

Teen Driver Tips for Parents



Lesson 9 Driving at Night

Purpose: To learn the special factors that affect driving at night and in poor visibility.

Predicted Practice Time: 60 minutes per repeat

Learning Space: A mix of public roads

Key Concepts

If we drove at night, during storms or when it is foggy in the same way we drive in perfect, daytime conditions it is likely that we would crash much more frequently. In fact, according to the California DMV:

The per mile crash rate for teenaged drivers is 3 times higher after 9:00 p.m. compared to driving during the day. This is because the task of driving at night is more difficult; they have less experience driving at night than during the day as well as being more sleep deprived.

Advice for Parents

Remind your driver of these things...

- Always make sure all vehicle lights are working.
- Use high beams only when necessary and when actually effective. For instance, they work less well in fog than low beams.
- Drive more slowly to give increased time to manage hazards.
- Pull over if you are drowsy or not fully aware.
- Keep interior lights off and the dash dimmed.
- On trips, take frequent breaks.
- Make sure to have plenty of fresh air.
- Don't look directly into oncoming headlights.
- Darkness makes you less effective in playing the What-If game because you can't see as much.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol, even over the counter medicines like cold remedies that can combine with night visibility and tunnel vision to create hypnotic drowsiness.



I will stop the learning activity if I believe you become distracted, angry or agitated.

Teaching Tips

Once again, it is recommended that you use the technique of Commentary Driving. Ask your young driver to “think out loud, saying every change you’ve made because of darkness.”

In this case, fill in the gaps in your learner’s comments by noting a few of the techniques you notice they may be missing. You don’t need to correct everything. Don’t overload the learning process.

For example, the driver might say, “Slow down early to make a left turn.” You might add, “And you’ll always want to get your turn signal on earlier too.”

You’ll also want to make sure your driver understands “overdriving your headlights.” This happens when your ability to react is slower than the farthest ahead you can see. To test it out, pick a spot as far out as the headlights extend. If you reach that spot more quickly than 2-3 seconds, you’re going too fast for visibility, no matter what the posted speed limit.

Plan to be more nervous when you are the teacher-passenger at night. Remember, your job is to be a help, not a distraction. Take a deep breath.

Driving Checklist

Learning Summary

Tasks can be considered accomplished when they are explained properly or done routinely (a minimum of three times without reminder.)

Task	Accomplished	Needs More Practice
• Understands how equipment affects nighttime driving safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Travels at a speed that is safe for conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Uses signals early and consistently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Avoids distractions and understands why	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Understands how medicines, night conditions and tunnel vision can exaggerate the danger of each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Recognize most hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Offers effective commentary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Can do an “overdriving the headlights” check correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Remained calm without distraction, anger or agitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Time spent on activity in minutes: