



For Immediate Release

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Santa Cruz Police Department Encourages Parents to Talk to Their Teen About Driving Safely
National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 20-26

Santa Cruz, Calif. – National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 20-26, and Santa Cruz Police Department is asking parents and guardians to take the time to discuss with their teen the rules of the road intended to keep them safe.

Driving remains the most dangerous activity for teens. Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens 15 to 18 years old. In 2017, 2,247 people were killed in crashes involving a teen driver (15-18 years old), according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

“Like anything new, it takes practice and experience to be a good driver,” Santa Cruz Police Sergeant Scott Garner said. “Teen drivers are also more likely to take risks and pick up bad habits behind the wheel, which is why it is important for parents to be involved and take steps to ensure their teen is staying safe on the road.”

According to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), six out of every 10 crashes involving teens were caused by driver distraction.

Santa Cruz Police Department offers tips to parents and guardians about starting conversations about safe driving with teens, and the responsibilities that come with being a licensed driver:

- **Graduated Driver License (GDL):** Learn about [California's GDL laws](#), which place restrictions on passengers and driving at night during the first year they have a license.
- **Lead by example:** Practice what you preach. Have driving sessions with your teen.
- **Set Ground Rules:** Be firm on things like not using the phone while driving, no friends in the car, following the speed limit and never driving after drinking or using drugs. Establish consequences you will enforce if your teen breaks the rules.
- **Understanding the Consequences:** Teach them about zero-tolerance laws regarding alcohol and California's cell phone law, which bars drivers under 18 from using a cell phone for any reason, including hands-free.
- **Sober Driving:** Emphasize the importance of never riding with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.

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