

TEENS AND SPEEDING: Breaking the Deadly Cycle



We've written in Road Buzz many times about the dangers of speeding, which is a factor in about 26 percent of all fatal crashes nationwide. Experts say it's a big factor in the disturbing increase in traffic fatalities last year, as our roads have been less crowded than normal during the pandemic. Speeding has helped push annual fatalities up to more than 42,000 – the highest level since 2007.

A new report from our friends at the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) takes a closer look at speeding and teens, where there's been a troubling trend.

The report notes that teen drivers and their passengers account for a greater proportion of speeding-related fatalities than all other motorist age groups (43% versus 30%).

We know some of the reasons for this disparity. Teen drivers lack the experience necessary to recognize and quickly react appropriately to dangerous situations, which makes speeding even riskier for

them. We also know that teens learn about speeding from an early age, as they ride in vehicles driven by their parents and other adults and see persistent speeding behavior.

As young drivers gain confidence behind the wheel, their travel speeds tend to increase, often made riskier by other drivers on the road. For teens, like the adults they grew up riding with, keeping up with traffic is the norm, even if it means exceeding the posted speed limit. And as we've noted before, unfortunately speeding is generally not viewed as a dangerous behavior, especially when compared with drunk and distracted driving. Too many of us, including teen drivers, view the biggest risk of speeding as being stopped and getting a ticket. It's just not seen as something that can kill.

The GHSA report discusses several things that can be done to deal with this serious issue. They include looking more closely at speed limits and speed enforcement, which falls under both state and local jurisdiction. Driver education and strong

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws are another necessary component. GDL restrictions can lower the risk of teen crashes by 50 percent.

Parental involvement also can play a major role in reducing teen crashes. The report suggests using in-car apps to monitor teen driving behavior. It also encourages consistent parental involvement with the driver training process, including having a teen-parent contract or pledge.

The importance of parent involvement cannot be overstated. Research from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia found that teenage drivers with actively involved parents were half as likely to be involved in a crash, 71% less likely to drive intoxicated, and 30% less likely to use a cell phone when driving compared to teens with uninvolved parents. These same teens were also 50% more likely to buckle up and recognize the importance of seatbelts as a lifesaving tool.

The full report "Teens and Speeding: Breaking the Deadly Cycle" can be downloaded at https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/GHSA_TeenSpeeding_Final_Jan21.pdf

Speeding in general has been a key focus of GHSA since 2019, after the organization convened a summit to find ways to address the problem. NRSF is supporting the effort by funding a speed management pilot program to help develop a template that can be used by other states and communities. Maryland and Virginia are to host the pilot programs. Maryland's pilot will be in a rural area and Virginia's will be in an urban setting.

Act Like an Air Traffic Controller

By Tim Hollister



I am often asked by parents, “What should my mindset be when I’m supervising my new driver?” I tell them to act like an air traffic controller.

Every time your teen proposes to get behind the wheel should be the equivalent of a pilot wanting to fly a plane. We would never toss the keys to a pilot and simply say, “Be careful.” Driving should be the same. Teens should be required to “file a flight plan” and get permission from the tower—you—before taking off.

The elements should include what a pilot would consider essential:

- **Destination:** Where exactly are you going?
- **Route:** What roads will you take, and are there safety concerns associated with any of them?
- **Time of day:** When are you leaving, and are there any safety issues in your timetable (for example, night driving)?
- **Equipment readiness:** Do you have enough gas? Is your car maintained and safe?
- **Communications plan:** When and how will you report to me when you arrive, any problem or delay, and when you are about to return home?

- **Passengers:** Who will be with you, where will they sit, and how will they not distract you?
- **Contingency plan:** What’s your alternate route if your intended one doesn’t work?
- **Return trip:** Do you have a set departure time, route, timetable, and passenger list?
- **Mental state:** Are you well rested and alert?
- **Overall:** Are you ready to undertake this responsibility?

Only when each of these items has been checked off should your teen be cleared for departure.

If you think this sounds silly, I respectfully suggest you return to the dangers of teen driving. The risks of an unprepared pilot flying are not unlike those facing a teen driver. The margin for error is extremely small, and the risks are enormous.

