

# New Drivers Gain Critical Defensive Driving Skills and Confidence Behind the Wheel from Toyota's Teen Safe Driving Program

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TORRANCE, CALIF. (April 9, 2013) – Toyota continues to offer its free-of-charge safe driving skills program, Toyota Driving Expectations, and comprehensive online resources with the goal of reducing motor vehicle crashes, the leading cause of death among teens. Upcoming behind-the-wheel safety events will be held in Torrance, Calif., Denver and San Antonio for newly licensed or permitted teens and their parents to learn about defensive driving skills, crash avoidance techniques and the dangers of distracted driving during the 2.5-hour program.

Moving into its 10<sup>th</sup> year, Toyota Driving Expectations supplements standard driver's education to prepare inexperienced drivers for the challenges they'll face on the road. In recognizing the importance of parents' involvement to help their teens develop responsible driving habits, the program requires a parent or guardian to accompany their teen.

Kicking-off in Torrance, Calif., professional instructors in the Toyota Driving Expectations "On The Road" program tour lead teens through driving courses and in-classroom discussions, while encouraging continued learning at home and demonstrating safe driving habits. This year's events will be held at:

- **Torrance, Calif.** on May 4-5 at Toyota headquarters. Registration now open at [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com)
- **Denver, Colo.** on May 18-19 at Bass Pro Shops. Registration opens April 18.
- **San Antonio, Texas** on June 8–9 at Toyota Texas Plant. Registration opens May 9.

"Safer drivers lead to safer roads, so Toyota is committed to helping educate and empower teens and parents around smart driving choices," said Michael Rouse, Toyota's vice president of diversity, philanthropy and community affairs. "Through our safe driving programs, partnerships and online resources, we hope more young drivers will absorb the sobering lessons of distracted driving and learn key skills to keep themselves safe behind the wheel."

To further the connection with teens in local communities, Toyota Driving Expectations has launched teen driving assemblies in high schools and dealerships across the country. Free Toyota Driving Expectations safety clinics at select Toyota dealerships will be led this summer by professional drivers who address vehicle safety features, defensive driving, distracted driving and vehicle maintenance.

## **Making Safe Driving Information and Resources Available**

Toyota also offers free online safety resources for teens, parents and educators through its partnership with Discovery Education at [ToyotaTeenDriver.com](http://ToyotaTeenDriver.com). The Toyota Teen Driver also has annual contests for teens and educators, including the current Toyota Teen Driver Video Challenge, whose top ten videos are open for public voting now through April 16<sup>th</sup>. The winning teen will receive \$15,000.

Last fall, Toyota's Collaborative Safety Research Center (CSRC) and the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) announced preliminary findings from a major, national study that analyzed the

critical role parents play in shaping teen driving habits. The [UMTRI/Toyota Teen Driver Distraction Study](#) found a significant correlation between parent and teen behaviors behind the wheel, suggesting parents can be influential role models for young drivers. Startling study findings showed that 61 percent of parents and 54 percent of teens report that they use a hand-held cellphone while driving, emphasizing the importance of including parents in the Toyota Driving Expectations program.

While helping parents talk to their teens about safety can be challenging, Toyota is dedicated to furthering this important conversation. Earlier this month, the company partnered with *Teen Vogue* to launch “Arrive in Style”, a safe driving campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving among teenage girls and inspire them to make a mutual commitment with their mothers to drive safely. The campaign features monthly advertorials with tips and advice from Toyota on different safe driving topics, as well as stories and online videos of *Teen Vogue* readers and their mothers about their commitment to driving safely. A microsite ([arriveinstyle.teenvogue.com](http://arriveinstyle.teenvogue.com)) will feature Toyota’s Mutual Driving Agreement that mothers and daughters can e-sign and share via Facebook for a chance to win monthly prizes. In addition to signing the Agreement, teens can upload a photo on the microsite of them and their mom “air driving” for a chance to win a trip to New York City to be featured in the February 2014 issue of *Teen Vogue*.

Building on its 10-year relationship with the National Safety Council, Toyota supports the Council’s DriveitHOME initiative, launched in March at [www.driveithome.org](http://www.driveithome.org). Designed by and for parents of newly licensed teen drivers, the online community uses highly visual media to educate parents on the dangers facing teens on the road and ways to coach recently licensed drivers. Like Toyota Driving Expectations, DriveitHOME encourages the conversation about safe habits to continue long after teens receive a license.

For more information about Toyota’s teen driving events, programs, partnerships and commitment to safer roads, visit [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com) and [www.toyotateedriver.com](http://www.toyotateedriver.com).