

## What is the number one cause of death among teenagers in BC? Car crashes.

### 16 to 20 year olds in BC car crashes<sup>1</sup>

54 are killed each year.

Over 70% of those killed are male.

Thousands more are injured, many are injured seriously.

### New drivers in BC car crashes

Drivers in the novice stage of the Graduated Licensing program (GLP) are over-represented in crashes. They are almost 45% more likely to be involved in a crash than experienced drivers.<sup>2</sup>

Crashes among new drivers tend to be more severe. One in four crashes involving GLP drivers results in an injury or fatality.<sup>2</sup>

### Teenage drivers are overrepresented in car crashes and fatalities.

16 to 20 year olds represent 6.6% of all licensed drivers in BC, but they account for 14% of all drivers involved in a crash.<sup>3</sup>

Drivers 16 to 19 years of age in Canada have a fatality rate more than four times as high as that of drivers aged 25 to 34 and nine times as high as that of drivers aged 45 to 54.<sup>4</sup>

### Why do teenagers crash?

Young drivers crash because they are relatively inexperienced and unskilled in driving.<sup>4</sup>

This inexperience puts teenagers at greater risk, particularly in more challenging situations and when their attention is distracted away from the task of driving. According to recent studies:

- In the US, over one third of deaths of 16 and 17-year-old drivers occur between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., despite relatively little driving during these hours.<sup>4</sup>
- In the US, nearly half of 16 and 17-year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes are carrying at least one passenger under 21 and no adult passengers.<sup>4</sup>
- The risk of crashing when using a cell phone is four times higher than the risk when a cell phone is not being used.<sup>5</sup>
- In BC, almost one quarter of fatal crashes involve alcohol. Young male drivers are predominately responsible for these crashes.<sup>3</sup>

That's why BC's graduated Licensing program includes restrictions on passengers and nighttime driving and has zero tolerance for alcohol.

### **Teenage drivers put other road users at risk when they crash.**

The majority of fatalities in crashes involving 15 to 17-year-old drivers are not the teenage driver themselves, according to a recent study:<sup>4</sup>

- Only 36% of those killed are the teenage driver themselves.
- 64% of those killed are others, including:
  - 32% are passengers in the teenage driver's vehicle.
  - 24 % are occupants of other vehicles operated by drivers at least 18 years old.
  - 8% are pedestrians, bicyclists and other road users.

### **Teenage passengers are particularly at risk.**

Canadian teenagers 15 to 19 years old represent less than 7% of the total population.

BUT, they represent 19% of all passenger fatalities and 19% of all serious injuries to passengers in Canada.<sup>6</sup>

### **Parents can impact teenager's crash rates.**

Parents of crash-involved teenagers are more likely to have a poor driving record than those of crash-free teens. They have had more crashes and received more tickets.<sup>4</sup>

Studies show that when parents set boundaries and take an active role in their teenager's driving education, the teenager's chances of being in a crash are reduced by up to a third.

## **References**

<sup>1</sup> *BC Traffic Collision Statistics: 2001 to 2005, averages*, available at [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

<sup>2</sup> ICBC website, [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

<sup>3</sup> *BC Traffic Collision Statistics: 2001 to 2005, averages*, available at [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

<sup>4</sup> *Reducing the Crash Risk for Young Drivers*, prepared by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Traffic Injury Research Foundation website, [www.trafficinjuryresearch.com](http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com)

<sup>6</sup> *Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics: 2005*, Transport Canada.