



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #5

KEYS to... Continued Safe Driving & Supervised Practice

Purpose

To increase the safety of everyone involved, families should ensure that teens have the safety knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to Continued Safe Driving & Supervised Practice.

- ♦ **Goal for Parent:** Make it clear to your teen that you expect her/him to be a safe driver. For Activity #5, prepare to assess your teen's knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to continued safe driving & supervised practice.
- ♦ **Goal for Teen:** Show your parents that you are committed to being a safe driver. For Activity #5, let your parents know that you have the knowledge, skills, & behaviors for continued safe driving & supervised practice.

Instructions

Completing activities may take some time & energy, but the safety impact will be long-lasting!

- ♦ **TOGETHER:** Parents & teens need to: (1) read over this Information Sheet, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on the Assignment Sheet for Homework Assignment #5, & (3) complete & turn in the Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.
- ♦ **As your family completes the activities, remember to REMAIN PATIENT with each other! This is a new experience for both parents & teens!**

Information for Homework Assignment #5: Continued Safe Driving

Box A: Never Perform Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Risky, distracted, & drowsy driving behaviors put a driver & those around at increased risk for crash or injury.

Risky driving

- ♦ Teen drivers are more likely to perform risky driving behaviors than older drivers. This may be because they do not appreciate the risks, they are not paying attention, or they are just acting their age.
- ♦ **The most common risky driving behaviors performed by teens include:** running a red light, disobeying a stop sign, speeding in residential or school zones, driving 10–19 miles per hour over the speed limit, weaving through slower traffic, changing lanes without signaling, pulling out into traffic without enough space between cars, eating, talking on phone, horsing around with passengers, & playing the radio so loud that they cannot hear horns or sirens.

Distracted Driving

- ♦ Teen drivers are more easily distracted than older drivers.
- ♦ Because of their inexperience, teens do not react as well when they suddenly become aware of danger.
- ♦ **The most common distractions for teens include:** teen passengers, cell phones, intense moods, eating in the vehicle, & changing tapes, CDs, or radio stations.

Drowsy Driving

- ♦ Teens need 9 to 10 hours of sleep each night to be rested (more sleep than adults need).
- ♦ Most teens actually get less sleep due to the demands of school, extracurricular activities, work, & developmental changes.
- ♦ Teens usually drive during the times when they could be most sleepy—at night, early in the morning, or during mid-afternoon.

Box B: Teens Can Increase Driver Safety

The goal of safe driving is to safely navigate roadways & safely interact with other roadway users.

Understand the phases of safe driving

- ♦ **Novice → Nearing Proficient → Proficient → Competent** (see the handout, *Understand the Road to Safe Driving*, from Parent Night).
- ♦ Performing a driving behavior correctly a couple of times does not mean competence! Competence means always performing correctly in many different driving situations.
- ♦ **The ONLY WAY to move from one phase to the next is time & practice.**

Understand the risks of unsafe driving

- ♦ You can get tickets.
- ♦ You can make your car insurance rates go up.
- ♦ You can lose your license or driving privileges.
- ♦ You can unnecessarily increase risk of crash.
- ♦ You can seriously injure or kill yourself, your passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or those in other cars.

Do what it takes to be a safe driver

- ♦ Obey all traffic laws & signs, including speed limits.
- ♦ Always wear your seat belt & require passengers to wear theirs.
- ♦ Never drive after any amount of alcohol/other drug use or ride with a driver who has used any amount of alcohol/other drugs.
- ♦ Never perform risky driving behaviors, such as tailgating or cutting off others.
- ♦ Avoid distracting activities while driving, such as playing around with passengers, changing the radio stations or CDs, or talking/texting on a cell phone.
- ♦ Never drive when angry, upset, or overly tired.

Information for Homework Assignment #5: Continued Supervised Practice

Box C: The Road Ahead: 50+ Hours of Supervised Practice

Knowledge & skill acquisition is not enough to produce safe drivers. Supervised practice is essential to competent, safe driving.

