

Nothing kills more teenagers than car crashes. That's why parents increasingly are setting clear ground rules with their teenagers even before they start driving. As kids get older, they ride more often with drivers besides their parents – including other teens who may not have a great deal of driving experience. Teenagers need to be smart passengers. And parents need to know they can trust them.

By setting clear expectations, your Countdown2Drive (C2D) Passenger Agreement can help reinforce key behaviors that keep teens safe as passengers now – and as drivers later. For parents, it means you can worry less. For teens, it's a chance to earn the trust and respect your parents will need to allow you to ride – and eventually drive – in cars on your own.

Use this template to create your own customized C2D Passenger Agreement.

RULES: Part 1

The first five rules tackle five major risk areas. These rules are included in all C2D Passenger Agreements.

I will always wear my seat belt. *A seat belt is the easiest way to protect yourself in a crash. Using a lap/shoulder belt can reduce the risk of dying in a car crash by almost half.*

I will take care never to distract the driver. *Driver distraction is a top reason for crashes. It's not just cell phones - passenger behavior can also be very distracting to the driver.*

I will never ride with a driver who has been drinking or taking drugs. *Using alcohol and other drugs changes the way drivers make decisions and respond to emergencies.*

I will not ride with drivers who have too little experience. A driver must have their license for at least _____ before I can accept a ride. This rule does not apply to the following drivers: _____.
Most teen crashes are the result of "rookie" mistakes. Teens need time and practice to gain driving experience.

I will avoid drivers that I know are unsafe. *Unsafe drivers can make you feel scared and put you in danger if they speed, pass cars when they shouldn't or make sudden moves that impact the safety of others.*

RULES: Part 2

Experts recommend adding the rules below as well. Read them over and check the boxes or use a highlighter to mark the ones that work for your family. Use the blank lines to write in any additional rules you'd like to include in your Passenger Agreement.

- I will always tell my parent where I'm going, who I'm with, and what time I'll be home. I will check in by text or by phone every time I arrive at a destination or leave to go somewhere else.** *Teens who have a specific destination and who check in regularly with their parents are more likely to have their parent's trust and build communication skills.*
- I will obey my curfew and call if I might be late. I will not ask a driver to hurry to get me home on time.** *Your crash risk rises at night – and speeding to get home on time makes it worse. Meeting curfew keeps your parents from worrying and shows you are responsible.*
- I will not accept a ride unless I have my parent's permission first. My parent will let me know which drivers I can ride with routinely.** *The risk of dying in a crash – as a passenger – rises in the teen years. It's important for parents to know who is at the wheel.*
- I will maintain my grades.** *Working towards earning at least a B average shows you are responsible – and could mean a discount on insurance when you're ready to drive. Teen drivers with higher GPAs are less likely to get traffic tickets.*
- I will always tell my parent how many passengers will be in the car before I accept a ride with a teen driver.** *Just one teen passenger doubles the risk a teen driver will get into a fatal crash; three or more passengers quadruples the risk.*
- If I'm in a crash, I will call my parent right away.** *Even if it's minor, a crash can have serious health, legal and financial consequences. Your parents need to know so they can help you decide what's best to do next.*
- I will be a helpful passenger.** *If the driver wants assistance, I will watch traffic, offer to text or call, change the music, read a map or otherwise help so the driver can keep their eyes on the road. Distracted driving is a leading cause of crashes for drivers of all ages.*
- I will not drink alcohol or take illegal drugs.** *You already know it's against the law. Avoiding alcohol and drugs shows you are responsible and trustworthy. It means you are clearheaded to make smart choices when you are riding in a car without your parent.*

Other (please list): _____

Other (please list): _____

Parent Commitments

The commitments below can help teens stick to their Passenger Agreement. Read through the options and check the boxes or use a highlighter to mark the ones that work for your family. Use the blank lines to write in any additional commitments you'd like to include.

- I am committed to your safety.** If you feel unsafe accepting a ride, I expect you to call me. In return, I will come get you or find another ride for you — no questions asked.
- I will be a good role model.** I pledge to follow the rules of the road and teach you good driving through my example.
- I will help you learn to be a safe driver.** When we are in the car, I will talk to you about safe driving and point out good and bad examples on the road.
- I will help guide you through the licensing process.** I will help you set dates and prepare for your tests. After you get your permit, I will make sure you get the on-the-road training you need.

Other (please list): _____

Other (please list): _____

Rewards

Most teens say what they want most from sticking to a Passenger Agreement is the chance to earn their parent's trust and respect. But rewards never hurt. Read through the options and check the boxes or use a highlighter to mark the ones that work for your family. Use the blank lines to write in any additional rewards you'd like to include.

Each month I follow the agreement, I can earn:

- More TV / video game time
- More computer time
- Control of TV remote one evening a week
- The chance to choose the music whenever I ride in the car
- A "get-out-of-a-chore" coupon
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

After six months of following the agreement, I can earn:

- A new book or a magazine subscription
- A later curfew
- Money and permission to go out to dinner with a friend
- A clothing gift card
- An iTunes gift card
- More freedom to spend time with friends on the weekend
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

Each year I follow the agreement, I can earn:

- Movie or concert tickets
- An outing to a theme park or sporting event of my choice
- Contributions to a savings account that will pay for car expenses when I am older
- My parent will set the date when I can get my learner's permit or license
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

Consequences

Teens and parents are more likely to take the C2D Passenger Agreement seriously if they agree to some consequences for not following the rules. Read through the options and check the boxes or use a highlighter to mark the ones that work for your family. Use the blank lines to write in any additional consequences you'd like to include.

If I break the agreement one time:

- I will lose a reward for that month
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

If I break the agreement multiple times:

- I will lose all rewards for that month
- I will lose screen time (TV, games, computer)
- I will lose use of my cell phone for a period of time
- I will have an earlier curfew for a few months
- I will be grounded
- I will be assigned additional chores
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

If I routinely break the agreement and fail to take it seriously:

- I will lose all rewards until I start following the agreement.
- I will not be allowed to ride in cars unless my parent is driving.
- I will have to wait an additional three months to get my learners permit or drivers license.
- Other (please list): _____
- Other (please list): _____

Review your selections to make sure you both feel comfortable with the contract. Once all terms are agreeable make it official by signing on the lines below. Once signed, consider putting it on the refrigerator or another place where your family is likely to see it often. That way, you'll have a frequent reminder of the rules, consequences and rewards you have agreed to.

We Agree	_____	_____	_____	_____
	SIGNATURE OF TEEN	DATE	SIGNATURE OF PARENT	DATE