

Toyota's Free Safe Driving Program Helps Teens Improve Their Driving Skills and Teaches Parents to be Strong Driving Role Models

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TORRANCE, CALIF. (September 14, 2011) – Committed to road safety in hopes of reducing the rate of teen driving fatalities, Toyota is continuing its national FREE advanced teen driving skills program, [Toyota Driving Expectations](#), and expanding to new locations for the fall tour.

Toyota established the program in 2004 to provide teens and their families with critical driving skills that are not always included in standard driving education courses. Toyota Driving Expectations is part of the company's commitment to increase overall safety in driving, and protect the lives of teen drivers, who are at a higher risk for accidents than more experienced drivers.

Since the program's inception, nearly 18,000 teens and parents have gained critical defensive driving skills and learned firsthand how everyday distractions, to which new drivers are especially prone, can have unexpected, dangerous consequences.

In October, Toyota Driving Expectations events will be held at the following locations:

- Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc., in Torrance, CA, October 8 – 9 *
- Emerald Downs in Auburn, WA, October 15 – 16
- Bass Pro Shops in Denver, CO, October 22 – 23
- Seymour High School in Seymour, CT, October 29 – 30 *

** Denotes special event; by invitation only.*

Participants must be between the ages of 15-19 with a valid driver's license or learner's permit, and be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Online registration for Toyota Driving Expectations events in Auburn, WA and Denver, CO is currently open at www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com.

Program Overview

According to the Centers for Disease Control, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for more than one in three deaths in this age group. In 2009, eight teens ages 16 to 19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries. Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely than experienced drivers to crash.

In an effort to help young drivers develop safe driving habits, Toyota Driving Expectations goes beyond what is taught in standard driver education courses, which usually focus on "normal" driving conditions. The program puts newly permitted or licensed teens behind the wheel to face challenging, real-world scenarios in a secure environment. The program's curriculum is designed for teens and parents alike to:

- Learn defensive driving skills and crash avoidance techniques, such as best practices for focusing on the road
- Identify and respond to the dangerous driving situations that they encounter daily
- Experience firsthand the dangers of distracted driving and understand the relationship between distraction and reaction time
- Understand vehicle dynamics and safety features, such as how to engage an anti-lock braking system

The unique aspect of requiring a parent or guardian to attend the program with their teen driver helps to foster an open dialogue between teens and parents about safe driving habits. As a result, parents learn the best practices to promote responsible driving habits with their teens so they're able to continue improving driving skills at home.

Taught by professional drivers, the curriculum for Toyota Driving Expectations was developed in partnership with multiple organizations committed to safe driving, including the National Safety Council and the Defensive Driving Academy in California.

Quote

“Toyota remains committed to making the driving experience as safe as possible. The company continually evaluates the safety features of our cars, but it’s also important to instill good driving habits at a young age. With Toyota Driving Expectations, Toyota hopes to empower teens, and change how they think and react while driving. Our goal is to equip them with the skills needed to keep themselves and their loved ones safe on the road.”

– Michael Rouse, Toyota’s vice president of philanthropy and community affairs