

6 WAYS TO MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

Most accidents *can* be prevented. The major causes of car crashes are:

Distraction

Inexperience

Carelessness

Recklessness (includes driving intoxicated)

As a concerned citizen, what can you do?

1. Drive awake and aware.

Keep your mind on your driving. Everyone out there is armed and dangerous — including you! Don't let yourself be lulled into a semi-conscious state.

Never drive when you're so tired you're almost falling asleep. Pull over and snooze. Remember, it's not just *you* who's in jeopardy if you try to tough it out.

2. Work to have the law crack down on dangerous drivers.

Insist that traffic laws be enforced in your town. If you don't believe the speed limits or other laws are correct, then work within the law to have them changed.

Increase the consequences for disobeying traffic laws.

Make radar detectors illegal in your state.

Impound the automobiles of repeat offenders or those caught driving without a valid license or insurance.

Insist that law enforcement get tough on teens. The first time a new driver is caught in a flagrant violation of traffic laws, he or she should lose driving privileges for 6 months. Our kids will be kids' attitude is killing our kids with kindness.

Show zero tolerance for frequent traffic offenders.

3. Pass hands-free legislation or, better yet, outright *ban* talking on cell phones while driving.

Work in your state to get rid of practices that cause distraction, such as cell phones.

4. Teach your children well!

Start early. Tell your toddler in the car seat that Mommy's turning right now. See how I put on my blinker so everyone will see I'm changing lanes? etc.

Always model excellent driving. Remember, you are the one most likely to influence how your child approaches driving. (If you're a hot head on the road, she's likely to be an even worse one!)

Always make sure you and your passengers buckle up and use child safety seats as appropriate.

Re-instate drivers education programs in the schools.

Don't send irresponsible teenagers out on the road to kill themselves or to prey on others. If they're not self-disciplined enough to manifest mature behaviors in other areas of their life, don't assume they'll magically smarten up once they're behind the wheel.

5. Tighten up on who can drive.

Set up a graduated license program in your state and keep kids as learners until they're 18. Make it more difficult for just anyone to get a driver's license. (In Europe people must be 18 before they can receive a driver's license. In recognition of the learning curve, a new driver displays a plaque for the first year that says "Beginner.")

Make drivers over the age of 70 pass a driving test every year to renew their licenses.

6. Never drive while impaired by *anything that makes you less than sharp behind the wheel.*

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