

AAA and its affiliated clubs in the United States and Canada are committed to promoting safe and efficient mobility and to improving safety for all of those who use the transportation system. AAA clubs carry out this commitment in communities across the country. At the national level, AAA continually monitors and responds to federal and state legislative and regulatory measures that affect the traveling public. AAA focuses special attention on three high risk groups – children, teens and seniors.

Child Passenger Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children of all ages. In 2010, motor vehicle crashes accounted for more than 800 deaths and 190,000 injuries of children age 14 and under. Child passenger safety (CPS) continues to be an important issue for AAA. In 1997, AAA clubs became an active CPS partner on both a national level and in communities across the country. AAA has a long-term commitment to reducing injuries and deaths through its *Seated, Safe & Secure* campaign, initiated over a decade ago. Through the initiative, clubs have greatly increased their level of activity. Club participation ranges from hosting seat-check events and training new CPS technicians, to testifying at hearings and serving as a resource for the media and policymakers. AAA has worked to educate the public about proper use of child restraints and improve child restraint laws across the nation – two key components in preventing child passenger injuries and deaths.

School and Pedestrian Safety

AAA also works to educate pediatricians, family care physicians and other health care practitioners on child passenger safety through AAA Medical Outreach Kits. These kits are tailored for medical offices and provide health care practitioners with essential tools and safety messages for parents and their children.

For more than 91 years, AAA has sponsored the *School Safety Patrol™* program, which works to instill in students a sense of responsibility and leadership as they protect classmates going to and from school.

The *AAA School Safety Patrol™* program provides training and support materials to more than 600,000 safety patrol members working in more than 31,000 schools nationally. Each year, AAA awards a *School Safety Patrol™ Lifesaving Medal* to exemplary students who risked their lives in the line of duty to save a fellow student. This program was awarded the *Presidential Citation for Private Sector Initiatives* in 1985.

AAA's *School's Open, Drive Carefully* public awareness campaign reminds motorists to watch out for students walking to and from school or waiting for buses. AAA distributes posters, envelope stuffers and bookmarks to U.S. and Canadian schools.

Teen Driver Safety

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, killing about 3,500 teens every year and injuring over a quarter million others. In fact, over a third of all deaths for 15- to 17-year-olds are the result of traffic crashes. Teens also have the highest crash fatality rates of any age group. Through safety programs, driver training and legislative efforts, AAA is an active leader in helping reduce the number of teens injured and killed in motor vehicle crashes.

Research shows that Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) and parent involvement can play key roles in reducing the toll of crashes on teens. AAA has led the state-by-state push to expand GDL systems from just eight in 1997 to all 50 states in 2005. Every

state and the District of Columbia now have some form of GDL.

Data show GDL systems work in preventing crashes, reducing injuries and saving lives. The positive effects of strong GDL systems have been extensively measured. States with comprehensive GDL systems (5 or more GDL components) have experienced a 38% decrease in fatal crash involvement for 16-year-olds and a 40% reduction in injury crashes. States with fewer components saw smaller reductions.

Moreover, a 2012 AAA Foundation study showed that a teen driver's risk of getting into a fatal crash increases when carrying young passengers. Compared with driving alone, a 16- or 17-year-old driver's fatal crash rate increases 44 percent when carrying one passenger younger than 21 (and with no older passengers); doubles with two passengers younger than 21; and quadruples with three or more young passengers.

The message from the research is clear: Greater injury and fatality reductions are achieved by adding GDL components. Improving a state's GDL improves safety.

Advocacy focus has now shifted to improving deficient licensing systems. Nearly every state GDL system needs strengthening by adding or improving one or more components. Specifically, AAA's GDL guidelines call for teens to accrue at least 50 hours of driving practice (including 10 hours at night) and hold a learner's permit for at least six months before being allowed to drive by themselves. They should then be limited to no more than one passenger under 20 during the first six months of driving and not be permitted to drive between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

In 2010, AAA launched ***TeenDriving.AAA.com*** to connect parents of teen drivers with the practical knowledge and tools they need to help guide their teens through every phase of the learning-to-drive process — from pre-licensure all the way through driving solo. The website features enhanced online versions of AAA's *StartSmart* program and *Dare to Prepare* workshop, as well as state-specific information about driver training, graduated driver licensing and more.

