

Teen driving laws: Decreasing or just transferring danger?

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

- September 25, 2011

For a teen getting his or her driver's license, it's a special and life-changing moment. The time when getting the freedom to drive marks a milestone where a teen is becoming an adult, with more opportunity for independence. But driving also presents many opportunities for danger. That is why some states, like Alabama, utilize graduated license programs for teen drivers.

The GDL programs are meant to put limits on young, new drivers in order to prevent them from causing of getting involved in [car accidents](#). Crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers. Studies regarding crash statistics among teens, however, suggest that GDL programs might not be the safety solution that communities are looking for.

According to an Alabama source, studies on crash rates where GDL programs exist provide surprising stats. In Florida, for example, the amount of fatal accidents involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers decreased since stricter driving laws were placed on teens. That alone is good news, right? Not so fast. The number of deadly crashes involving 18-year-old drivers increased, basically making up for the positive difference made among the younger group.

Those trends reportedly are not only true for Florida. Sources indicate that the startling increase in traffic fatalities involving older teen drivers is a national trend. Our source does not indicate why this trend would exist, and some suggest that more research needs to be done before Alabama or any other state with a GDL program decides the safety effort is useless.

What do you think of the teen driving laws in Alabama? Does the GDL program make you feel like your teen is safer while on the road? Why would 18-year-olds be getting into more deadly crashes than younger teens?

Source

Al.com: "[Driver's Side: Do graduated driver licenses really shift teen fatalities?](#)" Ginny MacDonald, Sep. 19, 2011