



The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc.

ROAD BUZZ

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NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVER EDUCATION NEEDED TO SUPPLEMENT GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSE (GDL) LAWS FOR TEENS

The National Road Safety Foundation says consistent standards could save thousands of lives every year

The President of The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. has issued a call for the Federal government to develop nationally standardized program guidelines for driver education, coupled with state graduated driver license (GDL) laws that place driving restrictions on young, less experienced drivers. Every state now has a GDL law, but restrictions and enforcement vary widely.

Fraydun Manocherian, who began his advocacy for safer roads in 1952 and founded The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF) in 1962, said, "Automobile crashes continue to be the number one cause of death for Americans up to the age of 33, and an overwhelming majority of those crashes are preventable." NHTSA statistics show that more than 42,000 people are killed on roads and highways every year and hundreds of thousands more are injured in crashes, at an annual cost estimated in excess of \$250 billion.

"Many of those senseless and tragic crashes could be avoided simply by having better drivers on the roads," Mr. Manocherian added. "It all comes down to education and training."

The National Road Safety Foundation supports funding to make driver education programs available free in high schools, where cutbacks over the past decades have forced the elimination of driver ed in many school districts. Uniform driver education curriculum standards will improve content and bring better drivers to the roads, which will reduce fatalities initially in the highest-risk group of drivers ages 16 to 25, with a larger cumulative effect over time. Programs and incentives would also encourage retraining and refreshing skills of experienced drivers.



NRSF also advocates integration of public awareness campaigns through national media to promote traffic safety. National media campaigns would address all causes of crashes and would target various age and risk groups, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists.

"We want to sell driver education and road safety the same way major corporations market products," Mr. Manocherian said. "Just as effective advertising can move cereal and cosmetics off shelves, a well-planned and properly funded education campaign in high schools and the media can succeed in reducing crashes, saving lives, reducing injuries, and addressing the number one cause of grief in this nation."

"We support NHTSA's efforts to research and evaluate which state GDL systems promote the best safety record. NRSF is committed to help promote the best practices and standards in driver education so they can be implemented state by state throughout the nation," Mr. Manocherian added.

He has proposed funding the driver education initiatives by adding a half-penny per gallon to the Federal tax on gasoline. Education programs could be fully funded and save an estimated 4,000 lives every year, avoid tens of thousands of injuries and save as much as \$25 billion in crash-related costs. All this can be achieved at a cost per driver of less than 20 cents per month or about \$2.40 per year.

"It's an excellent return on a very small investment," Mr. Manocherian said.

New Program from NRSF Drowsy Driving A Real Problem



One-third of U.S. drivers admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel in the past year, according to a recent survey by the National Sleep Foundation. It's probably happened to you – your eyes get heavy, you have to fight to keep them open. You lose track of time, miss an exit or drift out of your lane.

Traffic safety experts now recognize drowsy driving as a significant factor in many traffic crashes, and The National Road Safety Foundation is addressing this issue by creating its newest teaching program and public awareness campaign.

Recognizing the Drowsy Driver is a two-part program that includes "Almost Home: Profile on Drowsy Driving" and "Recognizing the Drowsy Driver." which tell of drowsy driving and its aftermath in brief and compelling real-life vignettes. The program includes discussion guides, activities and Powerpoint presentations.

Adele Kristiansson, NRSF Marketing and Legislative Affairs Director, has demonstrated "Almost Home" and "Recognizing the Drowsy Driver" at meetings of state and regional safety councils and driver education associations nationwide, and the response has been extremely positive. More than 10,000 copies of the new free program have already been distributed and NRSF promotion of the issue has earned favorable news coverage in dozens of newspapers and TV and radio news programs throughout the country. To preview a copy of the films, visit www.nationalroadsafety.org

GDL Standards Enforcement Can Save Teen Lives

Every state in the nation has some form of graduated driver license law for teenage drivers, which place restrictions on when or where they can drive. The restrictions are usually based on the driver's age and the level of training.

NRSF supports GDL laws that place restrictions on inexperienced drivers.

