

Age 15.7



"These Keys Come With Strings Attached"

Amador Teen Driver Council

PO Box 1807, Jackson, CA 95642

www.amadorteedriver.org

CHP: Start Smart!

CHP Start Smart classes for teen drivers and future teen drivers are held monthly at the local CHP office. Please contact officer John Hardey or Officer Craig Harmon for times and reservations.

Start Smart: 223-4890

Our council recommends all teens

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- Danae Littlefield** ~ Student
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- Tina Wurzbarger** ~ Parent ~ Carl Littlefield
- Virginia Manner** ~ Amador County Juvenile Justice
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A Contract With Your Teen Driver?

Have you talked to your future driver about what would happen if they got a traffic ticket? What would happen to their driving privileges if they were to get caught with another teen in their vehicle during the probationary period of their drivers license? What happens if they have an at fault auto accident? Psychologists and other researchers advise having an "official" contract between teens and their parents that "spells out" what happens if the teen doesn't follow the family rules and/or the traffic laws. Will you withhold driving privileges for a week ? A Month? Many parents set up written contracts that clearly spell out the consequences

for each potential infraction. Think about adding positive consequences too... i.e.; 1 year of "good driving" is rewarded with allowing them to drive with a friend in the car, etc. Kids are prone to make mistakes if both of you know the ramifications prior to making the mistakes it may be easier to enforce the consequences.

Included with this mailing we provide several contracts in hopes one gives you an idea of something you could use with your teen. Edit them to suit your needs! All of them are online, some of which allow editing, at our website:

www.amadorteedriver.org

Teen Driver Studies

Bloomington, Ill., January 25, 2007
- In a new national survey , 5,665 high school students said they are driving under extremely dangerous conditions - fatigue, talking on cell phones, strong emotions, multiple passengers - and many are still not wearing seatbelts. The National Teen Driver Survey, released by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia® and State Farm®, represents 10.6 million 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in all public high schools in the United States.

"Research has told us a lot about which teens get into crashes, but we don't know enough about the why," says Flaura K. Winston, M.D., Ph.D., co-scientific director and founder of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and principal investiga-

tor of the National Teen Driver study. "With this survey, we asked teens directly: what is happening when your peers drive that is making them unsafe"

Key findings about the teen experience in cars shows:

- 75 percent of teens see peers driving fatigued
- 90 percent see passenger behavior that distracts the driver
- 20 percent of 11th graders report being in a crash as a driver in the past year

The survey also revealed the important role that the teens see for their parents:

- 66 percent say that they care about

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Tina Werzberger ~ A Mother's Diary

Tina's son Carl Littlefield was killed in an auto accident on 7/7/06 this is the second article in a series written by Tina for Amador Teen Driver

July 8, 2006: (4:30 am) The Sheriff's officer just left my home. It took him almost five hours to get to the house to tell me you were killed in an accident. They gave me pamphlets on how to retrieve your body and a few items that belonged to you. They told me how terribly sorry they were for my loss and then went on their way. They told me you were driving the truck that killed you and one of your best friends, and put another in the hospital in severe critical condition. I feel numb! I don't know what to do with myself! Do I start making phone calls or wait? It's still early, but family members would probably want to know. This can't be real! I must be dreaming! I wonder

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what his father is feeling right now. What do I have to do first? Who do I call? Oh my God! My son is dead! I dial the phone to try to get a hold of your sister and all I get is her voice mail. I leave a frantic message and hang up. I call your grandfather and he can't even talk on the other line, he says nothing

but he'll call other family members out where he lives for me. I try your sister again! Oh my God it's her voice mail again. Please pick your phone up! I can't stand it! I leave another voice mail. I call your cell phone message to see if you answer. Maybe this is all a big mistake! Please answer your cell phone; maybe they had the wrong kid! Darn! It's your voice mail too! I listen carefully to your voice as you talk. Oh my God! My son is dead!

(5:30 am) I dial your sisters' phone again and still no answer. I think, maybe she's with her friend. I dial her number and she picks up. I say, "Is my daughter there?" she says, "Yeah, she's right here!" I hesitate for a minute and hear her answer the phone with "why are you up so early?" I reply, "I have some really bad news" She replies "what now?" I said, "Your brother was killed last night in a car accident" She sobs uncontrollably. I tell her to collect herself and call me in a few minutes and I'll let her know the details.

(10:00 am) We all gather at your aunt's house. No one can believe that our number seventy-one from the football team that just graduated a month ago, is gone. The disbelief on all their faces is indescribable! Your football coach shows up. Yeah that guy that was also your teacher who helped you receive that diploma one month earlier! He hugs me! Says he's here as he always was when it came to you. I asked him to get your football jersey so you could wear it. I turned around to see your

little brother sitting on the couch with elephant tears running down his face as he looked at your senior picture on the wall. The one with the sideways smug little smile we loved so much.