Thinking of teen driving like a pilot’s flight plan should help you and your teen focus on the difference between joyriding and driving with a destination, purpose and timetable.

Planning the route is especially important. New drivers should not drive a route that a supervising adult does not know. Supervising adults should consider whether there are locations on that route that are potentially unsafe, such as a curve at the end of a straightaway, a left lane merge onto a busy highway, a stretch of three- or four-lane highway where drivers are constantly changing lanes to get to exits, places with poor visibility, unfamiliar roundabouts with multiple entry points. Parents should instruct teens to take a route that avoids the riskier places.

This air controller routine will feel a bit less necessary when your teen is on his or her one-hundredth “flight” and has gotten the checklist down quite well. Will you need to maintain this level of detail after you and your teen have spent perhaps a year in this mode? Probably not. There will come a time when it will not be as critical to be so deliberate and mechanical. But the likelihood that your teen will get to this later stage is substantially increased if you and your teen treat every situation like a pilot preparing to fly a plane, and your supervision resembles that of a certified flight controller.

This air traffic controller mode also raises the question: should you use technology to track or monitor your teen driver? While teens may consider it an invasion of their privacy, many parents are taking advantage of an array of technologies to keep tabs on how and where they’re driving. GPS-based vehicle monitoring options range from smartphone apps that alert parents when their teens are driving faster than a preset speed, to devices that are either plugged into the vehicle’s diagnostic computer or professionally installed. Teens drive differently in vehicles equipped with these devices, taking fewer risks behind the wheel. Some insurance companies make monitoring devices available to customers at no cost and provide discounts if they are permanently installed. Like radar tracking a flight, technology can help.

Note: This article is adapted from Not so Fast, Chapter 9 (2nd ed. 2018).

Tim lost his 17-year-old son Reid in a crash in 2006. He is a teen driving safety advocate and author of “Not So Fast: Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving.”

NEW NRSF FILM PUTS FOCUS ON TEEN SPEEDING AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A new mini-documentary from The National Road Safety Foundation tells a true story about every parent's nightmare – a fatal car crash involving their child.

“Not So Fast,” an eight-minute film by director Jessica Hester, tells the story of Connecticut teenager Reid Hollister, who was killed in 2006 when he lost control of his speeding car on a highway exit ramp and rolled down an embankment.

Reid's father Tim, an attorney, channeled his grief into action, serving on a Connecticut task force that overhauled the state's Graduated Driver Licensing law, transforming it from among the most lenient in the nation to one of the strongest to protect teen drivers. When the task force finished its work, Tim kept going. He began a blog and then penned two books to help warn parents about the dangers facing teen drivers. He became a sought-after speaker, talking with audiences nationwide about the risks of speeding and distraction, especially for young inexperienced drivers. Tim has been a familiar face to many of us in the traffic safety community.

The new film shows the emotional toll on crash survivors – those who are left behind.

Safety experts agree that a big part of parental involvement begins long before teens learn to drive. “Parents have many responsibilities in the learning process,” said NRSF's Michelle Anderson. “Those responsibilities include modeling safe



driving behavior such as not driving aggressively, always obeying traffic signs and laws, never driving while impaired or distracted, and never speeding. Young people see what adults do.”

“Not So Fast” is now available for viewing or download, free of charge, at <https://www.nrsf.org/resources/speed-aggression>. NRSF is developing free program materials to support the film's key messages. Tim Hollister's books “Not So Fast” and “Still Reid's Dad” can be purchased at <http://www.fromreidsdad.org/>

TEENS HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT SPEEDING



We continue to engage young people in helping spread the word about safe driving behavior. Our regional Drive Safe PSA Contests this school year put the focus on the dangers of speeding. The winner of each contest receives \$2,000 and has his or her idea made into a finished TV spot that will be broadcast

nationwide. Runners-up receive a \$1,000 prize.

Our Drive Safe California winner is Isaiah Overson, 16, from Watsonville, CA.

Kaylee Franklin, 14, a student at Middletown High School in Middletown MD, is the winner of our Drive Safe D.C. Contest.

