

# Valley Teens and Parents to Learn Critical Defensive Driving Skills Through Toyota's Free Safe Driving Program May 1-2

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Toyota Prepares Teens for Real-World Driving Challenges while Battling Teen Driving Fatalities

Watch the event documentary here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L86nFVgk1tA>

**PHOENIX, ARIZ. (March 25, 2010)** While Arizona is currently in the process of passing a state-wide ban on text messaging while driving, in 2007, Phoenix was the first city in Arizona, and among the first in the nation, to pass and enforce the texting while driving ban. In support of reducing teen driving fatalities, particularly those associated with distracted driving, Toyota is offering Phoenix area teens and parents its advanced teen driving skills program, "Toyota Driving Expectations." The free of charge safe driving program will be held at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., May 1-2. Registration is open online at [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com).

Now in its sixth year, Toyota's program goes beyond what is taught in standard driver training classes, putting teens behind the wheel to face challenging, real-world scenarios in a secure environment. Driving in vehicles that have been tested and meet Toyota's highest safety standards, teens learn crucial skills that prepare them to handle potential on-road challenges such as driving distractions, while parents learn how to be effective driving role models and coaches for their teen drivers. The required attendance of a parent or guardian is a unique element of the program, and allows them to understand the dangers of distracted driving and basic behind-the-wheel skills.

In the Phoenix area, the Toyota Driving Expectations program will offer 12 four-hour sessions May 1-2 between 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

"Toyota is dedicated to supporting both teens and parents in developing safe, responsible driving habits and protecting them on the road," said Michael Rouse, Toyota's vice president of philanthropy and community affairs. "Toyota Driving Expectations simulates real-world hazards of driving and shows teens and parents how to best handle these situations – invaluable experience that goes beyond basic driver education training."

Each four-hour class begins with an opening session for all participants where they are introduced to the privilege and risk associated with driving. Combining both hands-on and interactive learning through driving courses and classroom style sessions, the program's curriculum covers a variety of topics to increase safe driving practices.

While driving on the courses under the supervision of professional drivers, teens practice techniques to best stay focused on the road, learn how to engage anti-lock braking systems on both wet and dry roads and demonstrate how everyday distractions, to which new drivers are especially prone, can have unexpected, dangerous effects. To demonstrate how reaction time is affected by these distractions, both parents and teens drive an actual "distraction course" that simulates behaviors such as driving while talking and texting on a cell phone, drinking water and listening to loud music.

At the end of the program, to reinforce what they learned, teens and parents develop a safe driving contract together to maintain an open dialogue about responsible driving habits at home.

Since the program's debut in 2004, more than 13,000 teens and parents in 18 cities have benefited from the program. The National Safety Council, a leading resource on strategies for advancing safety and health programs, has been a partner to Toyota Driving Expectations since its start. The program includes elements of the Council's signature driving programs, including Alive at 25 and Family Guide to Teen Drivers.

### **About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota directly employs nearly 34,000 in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion, including sales and manufacturing operations, research and development, financial services and design. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$493 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit [www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy](http://www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy).

### **About National Safety Council**

The National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)) saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes, communities and on the roads, through leadership, research, education and advocacy.

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