But more than the restrictions of GDL is needed in order to keep our roads safe. GDL restrictions must be integrated with phased driver education and supervised driving.

To view chart showing state-by-state GDL restrictions visit www.iihs.org/laws/graduatedlicenseIntro.aspx



NRSF Salutes Delaware for Excellence in Driver Education



Uniform driver ed curriculum available in all high schools produces nearly 40% drop in teen driving incidents; Strong support from private sector helps

The State of Delaware sets a great example other states should follow when it comes to delivering excellence in driver education. We are happy to cite them as a Best Practices State.

Delaware has taken serious steps by combining GDL laws into a thorough and universally accessible high school driver education program. And, happily, the statistics prove they're doing something very right.

Since the program began, teen involvement in traffic crashes has dropped steadily. The incidence of 16 – 18-year olds in traffic crashes has been cut by nearly 40 percent in the past ten years. For 16-year olds, the rate has dropped from 17% in 1996 to 8.3% in 2006.

According to Steve Cebulka, past president of the Delaware Driver Safety Education Association (DDSEA), Delaware enacted strict Graduated Driver License laws about ten years ago. In their current form, they require new drivers at age 16 to drive a minimum of 50 hours with parental supervision, including 10 hours of night driving.

Harry Roosevelt, Executive Director of the Delaware Safety Council and current president of the DDSEA, says driver education is available free to teens in every public and private high school in the state. It is offered within normal school hours and is tied to academic performance. Classroom instruction includes use of simulators, so students can see for themselves the effect of driving while intoxicated or drowsy. Instructors teach in-class as well as in-car components. This provides students with superior instructional continuity.

Delaware also has a mandatory orientation program for parents of young people taking driver ed in school, featuring presentations by representatives of law enforcement, the insurance industry and the medical profession.

An annual highlight is a statewide safe driving competition, where hundreds of teens from throughout the state gather at the Dover Downs International Speedway to test their driving skills with an obstacle course, parallel parking and reaction to emergencies on the road. They also have to pass a written test.

Local businesses support the program. Pete Booker, President of Delmarva Broadcasting, which owns a chain of area radio stations, said he was tired of broadcasting news stories on his stations about teen crashes and deaths, and decided use the stations' resources to do something about it. Delmarva, helps promote the event the safe driving competition and recognizes the winning students on-air. The company also created Smart Drive, a refresher and reinforcement program for students who have had their license for a year.

NRSF had a film crew at last year's event, and a short film was produced, which the state's driver education leaders are using to help secure more funding for driver training.

NRSF salutes the educators, state officials, area businesses and the students themselves for setting a shining example.

There she is... Miss America



Jennifer Berry, Miss America 2006, is featured in a new Public Service Announcement from The National Road Safety Foundation, as well as a six-minute film "Follow Your Dream."

During her reign as Miss America, Jennifer's platform was Building Intolerance to Drunk Driving and Underage Drinking. She is determined to spread the message to young people after she suffered a personal tragedy involving drinking and driving.

In 1999, while still in high school, Jennifer's school friend was killed at age 15. Her friend had been drinking at a party with other underage teens, and as they were heading to another party, the driver lost control. Jennifer's friend, sitting unbelted in the back seat, was killed instantly.

"It was the first funeral I ever attended," she recalled, "and that experience sparked a need to do something to help save other lives."

In the new film, Miss America talks about losing her friend and urges young people not to drink, but to get involved instead in activities such as sports or music.

The PSA and film were created by award-winning director Mark Sadan, who has written and produced other PSAs and films for the NRSF teaching library.

To receive a copy of the new Miss America PSA for airing on TV or cable in your community, call 1-866-SAFEPATH or go to www.nationalroadsafety.org and click on "Free Traffic Safety Programs."

Coming soon from NRSF The Other Breakfast Club



Work is being completed on a new film from NRSF that shows the tragic aftermath of traffic crashes.

"The Other Breakfast Club" profiles a group of people who are trying to recover and live with the devastating effects of traumatic brain injury caused in traffic crashes. It shows the impact of crash-related brain injuries not only on the victims, but on their families and friends.

Watch for more news of this important film, due to be released in 2008.