

Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

Teen: Heather Stevens
Parents: Tim & Faith Stevens

What is this Agreement?

This *Parent-Teen Driving Agreement* is a contract between Heather Stevens and her parents that establishes graduated freedoms based on experience behind the wheel and outlines consequences for not following what was agreed upon. Included are elements of the Indiana State Law that teen drivers are (or will soon be) required to follow.

Isn't This Overkill?

Interesting use of words. You see, the leading cause of death for teenagers is car crashes. Unfortunately, teen drivers put everyone at risk including friends, other drivers, pedestrians and family members. Recent studies show that two-thirds of the people killed in fatal crashes by teen drivers are persons other than the teen driver.

Not Convinced Yet?

- Inexperienced driving is cited as the reason for most teenage crashes.
- 16-year-olds are about three times more likely to die in a crash as the average-aged driver.
- 16-year-olds have a higher crash rate than any other age of driver.
- About half of teenage deaths occur when there is another teen in the car.
- Death rates for 16- and 17-year-old drivers increase with each extra passenger.

Why Do Teens Crash?

A number of studies have looked at why teens have such high crash rates. The top reasons teens crash include:

Inexperience—teen drivers are new drivers and lack experience behind the wheel.

Poor Visual Search—teen drivers have difficulty knowing when and where to look to identify potential hazards on the roadway.

Inattention or Distraction—teens are often distracted from the driving task, which can put them at increased risk for crashing.

Speed Management—teens often have difficulty choosing the appropriate speed for driving conditions, including wet weather and other hazardous road conditions.

Space Management—teens have difficulty judging how much time and space is needed to maneuver safely when driving.

Other factors that put teen drivers at risk—other passengers in the vehicle, speeding, aggressive driving, alcohol or other drugs, nighttime driving, and lack of seat belt use.

But Don't We Trust You?

Actually, Heather, we trust you a great deal. You are a very conscientious driver and we have no doubt that you will make good decisions. We've watched you drive over the past year and have seen great improvement! We just know by experience that every new driver will make mistakes—it is part of the learning process. We are hoping this agreement will help minimize the danger involved when those mistakes are made.

Let's Get To It

Great idea. The agreement begins on the next page.

Night-Time Driving

THE RISK: During the first six months of independent driving, the risk of a fatal crash at night is about three times higher for teens than during the day.

Heather

initial

- I will not violate the Indiana law that restricts nighttime driving. I will not drive after 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday or after 1:00am on Friday and Saturday. Per Indiana law, this rule will remain in place until my 18th birthday.
- Each time I am driving at night, I will have an agreement with my parents where I will be and when I will be home, and I will call if I'm going to be late.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break Indiana law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Dad/Mom

initial

Your safety is our #1 priority and we will be there when you need us. If you ever get in a bind or even just an uncomfortable situation, we will pick you up or arrange for safe transportation home, regardless of the situation or time of your call.

Aggressive & Reckless Driving

THE RISK: Speed-related crashes account for 44% of deaths among 15–20 year olds.

Heather

initial

- I agree to ALWAYS obey the posted speed limit.
- I agree to consider the weather and road conditions and adjust my speed appropriately.
- I will not drive when I am angry, frustrated or emotional.
- I will not tailgate, speed, weave in and out of traffic or participate in any aggressive or reckless driving.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break the law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Dad/Mom

initial

Your safety is our #1 priority and we will be there when you need us. We will pick you up or arrange for safe transportation if you feel it is not safe for you to drive, or if you are in a car with someone exhibiting these behaviors. We also promise to be a role model, lead by example and demonstrate responsible and safe driving behavior at all times.

Driving Under the Influence

THE RISK: Driving under the influence is a factor in one of every four fatal teen crashes.

Heather

initial

- I agree that I will never drink or use drugs and drive.
- I understand that Indiana has a ZERO TOLERANCE law that says it's illegal for drivers under 21 to have any measurable alcohol in their blood.
- I agree that I will never ride in a car with someone I know or suspect has been drinking or using drugs.
- I agree to call you if I am ever in a situation where I feel it is unsafe for me to drive, or unsafe for me to ride with someone else.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break the law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for 3 months or longer.

Dad/Mom

initial

Your safety is our #1 priority and we will be there when you need us. We agree to come and get you wherever you are whatever the time of day or night if you are not able to get home because you are following our rules AND the law regarding driving under the influence. We also promise to be a role model and lead by example, never getting behind the wheel after having even one drink.

