**TOOLBOX TALK - Young Drivers and Motor Vehicle Accidents**

## ****Young Drivers and Motor Vehicle Accidents Safety Talk****

Motor vehicle accidents cause many injuries and deaths every single year. In total, over 32,000 people die each year in the United States due to motor vehicle crashes. Young drivers, more than any other age group, are most likely to be the victims of motor vehicle crashes.

These crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the United States. An average of six teenagers from the ages of 16 to 19 years old die from motor vehicle crash injuries every single day.

## ****Contributing Factors to Young Driver Motor Vehicle Deaths****

There are many contributing factors as to why teens are more likely to be involved, and die from, motor vehicle crashes. Some factors to consider:

* Teens are less mature than their older counterparts which leads to poor decision making.
* Lack of skills and experience driving can be a major factor in these accidents.
* Distractions such as using cellphones or friends in the car often plays a role in these crashes.
* Risk taking behaviors such as speeding is a common problem with teen drivers. In 2016, speeding was a factor in 32% of fatal motor vehicle crashes involving young drivers.
* Driving under the influence **was a factor in 1 in 5 teen driver deaths in 2016**.
* Seatbelt use is lowest among teen drivers. 58% of teens and the passengers in their vehicles at the time of a fatal crash **were not wearing their seatbelt.**

## ****Preventing Young Driver Injuries and Deaths****

Parents can play a large part in whether or not their teen(s) will be a victim of a motor vehicle crash. There are many things parents can do to make a difference in instilling safe driving behaviors in their children. Some best practices include:

* Ensure they are truly ready to drive alone prior to allowing them to do so. Even if they pass the driving exam to get their license, be sure they are comfortable in other conditions such as nighttime driving or driving on the freeway.
* Set a good example for children early when it comes to driving. If they see you take part in speeding, driving under the influence, not wearing a seatbelt, etc. do you think they will do the same?
* Set rules for young drivers. Rules such as no friends in the car, no nighttime driving, and not using a cell phone while driving can make the difference in preventing a crash.
* Hold young drivers accountable. If risky behaviors take place, breaking the rules set by you, getting a ticket, etc. occur then take away driving privileges.

### **Summary**

The stats on teen driving deaths are staggering. It is important to have discussions about driving safely with the young people in your life, whether that is at home or on the job. As the parent, hold teens accountable if it is found out that they are taking part in risky behavior. If you supervise younger employees who drive, ensure all company rules are strictly enforced and they are understood by the employees. Never hesitate to address unsafe behaviors while driving- it can make all the difference in saving a life.