

## ARTICLE

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# Teen Driving Deaths Rising Nationwide But Not In New Jersey



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According to the Governors' Highway Safety Association, teenage driver deaths are rising at a significant rate across the nation. Preliminary data revealed in a report produced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) earlier this year shows that 16 and 17-year-old drivers are involved in fatal accidents at a 15 to 25 percent higher rate than in previous years.

Some believe that the rise in teen driver deaths is attributable to the slowly recovering economy; more teens can now afford to be on the roads and, thus, are involved in more [car accidents](#). Few states are cracking down on new drivers but, fortunately, fatality rates for teen drivers are actually dropping in New Jersey.

## **New Jersey Rates Declining**

New Jersey was one of the first states to adopt a Graduated Driver License (GDL) program, placing restrictions on new drivers. There are different levels each novice driver must achieve with a GDL program before he or she “graduates” to an unrestricted driving license.

Currently in New Jersey, each teen driver must comply with GDL rules such as the following:

- Must have a red tag on the car bumper so police can easily recognize novice drivers
- May not drive with more than one teen passenger
- Forbidden from driving between 11:01 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.

Texting while driving is a deadly combination and [distracted driving](#) causes thousands of accidents every year. Because cellphone use is so common among teens, New Jersey law also forbids all use of cellphones – as well as hands-free devices – by new drivers.

## **Reduce Driving Deaths And Injuries**

Unfortunately, GDL programs only address part of the issue. Teen drivers, while having much higher accident statistics than more experienced adult drivers, are not the only people causing car accidents. Motor vehicle collisions occur daily on the roads of New Jersey, causing serious injuries and [wrongful deaths](#) by the hundreds. Every driver needs to do his or her part to make the roads safer by doing such things as:

- Limiting distractions within the vehicle
- Using a hands-free device for cellphones or, better yet, saving calls for later
- Obeying speed limits

- Buckling up
- Maintaining safe distances between vehicles
- Not drinking and driving

## **If You Are Hurt**

If you or a loved one is injured or killed in a motor vehicle accident, [seek the counsel of an attorney experienced with personal injury claims](#). You may be entitled to compensation for medical expenses, wage losses and other damages suffered as a result of the accident.