

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR TEEN'S CAR INSURANCE RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE

At a minimum, your car insurance rates jump 50 percent the minute you put your kid on your policy. In some families, it's as much as 200 or 300 percent. Why? Because car crashes are the leading killer of people between the ages of 15 and 20.

So as the prime teen driving months of summer approach, it's worth discussing whether you've done everything possible to save money while making sure your kids stay safe on the road. A recent Chicago Tribune report pointed out that weekend nights in July and August continue to be the deadliest times for teen drivers.

**Talk to your kid about their grades.** You've heard it before. Girls are less expensive to insure because they generally are more conservative behind the wheel. Insurers also discount for boys and girls with good grades because their behavior suggests an ability to follow rules and stay safer behind the wheel.

**Find out how your insurer assigns your kid's rate.** Find out if your insurer is pricing your child's insurance based on the newest or most expensive car you own. If you have two safe cars in the driveway, see if your insurer will base its rate on your teen driving the 10-year-old beater instead of the \$40,000 SUV that's your baby. Then make sure your kid never gets behind the wheel of the expensive car. You might also want to consider whether buying your child a safe new or used economy car might save you money on insurance.

**Make sure your teen gets qualified driver training.** Many states have abandoned driver's education in the high schools, but talk to your insurer about the best private training options in your community. You'll see a break of at least 5 percent on your premium if your teen gets training, but the most important thing is making sure your kid knows how to safely operate a vehicle.

**Boost those deductibles.** Make sure you keep your deductibles on all vehicles as high as you can afford. Aggressively raising your deductibles can save between 25-35 percent on your premiums.

**Lay down the law.** Parents should double their vigilance when their kids start driving. It's up to parents to enforce curfews, demand seat belt use, limit their kids' night driving habits – when most teen accidents take place – and adopt a zero tolerance policy on drugs, alcohol and reckless driving. The Chicago Tribune report said that teen crashes kill more than 8,000 people and injure more than 700,000 others annually in the U.S., costing \$40 billion in property damage, medical costs and lost wages every year. It also said a critical risk factor is other teens in the car – know who your child is driving.

**Suspend coverage when they don't have the car.** If your child goes away to college without a car, take them off the insurance. Of course, your child must be made to understand that they can't get behind the wheel of anyone else's car unless insurance is somehow provided them. Overall, it's best to tell them they shouldn't be driving when you're not insuring them.

**Curtail cell phone use.** Everyday, you see adults in car wrecks because they were talking on their cell phones while driving. Inexperienced drivers talking on cell phones while driving presents an even riskier picture on the road. If your child has a cell phone, insist that they cannot use it while the car is moving.

**Make them pay all or part of their premium.** Want to ensure the safest driving possible? Make your child pay for their insurance and insist they continue to do so as premiums rise. If they end up not driving regularly until they're in college or on their own, that may not be a bad thing. Tell them public transportation saves money and helps the environment.

**Check car insurance rates before buying a new or used car.** Anytime you buy a new or used vehicle, check with your insurer before you sign on the dotted line. Insurance companies charge different rates based on how much the vehicle costs and the model's accident or theft record.

**Adjust your own driving.** Do what you can to reduce mileage on your own vehicles and attempt to drive more safely. Parents teach best by example.

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