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“What Safety Means To Teen Driving”

Safety! Driving! What does this mean to me as a teenager? When I first received my driver’s permit earlier this year, I knew that I had under taken quite an adventure... the adventure of safe driving. Before I even set foot in the car, I studied the owner’s manual of my family’s car. Then I studied the rules of the road.

Now I felt I was ready for the road. However, my mom and dad had other ideas. First, we went through a check list before I even was allowed to turn on the ignition. I felt that I was in the shuttle going through a pre flight check list. In essence, every time a driver gets into the car they, too, should go through this safe mental check list.

1. Buckle your seat belt
2. check and adjust your seat and mirrors
3. make sure you have gas
4. make sure no lights on the dash are on
5. know where the switch for your lights and window wipers are
6. Start up the car and go

Now, you are ready to enter traffic. Look both ways, right, left, and right again. Proceed cautiously into traffic and keep the appropriate speed. Remember not to tail gate and keep a distance between you and the car ahead of you. The rule of thumb is a car length for each ten miles per hour of speed.

All of this is the basics. However, you also have to deal with circumstances that you cannot control such as the weather. Not only severe weather, but even rain can affect the way you should drive to be safe. When it rains, the most important thing to remember is to drive more slowly and be more cautious because rain causes a decrease in grip which makes stopping all the more harder. Here in Northern Ohio, we experience heavy snowfall every winter. Snow can make the roads dangerous with ice. The only way to avoid a crash is to drive slowly and carefully. When I drive in conditions like these, safety must always be foremost in my mind. I always prepare myself mentally before I drive in bad weather to be ready for whatever Mother Nature can throw at me.

I feel that one of the biggest issues with dangerous teen driving is driving drunk. Many teens feel that they are invincible and that alcohol cannot affect their driving at all. Recently in school, a DARE officer came to my health class and brought goggles that simulate drunkenness. After stumbling around with them on, we attempted to drive a golf cart through an obstacle course under his supervision. We all found out how much alcohol truly does affect driving capabilities. The only way to be safe is to refuse alcohol and not let a person who has been drinking to drive.

I feel that safety is the most crucial facet of driving. Many teens underrate safety because they don't realize what the outcomes could be, or they just don't think. If you keep a calm head and always follow the rules of the road, safety will be a part of your every day driving.