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## **DPS reminds teens to drive safely this summer**

NOTE: RADIO STATIONS WANTING PERSONALIZED PSAs ON THIS TOPIC SHOULD CONTACT DPS PIO.

As summer begins, DPS reminds teens to play it safe while driving. In the U.S., motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. Approximately 6,000 teens per year are killed in traffic crashes in this country—that's the equivalent of one commercial airliner full of teens crashing every week.

“Teen drivers’ inexperience, combined with other factors, accounts for the fact that they are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers,” said Texas Highway Patrol Chief David Baker.

Teenagers are more likely to be involved in car crashes because of their inexperience behind the wheel, but they can take several steps to reduce their chances of becoming involved in a wreck.

Those safety steps include:

- *Do not send text messages while driving!* Talking on the cell phone and texting are dangerous distractions when you're behind the wheel.
- Always use your safety belt, and tell everyone in your vehicle to buckle up.
- Don't drink or use drugs and drive.
- Don't speed or race other cars.
- Exercise caution while driving at night. Darkness can make navigating the road more difficult, especially for inexperienced drivers.

If teen drivers make these simple steps a part of their daily routine, they'll improve their chances of returning home safely. These steps will also reduce their chances of receiving a ticket. From June through August 2008, the Texas Highway Patrol issued almost 5,000 citations to teens (ages 15-19) for driving under the influence, not wearing safety belts and speeding.