



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Teen Driver Safety Week: Parents Are Key to Keeping Teens Safe Behind the Wheel

Santa Cruz Calif. – National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 20-26. During this week, the Santa Cruz Police Department encourages parents and caregivers to talk with their teens about following the rules of the road and how safe driving can help save lives.

Car crashes are a leading cause of death for teens (15-18 years old) in the United States. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 2,514 people killed in crashes involving a teen driver in 2022. In California, young drivers were involved in nearly 12% of all fatal crashes in 2022 despite accounting for only 5% of all licensed drivers in the U.S.

The Santa Cruz Police Department reminds parents and caregivers to discuss the dangers of risky driving behaviors like speeding, texting while driving, or not wearing a seatbelt. Teens should also understand the serious dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

"Parents and caregivers play a huge part in keeping teens safe on the road," Santa Cruz Police Lieutenant Wes Morey said. "Having these meaningful conversations, setting rules, and being a role model for safe driving can help teens make better choices when they're driving."

The Santa Cruz Police Department offers the following tips to parents and guardians for starting conversations about safe driving with teens:

- **Provisional Driver's License:** Learn about California's [provisional licensing law](#), which places restrictions on passengers and driving at night during the first year they have a license.
- **Lead by example:** Have driving sessions with your teen. Tell, but also show, your teen how to drive safely.
- **Set ground rules:** Be firm on rules such as no phone use, eliminating distractions by friends, always following the speed limit, and always buckling up. Create a [parent-teen driving contract](#) to outline specific driving guidelines.
- **Sober driving:** Emphasize the importance of never driving impaired or riding with someone who has been driving under the influence of alcohol

or drugs.

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