

## Treating Young Drivers Equally

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It used to be that young ladies beginning to drive were different from their male counterparts.... they were safer. However, current trends, particularly accident statistics, show that girls are gaining equality with boys on the roadways. This is a case where increasing equality is not good news.

Information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates that the youngest set of female drivers, aged 16, is becoming involved in more accidents. While 16-year-old boys are still the scourges of the traffic system, 16-year-old girls, licenses still warm from the laminating machine, are closing the gap regarding accidents. They are increasingly involved in both non-fatal and fatal categories. Another factor contributing to the equality is that the accident rate for boys in the same age group is improving (dropping).

### How Can Parents Help?

Begin by recognizing that your new driver, girl or boy, needs your help. Make sure that you provide proper instruction and driving practice. If you're not already, become a positive driving role model. Once he or she has a license, resist any urge to allow broad driving privileges or to assign responsibility to take over chores such as driving younger siblings. Also, make sure that you exercise control over how and when they can operate a car. Finally, bite the expense bullet and make sure your son or daughter is properly insured. Your insurance professional can give you more assistance in seeing that your new driver turns into a safe one.

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