The Drive Safe Chicago Contest, done in conjunction with the Chicago Auto Show and the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, picks finalists who have their ideas made into 30-second spots. The public then selects the winner,

voting online through the Chicago Auto Show's Facebook page. This year's finalists are both from Indiana -- Kyle Rader, 16, a student at Hobart High School in Hobart, IN, and Katie Bernfield, 18, of North High School in Evansville. A link to the Facebook page for voting will be open in April at <https://www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago>

Watch our site to see the finished PSAs. Check them out at <https://www.nrsf.org/contests>

The Drive Safe Georgia Contest is still underway as Road Buzz is published. Entry deadline is March 22.

Focus on: Lauren Meade

SADD New York State Coordinator



State Coordinator Lauren Meade.

Lauren joined the SADD leadership team last year, after spending five years directing education and outreach for Planned Parenthood in New York's North County. Now, based near Saratoga, she is working to build SADD membership throughout the Empire State. SADD now has nearly 100 active chapters statewide in New York.

Lauren's goal this year is to build a SADD presence in 20 high-need communities in the state, making the group's peer-to-peer messaging and youth empowerment available to a broad range of young people in cities and rural communities.

"We appreciate the hard work and dedication shown by the adult leaders and especially the State Coordinators who help convert ideas into action that benefits the young people active in SADD nationwide as well as the schools and communities they serve," said Michelle Anderson, NRSF Director of Operations. "Lauren sets a very high bar for other SADD leaders to aspire to."

This year, as part of our long-standing partnership with SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), we are honoring the hardworking and dedicated SADD State Coordinators who help implement programs and support membership at the state level. Every quarter, we will pick what we call an NRSF State Squad Champ, who will receive a \$200 gift card and will also select a high-performing SADD Chapter in his or her state to receive a swag bag of NRSF program materials and give-away items.

Our first NRSF State Squad Champ is right from our own back yard – New York

PASSPORT TO SAFE DRIVING Continues to Expand Content and Distribution

We continue to broaden the contents of our Passport To Safe Driving, as more organizations and agencies are adopting it as a useful resource for new teen drivers and their parents. We created it with input from teen leaders of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), containing driving tips for teens, accompanied by talking points for parents to use in an important dialogue with new drivers in their family.



The Passport, which can be downloaded free, covers speeding, driving at night and in adverse weather, blind spots, negotiating left-hand turns and many other driving skills tips.

We are pleased to report it's been adopted by SADD State Coordinators, driver education teachers nationwide through ADTSEA, the national association of driver education teachers, and several state DMV's for use with new drivers.

It can be downloaded in its entirety from <https://www.nrsf.org/resources>. Printed copies can be ordered while supplies last at no charge at the same link. States and DMV's can adapt it using their state/organization logo by emailing us at info@nrsf.org

New NRSF Film To Debut at South by Southwest Festival



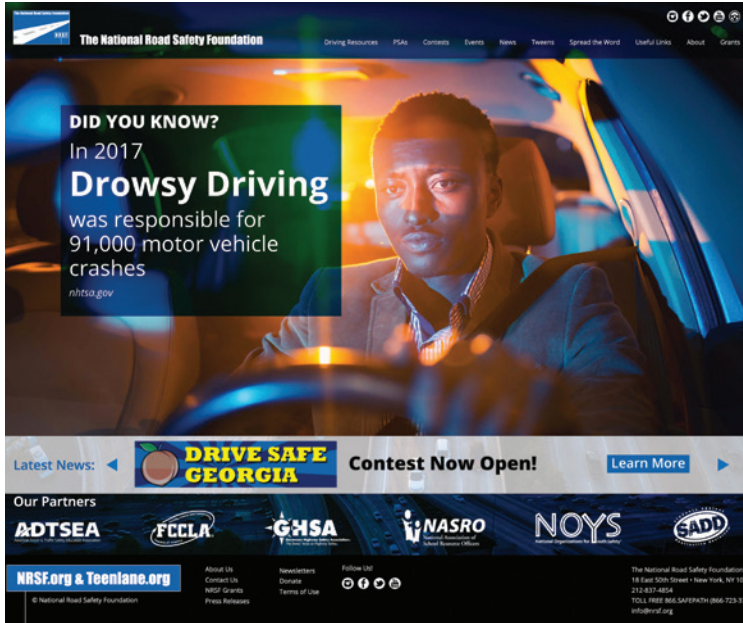
"A Puff Before Dying," a new film produced for NRSF by director Michael Reich with the famed Los Angeles-based Bob Baker Marionette Theater, has been selected as an official entrant

in the prestigious South by Southwest Festival. It will have its world premiere in mid-March at SXSW under the "documentary shorts" category. Details are at <https://www.sxsw.com/festivals/film/lineup/#documentary-shorts>

