen driver on the road.

Be aware that bodily injury liability also has a type of coverage called uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage. This coverage offers protection in case you or your teen gets in an accident with a driver who has inadequate or no auto insurance. Uninsured motorist coverage allows you to collect damages against your own policy in this event.

Lastly, you may also want to review your umbrella liability coverage. This type of coverage provides additional liability coverage above the amounts provided by automobile insurance and may help protect you if the worst happens. Umbrella coverage also offers excess uninsured motorist coverage. Be sure to update your coverages well before your teen driver takes the road.

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