



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **TEENAGE SAFE DRIVING AWARENESS WEEK DELIVERS IMPORTANT MESSAGE DURING PROM AND GRADUATION SEASON**

*~ Driving is a privilege - don't lose it ~*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – As high school students plan activities to celebrate prom and graduation, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles encourages teens and parents to include a safe driving plan and options as part of their party planning. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen fatalities, and a little planning up front could save a life.

In an effort to promote the importance of developing good driving habits, Gov. Charlie Crist has proclaimed April 20-25, 2009, to be *Teenage Safe Driving Awareness Week* in Florida.

“We want teens to enjoy this special time in their lives, but we know they are the most high-risk drivers on our roads,” said DHSMV Executive Director Electra Theodorides-Bustle. “It is important that we work together in the community, in schools and at home to provide our teens with the right kind of education and tools to protect themselves and others on the road.”

Some things parents and students should remember for the events:

- Don't drink (and never drink and drive.)
- Don't get in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking.
- Make sure everyone in the vehicle is buckled up – it's the law.
- Keep a cell phone on and easily accessible, so parents and guardians can reach you.
- If you do get into a situation where you need assistance, call your parents or another trusted adult.
- Limit the number of passengers in the vehicle to eliminate distractions.
- Do not text or talk on a cell phone while driving - pull over and park if you have to text or call someone.
- Driving is a privilege – don't lose it.

“Florida law enforcement will maintain the zero tolerance stance for drunk drivers no matter the time of year or the person's age,” said Director of the Florida Highway Patrol Col. John Czernis. “Drivers under the age of 21 with a blood alcohol level of .02 percent or more will have their license suspended for six months. No exceptions.”

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The Department wants to see all students who celebrate their prom or graduation, do so with safe choices in mind. Troopers will work closely with school administrators, parents and local law enforcement from now through graduations from the Panhandle to the Keys to ensure that students understand the importance of making good driving decisions. More information on teen driver safety is available online at [www.flhsmv.gov/teens](http://www.flhsmv.gov/teens) and at [www.TakeTheWheel.net](http://www.TakeTheWheel.net), which is a Web site created by teens for teens. Parents also can check their teens' driver records online at [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov).

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles also encourages teens and their parents to register their Emergency Contact Information online using their Florida driver license or identification card number. The information can then be accessed only by law enforcement officers to find designated contacts in the case of an emergency. To register your Emergency Contact Information, visit [www.flhsmv.gov/eci](http://www.flhsmv.gov/eci).

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