



YOUNG DRIVERS

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING (GDL) PROGRAMS

Issue

Teen and young adult novice drivers are more likely to be involved in fatal crashes because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks.

Impact

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading killer of teens in the U.S. In crashes involving young drivers, fatalities totaled 5,565 in 2021, an increase of 10% over 2020.

Solutions

Laws, Technology,
and Roadway Safety
Infrastructure

GDL programs introduce teens to the driving experience gradually by phasing in full driving privileges over time and in lower risk settings

Safety Technologies and Improved Safety Standards Can Protect Vehicle Occupants and Other Road Users

- IIHS has found that if all vehicles in crashes with teen drivers were equipped with front crash prevention (forward collision warning (FCW) and/or AEB), LDW / lane keeping assist (LKA), and blind spot monitoring, 32% of crashes involving a teen driver, 27% of injured teen drivers, and 36% of teen driver deaths could be prevented.

Road Safety Infrastructure Improvements and the Safe System Approach



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The Facts

- Among the 5,565 fatalities in crashes involving young drivers in 2021, 2,116 were young drivers, 1,065 were passengers of young drivers, and the remaining 2,384 were nonoccupants or occupants of other vehicles.
- The estimated economic cost of police-reported crashes involving young drivers between 15 and 20 years old was \$40.8 billion (2002). When adjusted for inflation only, these costs amount to \$68.92 billion in 2023 dollars.
- Widespread public concern about young drivers exists, with 58% “extremely” or “very” concerned about inexperienced new young drivers, according to an opinion poll commissioned by Advocates and conducted by ENGINE Insights in December 2021.
- The fatal crash rate per mile driven is nearly three times as high for 16- to 19-year-olds as it is for ages 20 and over. Risk is highest at ages 16-17.
- In states which have adopted GDL programs, studies have found overall crash reductions among teen drivers of about 10 to 30 percent.



- A 2010 survey conducted by IIHS shows that parents favor GDL laws which are as strict as or even stricter than currently exist in any state.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of teens approve of a single comprehensive law which incorporates the key elements of GDL programs.

OLDER TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT NOVICE DRIVERS

Studies have shown that GDL programs have contributed to a decline in teen driver crashes. However, older teen and young adult novice drivers need but are missing out on the safety benefits of GDL programs. Aging out of GDL is a problem because drivers who begin the licensing process at age 18, 19 or 20 still have a high crash risk due to inexperience and brain development. Research from CHOP CIRP and AAA shows that, “about one-third of all drivers are not licensed by age 18, and by age 21, about 20% of all young adults still are not licensed.” A study showed that while GDL programs likely have contributed to a significant decline in teen driver crashes over the decade of 2005 to 2014, the improvements are not as strong for 18- to 20-year-olds who have aged out of GDL.

GDL programs that extend beyond the mid-teen years cover a broader population of novice drivers and may experience additional safety benefits. A new study from CHOP CIRP found that, “drivers who were licensed at age 18, making them exempt from comprehensive licensing requirements, had the highest crash rates in the first year of licensure of all those licensed under the age of 25.”

[Click here to learn more](#)



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Advocacy

Family of Teen Driver Crash Victim Fights to Upgrade California’s GDL Program



“My daughter, Nora Rose-Hines, lost her life when her car was hit at a dangerous intersection by a 19-year-old driver with little driving experience and no driver education,” said Pat Hines, founder and director of Safe Moves Los Angeles. “I know that losing a child is the greatest fear of every parent, but it is unimaginable until it happens to you. Had the driver who crashed into Nora had more experience my daughter would be alive today. Senator Allen’s bill will help ensure other families do not suffer like we have.”

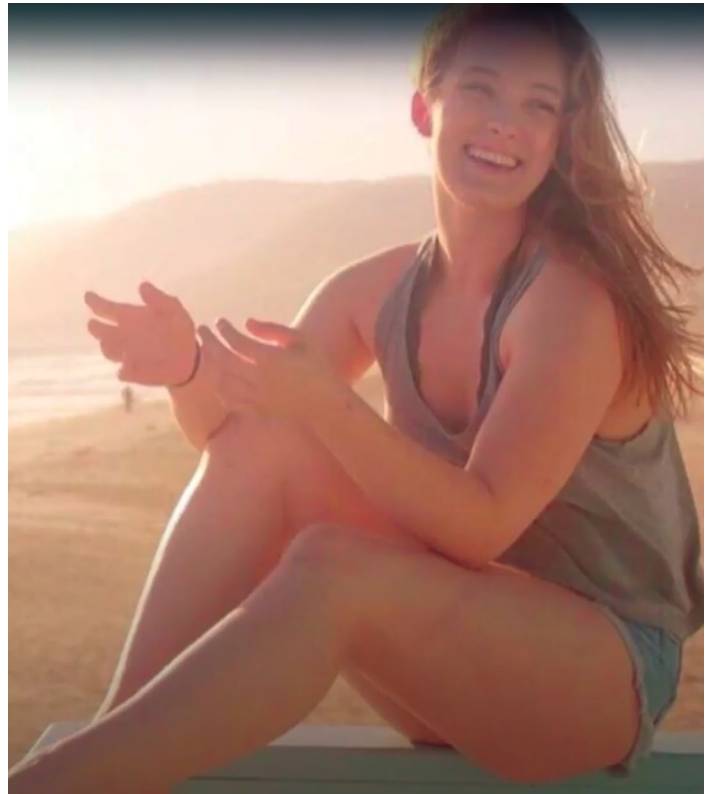
NORA ROSE-HINES was a freshman at UCLA majoring in musical theater and was a humanitarian who spent her summers working at a Guatemalan children’s orphanage. Nora also taught traffic safety to children at Safe Moves.

Tragically, all that promise was lost in an instant. At a dangerous intersection in Los Angeles, the driver who struck the car in which Nora was driving had “aged out” and did not have the benefit of GDL training.

Pat Hines created the [Nora Rose-Hines Foundation](#) to honor Nora’s legacy. The Foundation is a cosponsor of legislation in California to extend GDL requirements to older teen and young adult new drivers. This would improve safety for this group of novice drivers as well as all who share the road with them.

LOOKING TO 2024

The Nora Rose-Hines Foundation is working closely with [California Coalition for Children’s Safety & Health \(CCCSH\)](#), [Impact Teen Drivers](#), [Advocates](#), and a broad coalition to advance the GDL upgrade. They have come very close to getting the legislation enacted several times and are hopeful they will be successful next session.



Nora Rose-Hines