AAA's *StartSmart* program is a robust online parent-teen driver involvement curriculum developed by traffic safety experts and based on the National Institutes of Health's *Checkpoints* program. Through *StartSmart*, parents manage their teen's gradual progression toward becoming a safe driver through interactive lessons on safe driving through the use of parent-teen driver agreement.

Other AAA programs, like *Dare to Prepare* and *Teaching Your Teen to Drive*, also help prepare parents for various parts of their teen's driving development. AAA provides parents the necessary tools to help their teens stay safe behind the wheel.

Senior Driver Safety

Senior drivers are among the safest drivers since they often reduce their risk of injury by wearing safety belts, not drinking and driving and by observing speed limits. However, seniors are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash due to age-related fragility. With the exception of teen drivers, seniors have the highest crash death rate per mile driven.

By 2030, one in five Americans will be 65 or older and the majority will be licensed to

drive. Recognizing the changing demographics, AAA launched the *Lifelong Safe Mobility* initiative in 2003 to help seniors drive as long as safely possible and remain mobile thereafter. *Lifelong Safe Mobility* takes a comprehensive approach to senior driver safety by addressing the road, vehicle and driver.

In 2005, AAA released a state-of-the-art computer-based screening tool that allows seniors to measure the functional abilities related to safe driving in the privacy of their own home. *AAA Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer* is a scientifically-validated program that informs users of potential problems in their “driving health,” and identifies ways in which drivers may improve declining abilities.

In 2007, AAA launched an educational program developed in collaboration with the American Society on Aging, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association. *CarFit* is a community-based program that helps mature drivers improve how well they and their cars “fit” together, and what actions they can take to enhance comfort and safety behind the wheel. *CarFit* also provides older participants with community-specific resources to help them drive for as long as safely possible.

Launched in 2008, *AAA’s Smart Features for Mature Drivers* identifies vehicle features that can assist drivers with visual, physical and mental changes that are frequently encountered as they age. Muscle strength, reaction times, range of motion and visual acuity tend to diminish as part of the natural aging process. Arthritis, hip and knee joint pain and osteoporosis also can reduce the ability to safely execute the complex task of driving. *Smart Features for Mature Drivers* highlights features that best address each condition and provides examples of vehicles exemplifying those features.

In 2010, AAA launched the *AAA Senior Driver Expo*, which offers a hands-on opportunity to sample AAA’s suite of research-based senior driver safety and mobility programs and resources. Modeled after community health fairs, attendees have access to tools that can help measure and improve driving skills, reduce driving risks and foster dialogue between adult children and their senior parents about driving issues.

AAA launched ***SeniorDriving.AAA.com*** in 2012, which provides expert advice about how aging affects one’s ability to drive safely. Users also will find a step-by-step guide on how to begin a conversation with an older driver about the need to work together to develop an action plan for the transition from older driver to passenger. Additionally, users will find a variety of interactive tools and resources from educational brochures and driver improvement courses, to skill assessment tools and free community-based programs. AAA is dedicated to keeping senior road users driving as long as safely possible. When it is no longer safe -for seniors to drive, AAA is committed to promoting viable transportation options.

Maintaining Safe & Efficient Mobility in the 21st Century

AAA was among the prominent interest groups in 1956 that built support for creating the Interstate Highway System, and maintains a constant commitment to ensuring adequate funding for a safe and reliable transportation network. The challenge for the next decade is to develop a new transportation vision and funding sources that will meet the nation’s future transportation needs. AAA will play an active role in the debate on the future of the transportation system to ensure that the interests of motorists are protected.

Publications

AAA Public Affairs produces dozens of informative publications on savings and safety, such as the *Gas Watcher's Guide*, which shows motorists how to save fuel while driving safely and protecting the environment. AAA also produces *Your Driving Costs*, which shows the annual costs of operating a motor vehicle.

Traffic safety publications are available on topics ranging from bicycle safety to mature drivers. Titles include: *Seated For Safety*, *So Your Teen Wants A Car? A Parent's Guide to Choosing a Vehicle* and *Straight Talk for Mature Drivers*.