

Teen Driver Safety in Wisconsin



Did you know...

In Wisconsin, in 2021, one teen driver was injured or killed every 3.6 hours.

- 20,020 teen drivers (defined as drivers from 16 to 19 years old) were involved in a crash in Wisconsin in 2021.
- In these crashes, 37 teen drivers were killed and 2,375 were injured in 2021.

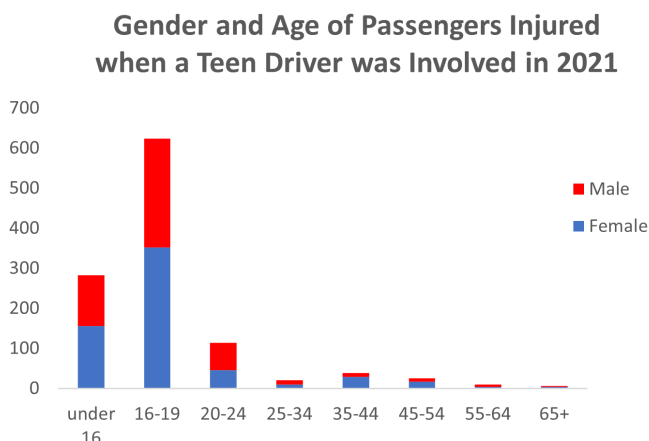
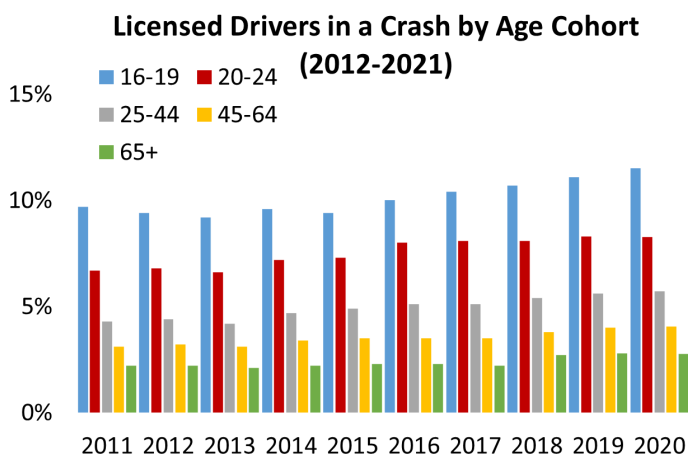
Scale of the Problem

Teen drivers are more likely to be involved in a vehicle crash than members of any other age cohort. During 2021, a full 10% of all 16- to 19-year-old licensed drivers in Wisconsin were involved in a crash.

Compared to drivers in other age groups, teen drivers experience more crashes involving risky behaviors.

In 2021, teen drivers make up only 4.5% of all licensed drivers but accounted for 10.2% of all drivers in a crash.

On the whole, teen drivers injure and kill other teens. In crashes where teens were driving the vehicle in 2021, 57% of those injured or killed were other 16- to 19-year-olds; 83% of injured or killed occupants were under 20 years old.



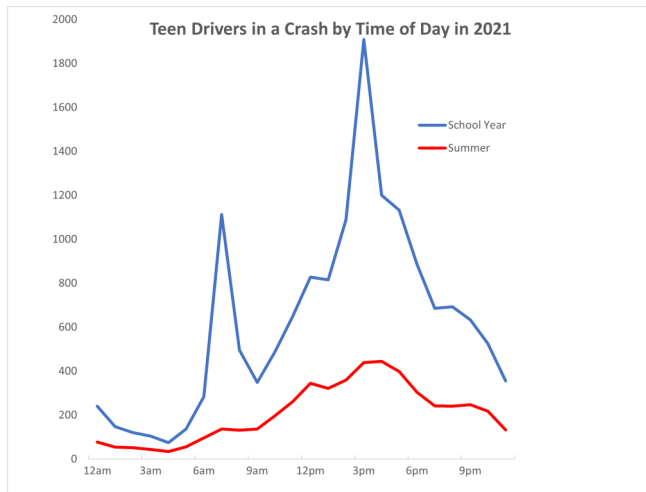
Teen Crash Risk Factors

Within the teen cohort, male and female risks differ. More male teen drivers were involved in a crash than female teen drivers. Three out of four 16 to 19-year-olds killed in 2021 traffic crashes were male. In crashes that proved fatal or seriously injured this same age cohort, 71% of the female victims wore a seat belt and 65% of the male victims wore one.

Teen drivers who are involved in crashes are more likely than other drivers to be involved in crashes caused by:

- Exceeding the speed limit
- Over-correcting/over-steering
- Driving too fast for conditions
- Driving in an aggressive or erratic manner

When do Crashes Occur?



Teen drivers tend to crash in the late afternoon. The peak hours for teen crashes is 7-8 a.m. and 3-4 p.m. during the school year and 3-5 p.m. during the summer. More crashes involving 16- to 19-year-old drivers occurred on Friday than on any other day of the week.

Snowy/icy road conditions pose special threats for teen drivers. Relative to the number of licensed drivers by age, a larger percentage of teen drivers crashed during these conditions in January, February and December of 2021, than did drivers over age 19.

Graduated License Requirement

When new Wisconsin drivers under the age of 18 obtain their license, it comes with **graduated drivers license (GDL) restrictions**. Since 2000, 16- and 17-year-old drivers must have an additional 50 hours of practice driving time (including 10 hours at night) and hold an instructional permit for at least six months before taking a road test and applying for a probationary driver's license. The probationary license imposes a curfew (no operation between midnight and 5 a.m. except for going to/from school or work) and a passenger restriction (only one passenger other than family members) during the first nine months of operation. These limitations are removed for drivers who remain conviction-free or once they turn 18. For more information:

[Wisconsin DMV Official Government Site - Graduated Driver License \(GDL\) FAQs \(wisconsin.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/dmv/gdl-faq)

What can Parents Do?

- Model good driving behavior. While it may seem surprising, teens generally look up to their parents as role models.
- Talk with teens about peer pressure and to recognize the dangers of impaired driving. Make contingency plans for safely picking up your child if they are dependent upon an impaired teen to get home.
- Talk with your child about the need to develop hand-eye coordination when driving and to be cautious. A simple drive may quickly become hazardous with a lack of experience.
- More practice is always better. Parents should set aside some time each week to help cultivate teen driving skills.

What can Teens Do?

- Avoid distractions like your cell phone. Research shows that talking on a cell phone is just as dangerous as driving buzzed or drunk. For teens in Wisconsin, state law bans all cell phone use if you have a probationary license.
- Avoid drinking and driving. Getting an OWI—operating while intoxicated—can be a black mark on your record and can hurt your chances of getting into college and obtaining a job.
- Accept that you are learning and so when in doubt about a maneuver, don't do it! Your safety is your priority and it is not worth endangering it for a slightly faster trip.