Safety Belts

THE RISK: Teens have the lowest safety belt use of all drivers and are more likely to forget or decide not to buckle up when there are other teens in the car.

Heather

initial

- I agree to wear my safety belt at all times.
- I agree that I will not start the car until all passengers are buckled up. No exceptions.
- I agree that I will not ride in a car as a passenger without buckling up.
- I agree that I will not ride in a car where the driver and other passengers are not buckled up.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break the law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Dad/Mom

initial

We promise to be a role model and lead by example by always wearing our seat belt and enforcing safety belt rules with our passengers on every ride.

Passengers

THE RISK: The number of passengers in a teen's vehicle is a major risk factor in teen crashes. The risk of a fatal crash increases by 100% for each additional teen passenger when a teen is driving.

Heather

initial

- Phase 1 (0-3 months): I will follow the Indiana law and agree not to have any passengers in the car during my first three months of driving unless you or someone you have approved in advance, over the age of 21, is present.
- Phase 2 (4-12 months): I will not carry more than one passenger in my car without permission for a specific trip.
- I will not ride as a passenger in a car where the driver has had their license for less than one year, and then only with your permission.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break California law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Dad/Mom

initial

Your safety is our #1 priority and we will be there when you need us. We will pick you up or arrange for safe transportation home, regardless of the situation or time of your call.

Cell Phones

THE RISK: Teen drivers are particularly at risk of distracted driving resulting from talking or texting on cell phones. Such activities increase the chance of getting involved in serious vehicle crashes. Beginning July 1, 2009, Indiana law prohibits drivers under the age of 18 from using a cell phone, a hands-free device or other electronic communication while driving.

Heather

initial

- I understand that, under Indiana Law, drivers under the age of 18 may not use a wireless telephone, pager, laptop or any other electronic communication or mobile services device to speak or text while driving in any manner, even "hands-free."
- I agree that if I need to use my cell phone, I will pull over to a safe location away from traffic before I use my phone.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break the law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 1 month.

Dad/Mom

initial

We understand that a cell phone is a privilege as well as a productivity tool. We agree to continue paying for your usage of a cell phone so long as you continue to use it responsibly—and never while driving.

Distractions

THE RISK: Teen drivers are especially susceptible to distractions. Distractions impair judgment and decision-making abilities. Talking to passengers, changing a CD or iPod track, eating, and personal grooming are all distractions that divide attention and take the focus off driving.

Heather

initial

- For the first three months, I will not have the car stereo on. For the next three months, I may have the stereo on but may not make any adjustments while driving other than changing the volume.
- I will not participate in any behavior that makes me look away from the road or distracts me from driving.
- I agree to check myself for readiness to drive before driving.
- If I am not able to focus on the driving task due to lack of sleep or if I am emotional, I will not drive.
- I agree to set rules for my passengers so they don't distract me, and will pull over to a safe location until they have stopped distracting me and I am able to drive again.

I understand these rules are for my safety. If I violate any of these rules, I endanger myself, my passengers and other drivers and I may break the law. If I violate our rules, I agree to lose my driving privileges for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Dad/Mom

initial

Your safety is my #1 priority and I will be there when you need me. I will pick you up or arrange for safe transportation home, regardless of the situation or time of your call.

Summary

I, Heather Stevens...

- Promise to abide by the rules outlined above.
- Understand the car I drive is your property and that driving is a privilege, not a right.
- Will only drive the car with permission and will not permit any other person to drive the car without your specific permission for each specific case.
- Know it is my responsibility to protect the car I drive and will keep it reasonably clean and maintained.
- Understand that I am responsible for my driving actions. If I break any rules we have agreed to, I will accept the consequences that we have discussed.
- Agree to contribute to the family by providing transportation to family members when asked by you (after the law allows).
- Understand that the terms of this agreement may be loosened or tightened based on how I handle the responsibility of driving.

signature

date

We, Tim & Faith Stevens...

- Will approach the process of teaching you to drive with patience and support.
- Promise to be a positive role model by demonstrating safe driving, following all the traffic safety laws and regulations that we've asked you to follow.
- Agree to continue to offer you training and coaching as you develop your driving skills.
- Will consider your requests for changes to our agreement with respect and careful consideration.

signatures

date

Sources: AAA California, Dr. Wisely's Parenting Teen Drivers, TeenDriving.com, AllStateTeenDriver.com, Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, ThinkBeforeYouDrive.org