



Press Contacts:

Glenn Greenberg
Liberty Mutual
617-574-5874
glenn.greenberg@libertymutual.com

Deborah Burke Henderson
SADD
508-481-3568
508-479-7723 (cell)
dbhenderson@sadd.org

**SUMMER IS DEADLIEST TIME OF YEAR FOR YOUNG DRIVERS,
BUT STUDY SHOWS LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF TEENS SEE THE DANGER
DESPITE INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF DRINKING AND DRIVING**

***Family Safe Driving Agreement at www.LibertyMutualTeenDriving.com Can Play
Significant Role in Deterring Teens' Dangerous or Distracted Driving Habits***

BOSTON, June 24, 2010 – As teens empty out of high schools across the country and into their cars this month, some will tragically contribute to this disturbing statistic: car crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to-20 year-olds in the United States. Add that to the fact that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports more driving-related deaths in the summer months than in any other season of the year, and parents have reason for concern over their children's safety.

Despite this, however, teens don't agree: according to a national study of more than 2,500 eleventh and twelfth graders conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), only 9 percent of teens believe that summer driving comes with a high degree of danger.

The new Liberty Mutual/SADD research also indicates that the majority of teens (55 percent) believe they or their peers are more likely to drink and drive during the summer. That sentiment spikes to 77 percent when asked specifically about the Fourth of July, contributing to a greater acknowledgement by teens that driving on the holiday does come with a high degree of danger (31 percent).

Interestingly, girls were more likely than boys to say there would be increased drinking and driving by teens during the summer overall (60 percent vs. 48 percent) and on the Fourth specifically (81 percent vs. 72 percent).

“Our past Liberty Mutual/SADD research revealed that teens spend 44 percent more hours driving each week in the summer than during the school year, so when you have your most inexperienced driving population on the road for so much longer, it’s understandable that there would be a huge uptick in risk for crashes and tragedies,” said Dave Melton, Liberty Mutual’s director of transportation industry services and a driving safety expert at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety. “All the more reason that parents should be diligent about discussing responsible driving with their teens, and establishing family driving rules with actionable consequences and rewards.”

Other Risky Driving Habits

The prevalence of year-round dangerous or distracted driving behaviors reported by teens also is a likely significant contributor to teen crashes, especially during the summer given the sharp rise in driving hours. According to the Liberty Mutual/SADD study, teens report “often” or “very often” engaging in:

Text messaging	33 percent
Talking on a cell phone	28 percent
Racing other cars	10 percent
Changing songs on an MP3 player	37 percent
Speeding	36 percent
Driving with 3+ passengers	31 percent

Parents Play a Key Role

The new research confirms that parents have a tremendous opportunity to enhance their role in deterring unsafe driving behaviors among teens: more than half (52 percent) of teens admit they are not responsible for abiding by any formal or informal family driving safety rules, yet 64 percent of teens who have not entered into a written agreement with their parents about safe driving rules say they would be willing to do so.

“Past Liberty Mutual/SADD research strongly indicates that teens who have regular conversations with their parents about driving safety are less likely to drink and drive, less likely to speed, and are more likely to wear their seat belts,” said SADD Chairman Stephen Wallace. “When families build safe driving plans together it fosters effective, face-to-face communication, which we know leads to safer driving behaviors.”

Indeed, those who do have formal driving safety rules established with their parents are significantly more likely than teens who have no family driving safety rules to say such an agreement would encourage them to change their driving habits (44 percent vs. 26 percent) and would make it easier for them to resist peer pressure when it comes to making a decision between safe and unsafe driving behaviors (58 percent vs. 42 percent).

Liberty Mutual and SADD offer a customizable Family Ground Rules driving agreement at www.libertymutualteendriving.com that provides a framework for parents and teens to set and agree to specific rules around key safe driving issues such as speeding, the number of passengers in the car, cell phone usage, texting while driving and curfews. Upon acceptance, these ground rules – with mutually agreed upon rewards and consequences – can be printed and posted on the refrigerator so parents and teens can refer back to them throughout the year.

About the Liberty Mutual/SADD Teen Driving Partnership

Since 1991, Liberty Mutual and SADD have collaborated on research and responsible solutions to keep families safe behind the wheel. In addition to the Family Driving Ground Rules agreement, www.LibertyMutualTeenDriving.com also features tips on how parents and teens can openly talk about driving distractions and alcohol and drug use; video demonstrations of safe driving techniques; state-by-state teen driving laws; individual car safety scores; tips on buying and caring for a car; and an exclusive 50 percent discount for teens to take the National Safety Council’s online Defensive Driving Course.

Liberty Mutual and SADD also are national partners with Oprah’s “No Phone Zone” campaign to put an end to distracted driving.

About the Survey

Liberty Mutual and SADD commissioned ORC Guideline to conduct a qualitative and quantitative survey to measure teen driving attitudes and behaviors. The study was initiated with a series of five focus groups held in Boston, Denver and Minneapolis in April 2009. The study also involved surveying a total of 2,531 teens in eleventh and twelfth grades from 25 randomly recruited high schools across the country in the fall of 2009. These findings can be interpreted with a 95 percent confidence interval with an error margin of +/- 1.7 percent.

About Liberty Mutual Group

"Helping people live safer, more secure lives" since 1912, Boston-based Liberty Mutual Group (www.LibertyMutualGroup.com) is a diversified global insurer and fifth-largest property and casualty insurer in the U.S. based on 2008 direct written premium. Liberty Mutual Group ranks 71st on the Fortune 500 list of largest U.S. corporations, based on 2009 revenue. The company has over 45,000 employees located in more than 900 offices throughout the world.

The eighth-largest auto and home insurer in the U.S., Liberty Mutual (www.libertymutual.com) sells full lines of coverage for automobile, homeowners, valuable possessions, personal liability, and individual life insurance. The company is an industry leader in affinity partnerships, offering car and home insurance to employees and members of more than 12,000 companies, credit unions, professional associations and alumni groups.

About SADD

For nearly 30 years, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) has been committed to empowering young people to lead education and prevention initiatives in their schools and communities. Founded as Students Against Driving Drunk in 1981, SADD (www.sadd.org) has become the nation's preeminent peer-to-peer youth education, prevention and activism organization, with nearly 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges nationwide. SADD now highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, substance abuse, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide.

###