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)

Driver education is the beginning of the process of learning to drive—acquiring technical knowledge & skill. But teens need many, many hours of practice to become competent, safe drivers. Montana GDL laws require parents to provide their teens with a minimum of 50 hours of practice driving (at least 10 hrs at night) before they are eligible for a restricted license. Many teens may require even more practice.

Who?

Practice with teen & parent only in the vehicle. And, remember 3 things: (1) Remain calm & focused; (2) Making mistakes is part of learning; & (3) Practice driving is serious, but should also be interesting & engaging.

What?

Practice the driving skills that your teen has learned in driver education & are listed for you in the handout, **Keep Track of Driver Progress**. Make a schedule for the week & set “goals” for each supervised practice session. The “goals” should be to practice one or more of the safe driving behaviors in various driving conditions. Begin with basic skills such as turning, parking, & backing up. Then, practice more complex skills such as changing lanes & merging.

When?

In the beginning, practice in daylight & good weather. As your teen's skills increase, gradually expose your teen to different driving conditions, including a variety of roads, weather, & times of day.

Where?

In the beginning, practice in safe, low-risk driving conditions. Start out in empty parking lots or remote roads. As your teen's skills increase, progress to quiet neighborhood streets & later to busier roads & highways.

Why?

Learning to drive requires responsibility & dedication from both parents & teens. New drivers need a lot of practice to gain enough experience to handle **daily driving hazards & unexpected situations**. Maintain a driving log with dates, driving behaviors, & time elapsed during supervised practice (see the handout, **Schedule for Supervised Driving**) so that you can keep track of Montana requirements (at least 50 hours of supervised practice) & so that you can keep track of teen's progress toward becoming a safe driver!

Box D: Parents Can Increase Teen Driver Safety

Parents have a substantial opportunity to influence & ensure safe teen driving.

Understand the phases of safe driving

- ♦ **Novice → Nearing Proficient → Proficient → Competent** (see the handout, **Understand the Road to Safe Driving**, from Parent Night).
- ♦ Performing a driving behavior correctly a couple of times does not mean competence! Competence means always performing the behavior correctly in many different kinds of driving situations.
- ♦ **The ONLY WAY to move from one phase to the next is time & practice.**

Supervise your teen's driving regularly

- ♦ Teens need to be exposed to varying driving situations but they do not easily adapt to new situations so an experienced person needs to guide them through.
- ♦ Teens need any errors in driving attitudes or behaviors identified & corrected by an experienced driver before unsafe habits become over-learned or “automatic.”
- ♦ Certain conditions are especially high-risk for teens including dawn/dusk/nighttime driving, high speeds, passengers, & adverse weather, traffic, & road conditions. Supervise teen's driving under high-risk conditions to ensure that they are able to handle them before allowing independent driving under these conditions.

Set rules for safe driving

- ♦ **Do not assume that teens are safe drivers; require them to be.**
- ♦ Talk about safe driving often, set rules for driver safety, & set consequences for violations of rules.
- ♦ Always know where your teen is going, who they will be with, & when they will return.
- ♦ Follow through with consequences for violations of safe driving rules. Consequences should relate to loss of driving privileges.

Family Activities to Increase Teen Driver Safety: For Now & In the Future

Families should complete parent-teen activities to assess teen knowledge & practice of driver safety.

For Homework Assignment #5, families will do the following:

- ♦ Discuss & agree to safety expectations for teen driving, rate teen's progress to date for safe driving behaviors, & make a weekly schedule for supervised practice driving that includes goals for each session

Families should talk about driver safety OFTEN

Parents & teens should discuss the following:

- ☐ The importance of obeying all traffic laws
- ☐ The risks related to risky driving
- ☐ The risks related to distracted driving
- ☐ The risks related to drowsy driving
- ☐ The phases of becoming a competent, safe driver
- ☐ The purpose of graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws
- ☐ The need for supervised practice driving

Families should set expectations for safe driving NOW

MAKE CLEAR that teens are expected to:

- ☐ **Obey all traffic laws**, including traffic control devices, seat belt use, posted speed limits, & no alcohol or drug use
- ☐ **Never take unnecessary risks while driving**
 - Never perform risky driving behaviors
 - Reduce distractions while driving from passengers, radio/CDs, cell phone, eating, etc.
 - Never drive when angry, upset, or overly tired

MAKE CLEAR that teens who violate safety expectations will:

- ☐ Lose driving privileges for _____ (write in amount of time)
- ☐ Other: _____ (write in what & amount of time)



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety *ASSIGNMENT SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #5* *Continued Safe Driving & Supervised Practice*

Date:

Student:

Parent:

Instructions

Together, parent & teen need to: (1) read over the Information Sheet for Homework Assignment #5, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed in this Assignment Sheet, & (3) complete & turn in this Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.

- ♦ **Materials needed:** Parent, teen, this homework assignment sheet, **Parent-Teen Agreement for Safe Driving Expectations** handout, **Keep Track of Driver Progress** handout, **Schedule for Supervised Practice** handout, & pencil or pen.
- ♦ **Time needed:** Each activity can take 10-30 minutes & can be done separately, at different times.
- ♦ **Directions:** After completing each activity, check (☑) the box to show that it was completed & then parent rates teen's performance as "good," "fair," or "needs improvement." No matter what the rating, please list comments about teen's performance to help us keep track.
- ♦ **Grading:** Grading of Homework Assignment #5 is based **ONLY on completing the activities, not on the actual ratings for teen progress or comments for the activities.** Thus, a "needs improvement" rating will not lower your teen's grade. This information is important for tracking student progress & providing you with feedback for ways to improve.

☑	Activities for Continued Safe Driving (Use information from Boxes A & B on the Information Sheet)	Rating (☑) NI = Needs Improvement			
		Good	Fair	NI	Comments
☑	Family Discussion: Unsafe Driving. To assess knowledge, teen tells parent about each of the following. Parent checks accuracy using information from Boxes A & B on the Information Sheet				
☐	Types of unsafe driving including risky driving, distracted driving, & drowsy driving	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The risks of unsafe driving	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The ways teens can increase driver safety	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The ways parents can increase driver safety	☐	☐	☐	

☒	Family Exercise: Parent-Teen Agreement for Safe Driving Expectations. For family peace of mind, together, parent & teen complete the Parent-Teen Agreement for Safe Driving Expectations handout. (1) Check the boxes for the safety topics you discuss & the rules you expect to be followed. (2) Discuss & write in fair consequences for the example violations. (3) Initial to show that you understand & accept these safe driving expectations.	
☐	Complete Discussion section	Comments:
☐	Complete Rules section	Comments:
☐	Complete Example Violations & Consequences section	Comments:
☐	Initial Agreement	Comments:

☒	Activities for Continued Supervised Practice (Use information from Boxes C & D on the Information Sheet)	
☒	Family Exercise: Keep Track of Driver Progress. To assess progress, together, parent & teen assess teen's current status for safe driving. (1) Think about teen's driving up to this point (<u>do not</u> drive around for this exercise, just use what you know up to this point). (2) Discuss & rate each item for teen's driver safety knowledge, skill, performance, & adaptability. (The rating system includes "0 = not enough information to judge at this time," so if you don't know, then use this answer.) (3) Repeat this assessment every two months to see progress!	
☐	Rate Knowledge	Comments:
☐	Rate Skill	Comments:
☐	Rate Driving Performance	Comments:
☐	Rate Adaptability	Comments:
☒	Family Exercise: Schedule for Supervised Driving. To assess skill, together, parent & teen determine a supervised practice driving schedule for the next week. (1) List at least 2 dates for practice driving & the "goals" for those sessions. (Goals should include which safe driving behaviors will be focused on from the Keep Track of Driver Progress handout & under what conditions.)	
☐	Determine dates for supervised practice for the next week	Comments:
☐	Determine goals (conditions & skills) for those supervised practice sessions	Comments: