



SADD Teens Today:

SADD/Liberty Mutual Survey

New research by SADD and the Liberty Mutual Group reveals that almost two in five young drivers (39 percent) routinely tempt fate on the road by not wearing seat belts. In addition, more than three in four teens (77 percent) speed when driving, and one in five (21 percent) drives after drinking. Nationally, 6,168 young people died in motor vehicle crashes and 554,000 were injured in 1998, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The two organizations gathered information on teen driving habits as part of a new survey of 700 young people and 400 parents of teenagers on the many pressures teens face. Responses to the questions on whether teen drivers use seat belts, speed, and drive after drinking were limited to the approximately 470 participants who are licensed to drive.

The study also found that teens' safety habits do not improve when they are passengers.

The survey found that nearly half of the teens canvassed shun seat belts when they are along for the ride. Eighty-six percent said the teenager who is driving speeds. And 40 percent of the young respondents have ridden with a teen driver who was impaired or intoxicated.

No doubt this information will disturb many parents who have an unrealistically rosy view of their teens' driving habits. Virtually all parents (93 percent) believe their teens generally buckle up whenever they drive. Ninety-two percent of parents are fairly certain their teens do not drive under the influence. Another 46 percent are fairly certain their youngsters never speed. Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of young people in the United States. Survey results indicate that teenagers should be better educated about the tragic consequences of unsafe driving behaviors.

NHTSA reports indicate that 64 percent of the teens who were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 1998 were not wearing seat belts. Furthermore, more than a third of the teenagers involved in fatal crashes were speeding and 29 percent of the young drivers who died had been drinking.

"Many of these young people would be alive today if they had buckled up or slowed down or had not taken a ride from someone who was drinking," said Stephen Wallace, SADD's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "SADD chapters must convince teens it's actually cool to use common sense behind the wheel and always to buckle up."

This survey is the first of an annual series that will be conducted by SADD and Liberty Mutual to further explore solutions to problems associated with teen use of alcohol and drugs, violence, and other challenges before teens, as well as driving issues. To see how you, your friends and even your parents rate on driving habits, use the Driving Report Card printed below.



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DRIVING REPORT CARD

Answer Yes or No to the following questions:

Does Driver ...

- Always wear a seat belt?
- Obey the speed limit?
- Come to full stop at STOP sign?
- Slow for yellow light (rather than speed up)?
- Stop for red lights?
- Pay attention while driving?
- Act courteously to other drivers and pedestrians?
- Adjust driving to weather conditions?
- Travel a responsible distance behind other vehicles?

If answers are YES to all questions, driver is a SUPER DRIVER and deserves a pat on the back!

If questions are answered NO to two or more, driving is unacceptable and unsafe!

If questions are answered NO to three or more, driver is violating the law and endangering his/her life and the lives of others!