After its showing at South by Southwest, the seven-minute film about the dangers of marijuana and driving will be available for viewing and download free on the NRSF's site at <https://www.nrsf.org/resources/impaired-driving>

NRSF REVAMPS WEBSITE

Upgrades make it easier to access useful teaching resources



We've completed major enhancements to our website, which has a wealth of free driver safety resources, including downloadable films, PSAs and PowerPoint presentations and our newest teen/parent resource – The Passport To Safe Driving.

The upgrades at www.nrsf.org make the site easier to navigate,

connecting users with a broad range of free road safety resources. Topics include impaired driving, distraction, drowsy driving, speed and aggressive driving, occupant protection, driving skills, senior driving, and pedestrian safety. The site also has more than 100 downloadable videos and PSAs. They range from the award-winning “The Other Breakfast Club,” a 47-minute documentary that tells the stories of six young people who met in rehabilitation during their recovery from traumatic brain injury caused by traffic crashes, to short-form videos running 3 – 7 minutes, and dozens of creative 30-second broadcast-ready public service announcements, including many based on scripts by teens.

The site also has information about our contests to engage young people, including the national Drive2Life PSA Contest, regional Drive Safe contests and contests in partnership with student groups SADD and FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America). The site also links to resources and information from more than three dozen traffic safety organizations, corporate safety programs and government agencies. Find us at www.nrsf.org.

NRSF and NASRO Looking for Innovation in the Classroom

NRSF continues its partnership with The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) to recognize and share innovative methods with which resource officers teach teens about safe driving.

The winner of the Innovation in the Classroom Award will be honored with a choice of prizes including registration and travel to the NASRO National School Safety Conference in Orlando in July or registration and travel to one of several for-credit training programs run by NASRO throughout the year. The winner will also be invited to present the winning program to the participants of the NASRO National School Safety Conference and will be featured in the summer issue of *The Journal of School Safety*.

“The Innovation in the Classroom program is a way to find and reward

teaching excellence in traffic safety, as well as share best practices with school resource officers in classrooms nationwide,” said Mo Canady, executive director of NASRO. “We applaud and appreciate the commitment of our friends at The National Road Safety Foundation for their support of this important program for nearly ten years.”

NASRO has made it easier for SROs to navigate the nomination process, with minimal paperwork. Nominations may be made by submitting a brief video explaining the SRO’s teaching technique and why it is innovative and effective. Entry details and rules are at https://www.nasro.org/clientuploads/Innovation_in_the_Classroom_Award_Applicant_Information_Form.pdf. The deadline for nominations is April 1, 2021.



NASRO, the world’s leader in school-based policing, is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and school security and/or safety professionals who work as partners to protect schools and their students, faculty and staff members. By training law enforcement officers to educate, counsel and protect school communities, the more than 3,000 men and women of NASRO continuously lead by example and promote a positive image of law enforcement to school children and school communities. For more information, visit www.nasro.org

Look for Us at these Upcoming Events

Look for us at these major events this year.
Dates of non-virtual events are subject to change
or cancellation due to the pandemic.

APR 2021

Apr 26 - 28 **Lifesavers Conference** Virtual Event

JUL 2021

Jul 11 - 16 **NASRO** Orlando, FL
National Association of School Resource Officers

Jul 25 - 28 **ADTSEA** Knoxville, TN
American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association

July TBD **SADD National Conference** Virtual Event
Students Against Destructive Decisions

SEPT 2021

Sep 11 - 15 **GHSA** Denver, CO
Governors Highway Safety Association

NOV 2021

Nov 19 - 21 **Los Angeles Auto Show** Los Angeles, CA
Drive Safe California

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 nrsf.org

 twitter.com/nrsforg

 youtube.com/nationalroadsafety

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded nearly 60 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driving skills, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For more information or to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org or www.teenlane.org.



18 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022