(11:30 am) There you are lying on the table. They cleaned you up and gave you a little shave. Thank God your face wasn't damaged! We were surely blessed by that. I needed to see your face to make this real. You really do look like you're asleep. I keep expecting you to jump up any minute and say "jokes on you mom! Got you good!" but your face is so cold; your chest is so bruised! They say you didn't suffer at all. But how do they really know for sure. I sure hope you didn't. I wouldn't want that for you. Your dad is so sad! He wants to see you alone because he doesn't want anyone to see him say goodbye. He doesn't want anyone to see him so vulnerable. He was always so tough! But not now, his son is dead! Your step-dad has been very supportive. He's trying everything in the world to help me cope but I see how much this is tearing him apart. He loved you so much! He misses you terribly! Your whole family is here for you. I wonder if you know you are dead. I wonder if you know we are here. I wonder where you are right this very moment.

(12:30 pm) We're all sitting down and planning your funeral. Oh my God my son is dead! We have to do this now? Yes I guess so. Do we bury you? No! I couldn't

bear putting you in the ground like that! I want you with me always. We decide to cremate you and share you in death just like we shared you in life. We will have a viewing with your friend for a day so everyone can see you both and say goodbye! I think people will need that! Oh my God! I can't believe this is happening! I

...I love you my only son and you will live forever in my heart.

am so numb! There are so many things to pick. Flowers, pictures, announcements, too many things to think about. What about the other family? Are they taken care of? So many people want to help but I don't know what to tell them. I don't want to deal with this anymore. I want to wake up now. This can all go away! I want you to wake me up and tell me this was all a bad dream! No, not a dream this is as real as it gets. Oh my God, my son is dead!

(2:30 pm) I'm driving home so numb to reality I can't even think straight. There is really nothing else to do but sit and wait for people to come. We get home and there are many messages on the machine of people who don't know what to say. I keep staring at the door waiting for you to walk through it, telling myself that wasn't really

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Teen Driver Studies

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their parents' opinion on cell phone use while driving

- 56 percent of them rely on parents to learn how to drive
- 39 percent of their parents provide total financial responsibility for their driving

"Teens described a driving environment that would be challenging even to experienced drivers," says Dr. Winston. "Combine this driving environment with lack of training and inexperience and you have a deadly mix."

- 75 percent of teens see peers driving fatigued
- 90 percent see passenger behavior that distracts the driver
- 20% of eleventh graders report being in a crash as the driver in the past year

In 2005, almost 7,500 15-to 20-year-old drivers were involved in fatal crashes according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The fatality rate for driv-

ers aged 16 to 19 years, based on miles driven, is four times that of drivers aged 25 to 69 years.

"Our aim is to help young drivers make safe decisions," says Laurette Stiles, Vice President Strategic Resources at State Farm. "We want to give them tools to help them avoid hazards and ultimately to save lives and make our roads safer for all".

The National Teen Driver Survey is the first phase of a multidisciplinary initiative of research, education and programmatic interventions that can be implemented

nationally to save lives. Under an existing alliance between The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm, this initiative is dedicated to taking research results and translating them into nationwide action to save teen's lives. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm have a proven track record in conducting research and implementing programming that have helped reduce injuries and fatalities to children in motor vehicle crashes through Partners for Child Passenger Safety

Tina Wurzbarger ~ A Mother's Diary

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you I just saw on that table at the mortuary. I walk into your bedroom and sit on your bed. I take in the aroma of the room. Gosh! It still smells like you were just here! Are you here? Can you see me? I listen to see if I can hear you. Nothing but silence. Oh my God! My son is dead! I start to weep, afraid I won't stop, but the phone rings. It's another concerned friend or family member wanting to do something. What would I do without them!

July 13, 2006: We are driving up to the mortuary. I'm feeling anxious. How will you look? How will your friend look? What will people do? As I enter the room where you lay in your casket, I can see your face. You look so handsome in your football jersey! Number seventy-one. We saw it so many times just a few months earlier on the field as you tackled

those guys. You did such a good job. You still look like you're sleeping. Again I picture you jumping up saying "Ha! Mom!" "Danny and I got you good this time!" Oh how I wish you would do that! But no, you just lay there. I place a kiss on your forehead. It's so cold! I turn around and there are so many people waiting to see you! I move aside as if no one even knows who I am. Four hours later and hundreds of people later we say goodbye to you for one more day.

July 14, 2006: Well this is the day we all gather to say goodbye to you for the last time in our lives! We put on our Sunday best and drive to the church. They predict a huge crowd today! Who knew? George will say a beautiful service for you! Coach will speak

about you. Music will be played in your honor and people will speak many great things as they say goodbye to you one last time. Many, many tears fall. Not a dry eye in the place! Standing room only! They said there was nearly nine hundred people there. You were so loved! I am so proud! I look around and so many young faces with blank looks on their faces! I want to scoop them up and hug them all. Then we have your buddy's funeral right after yours. It's just as sad! We put you in a room up the hill in a little chapel off to the side so people can spend some time with you. Then I watch the Hearses drive off with you guys in them and my heart sank! Goodbye Jason. Rest in Peace! See you on Sunday one

last time my son!

