



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Proclaims Oct. 14-20 as Teen Driver Safety Week

Celebrates Legislation Aimed at Keeping Teens Safe

Harrisburg — Governor Tom Corbett today proclaimed Oct. 14-20 as Teen Driver Safety Week, noting two significant pieces of legislation that he signed into law in the past year aimed at increasing safety for teens.

Corbett's proclamation coincides with the safety week's national observance.

In the past year, Corbett signed Act 81, which enhanced teen driver safety by strengthening the graduated driver licensing law, and Act 84, which requires safety training for 16- and 17-year-olds seeking motorcycle licenses.

"Over the past year we've made great strides in ensuring our youngest drivers have as much experience as possible on our roadways," PennDOT Secretary Barry J. Schoch said. "PennDOT is wholeheartedly invested in traffic safety, and the bills the governor has signed emphasize the state's commitment to future generations of safe drivers."

When Corbett signed Act 81, which became effective in December 2011, the state's graduated driver licensing requirements were updated to include:

- Increased supervised, behind-the-wheel skill building for permit holders under 18 years old from 50 hours to 65 hours;
- Stricter limits on the number of passengers young drivers can transport for the first six months after receiving their junior license; and
- Making it a primary offense for violating the law's provision requiring the proper use of seat belts for drivers and front-seat passengers of passenger cars, class I and II trucks or motor homes, who are under the age of 18, and every occupant older than eight but younger than 18.

In August, Corbett signed Act 84, which requires 16- and 17-year olds who want to obtain a motorcycle license to first complete the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program's Basic Rider Course (BRC). The 15 hours of training they receive through the BRC counts toward the 65 hours of on-the-road training riders under the age of 18 must complete to obtain a motorcycle license.

From 2007 to 2011, there were 109,313 crashes involving at least one 16- to 19-year old driver in Pennsylvania, resulting in 942 fatalities. Nearly 53 percent of those crashes involved the teen driver driving too fast for conditions (28,148

crashes), driver inexperience (11,071), driver distraction (10,028) and improper/careless turning (8,614).

The risk of a crash involving any of these factors can be reduced through practice, limiting the number of passengers riding with a teen driver, parents setting a good example for the teen driver, obeying all rules of the road and exercising common sense.

As a part of their obligation to help teen drivers become more responsible, safer drivers, parents should:

- Talk to your teen about safe driving skills before they turn 16.
- Establish a parent/teen driving contract.
- Limit the number of passengers your teen is allowed to have in their vehicle.
- Limit dawn, dusk and nighttime driving until your teen gathers more experience, and enforce a curfew. Remember, Pennsylvania law prohibits 16- and 17-year-old drivers with a junior driver's license from driving between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.
- Gradually increase the amount of time/distance your teen is allowed to drive.
- Encourage your teen to avoid distractions behind the wheel, such as talking or texting on the cell phone.
- Enforce observance of speed limits and other rules of the road.
- Ride with your teen occasionally to monitor driving skills.
- Set a good example.

For more information on young driver safety, visit PennDOT's highway safety website, www.JustDrivePA.com and select the "Young Driver" link under the Traffic Safety Information Center.

Media contacts: Jan McKnight, 717-787-0485 or Craig Yetter, 717-705-1092

Editor's Note: Text of Governor's proclamation follows.

TEEN DRIVER SAFETY WEEK October 14-20, 2012

WHEREAS, The safety of all Pennsylvania motorists is a concern of the highest consequence, and all motorists should unite in the safe sharing of roadways throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, driving is a complex activity requiring drivers to put together multifaceted evaluations, make split-second decisions and perform intricate maneuvers, which can be a dangerous combination for inexperienced teen drivers; and

WHEREAS, the leading cause of death among teenagers across the Commonwealth and our nation is automobile crashes; and

WHEREAS, it is especially important that the citizens of our Commonwealth be aware of the challenges facing teen drivers and become actively involved as

mentors and trainers helping these drivers develop and maintain the proper attitude about driving, practice safe driving techniques, avoid distractions and promote adherence to vehicle laws and regulations through their own example.

THEREFORE, In recognition of the importance of teen driver safety on our Commonwealth's roadways, I, Tom Corbett, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim October 14-20, 2012, as TEEN DRIVER SAFETY WEEK in Pennsylvania. I encourage all motorists to continue their efforts to promote safety and all drivers to share the road and respect the unique training and safety needs of teen drivers.

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