July 16, 2006: It's your eighteenth birthday today son! We came to the mortuary one last time to see you before they take you to be cremated. You look different today! I don't know what it is, but you look different. I kiss you one last time and say goodbye, looking back at you as I leave the room! Goodbye my only son! There will never be a day I won't miss you or forget you! We drive to the football field and leave your casket flowers on your rock that bears your name and number. We then drive to the accident site and leave the tons of wreaths and flowers that people sent as a shrine in your honor for all to see! You were truly loved and you are truly missed. I love you my only son and you will live forever in my heart.

Day in the life of a driver by Teresa Vinciguerra

7:50 – My brother and I head off to school from our home in Running Gold.

7:55 – We approach Ridge Road. Traffic on my right is heading towards Sutter Hill. Traffic on my left is heading east, probably towards Jackson Rancheria Casino. Since the Casino was built the traffic has increased horribly. Many of the drivers don't seem to think there's a speed limit.

8:00 – I finally pull out on Ridge Road, almost before I know it, a car is practically on my bumper, "SLOW DOWN IDIOT!" is what I think to myself. I always approach the Old Sutter Creek Bypass Road with caution because people pull out in front of oncoming traffic all the time.

8:05 – I'm waiting in the turn lane at Sutter Hill to head South on 49 towards Jackson. Four cars make the turn legally before the light turns red, one car runs the light, but there are no City Police or CHP's in sight to ticket him. I wait around four more minutes until the light turns green again.

8:09 – I'm finally heading to school but not before I wait through two more stoplights. I can remember a few years ago when there was just one stoplight on Sutter Hill, now I have to go through three to get to Argonaut.

8:12 – I take a right on Argonaut Lane and follow the posted speed limit. I have seen a lot of kids get tickets on this road in the morning and there are several kids who walk to school. I pass a Jackson City Police car "hiding" at the Book Mine.

8:15 – I find a spot to park and get to class before the morning bell rings

11:15 – I decide that I'll drive down to Taco Bell for lunch. Though we have a "closed" campus, Seniors who have good grades and who are in good standing can go off campus during lunch. I didn't like it when the School District decided to impose a closed campus but I guess it does cut-down on kids driving around and getting in trouble, or cutting class. It's still hard to get out of the Argonaut parking lot since it drops on to Argonaut Lane which is a pretty busy road. Next year the new Courthouse will be built which will make it even busier.

11:20 – I inch down Hoffman and wait to turn right on to Hwy 49. I have to go

through two more stoplights and it sometimes backs up at the stoplight in front of the fire station so I know I won't have that much time to eat. I get in the right-hand turn lane which has three entries into Jackson Creek Plaza. Here is another place where people pull out onto 49 unexpectedly, or who drive down the turn lane as though it's a passing lane. I take the third exit and make my way to Taco Bell. I'm third in line, but it moves pretty quickly and I head back towards the high school to eat lunch there. Back through two more lights, and in the left lane of Highway 49 to go up Hoffman. People are driving pretty fast and I gun the car to beat oncoming traffic. I go pretty slowly up this street because many cars pull out from the Junior High on Rex Avenue. Finally I turn in to Argonaut.

11:30 – I have just enough time to eat with my friends until the bell rings at 12:45.

3:10 – School's out, and I'll wait for the initial traffic to clear while my brother collects his equipment for baseball. There are still some buses parked alongside the road, waiting to take Junior High kids home, so I turn and drop my brother off. Back up Hoffman and out Argonaut Lane, seems like I'll never get home.

3:40 – I approach Argonaut and Highway 49 and wait for one car to turn on Argonaut. As I get out to the middle turn lane I can see several cars coming up behind me. I know I had better wait till both right lanes are clear so I won't have to speed across the double lanes to turn towards Sutter Creek. Finally, I'm at the four way stop, wait my turn, head towards Sutter Hill. Two more lights and I turn right on to Ridge Road. I look back in my mirror and see that the East/West light has changed and there is a string of cars – headed for the Casino, I suppose. I put on my right turn indicator soon after passing the Mormon Church, just in case one of these idiots behind me is in a hurry. As I approach Running Gold I can see one little Toyota coming up pretty fast. I slow to turn and the car whizzes past me and honks the horn.

This project supported by the following major sponsors:

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- Amador County School District
- Amador-Sutter Hospital
- Argonaut Breakfast Lions
- Element 58 Web Design
- Jackson Lions
- Medical Staff of Sutter Amador Hospital
- St. Patrick's Parish
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- Jackson Rancheria Casino
- Soroptimist International of Amador County
- State Farm Insurance ~ Anne Lintz & Diane Witte

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- Jeff Holman Auto Center
- Mike & Cindy Rankin

If you would like to sponsor or donate to Amador Teen Driver Council please contact Anne Lintz @ 209-223-1631

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3:55 – I'm pulling into my driveway. I know I should go and pick my brother up at 5:30 but I think I'll let someone else go out. I feel like I want to stay home now. No traffic, no horns, no foul people. It has been just another day driving in Amador County.