



## Sixteen Minutes in a Fifteen-Year-Old's Life Program Guide for Presenters

This program is intended to emphasize three key focus areas that young drivers will experience during their first journey behind the wheel.

It will be split into three distinct sections:

- 1. Expectation and Reality.** This section is about handing over responsibility from parent to child (as illustrated by the key exchange in the picture). It's important to explore the expectations 15-year-olds have about driving and the realities realized by their 16-year-old peers. It's also important to stress the significance of wearing a seat belt before new drivers get behind the wheel.
- 2. Behavior and Consequences.** This section explores the dangers of driving for teenagers and the behaviors that can cause a serious crash. It's important to explain crash characteristics unique to this age group and strategies for avoiding them. A key message in this section is that a seat belt is the best defense in a crash.
- 3. Enforcement and Penalty.** This section introduces teenagers to Pennsylvania's seat belt law and the *Click It or Ticket* campaign. Ticketing procedures and prices will be explained during this part of the presentation. The section should end with the reminder that driving is not a right, but a privilege.

### *Timing Sequence*

The above topics will change every five minutes, totaling 15 minutes with one minute left over for the conclusion. Seat belts must remain an underlying theme throughout the presentation.

### *Program Planning*

- Only students who will turn 16 within the month should participate.
- The program should be scheduled as close to the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month as possible.
- Group size should be limited so that the presentation can be conducted in a smaller, less formal manner. You should sit among the students.
- A student should be designated to monitor five minute intervals to keep the presentation moving from topic to topic.
- A strong, significant statement should close the presentation.

### *Program Procedure (Tips)*

- 1. Why wear seat belts, and why wear them correctly? (5 minutes)** Buckling up before getting behind the wheel is not just recommended; it's the law. Discuss various ways students may wear a seat belt ( e.g. behind the back, slouched low in the seat and to the side, or removing the seat belts completely )

When discussing what it might be like to drive before actually getting behind the wheel, most 15 year olds have admitted to being scared, nervous and fearful of crashing. Many also believed it would be fun and

empowering. Maintaining control is the most important factor for this section. Graduated licensing should also be discussed.

- 2. Seat belts are your best protection in a crash. (5 minutes)** Many crashes that occur among teenagers involve distracted drivers, aggressive and impaired drivers and drivers carrying too many passengers for a vehicle. The most important message in this section is that always wearing a seat belt is the best defense in a crash (explain how belts and airbags work together when used properly). Consequences of risk-taking (e.g. injury and death) should also be discussed.
- 3. Seat belts are the law, and one might save your life. (5 minutes)** Read the part of Pennsylvania's seat belt law that pertains to children their age and highlight the parts of the law involving transporting children younger than themselves. Click It or Ticket should also be explained in this section, as well as seat belt ticket costs. Explain that you'd rather ticket teenagers than contact their parents to tell them that they won't be coming home again. "How we meet is up to you ... if you don't buckle up, I may be there, but you'll never know it."
- 4. Closing. (1 minute)** "Driving is a privilege, not a right. We want to believe that everyone on the road is safe and responsible, but you know that's not the case. Protect yourself and wear a seat belt. You and your passengers' lives depend on it."

## **PART ONE – Handing Over Responsibility**

Turning sixteen will be a big event in your life. It means you are legally able to drive. It's a new part of your life that brings a lot of excitement and a lot of responsibility.

Fifteen year olds expect that learning to drive will bring freedom from parents and a sense of control and power. They are often nervous about getting behind the wheel.

*Select a few students and ask, "What does driving mean to you?"*

*After hearing their responses, explain that sixteen year olds, after spending some time actually driving, have some surprising views. Here's what 454 driver education students had to say:*

- 38% thought driving was either hard, scary, or nerve-wracking
- 6% though driving was easy
- 15% said driving was an exciting rush
- 11% felt driving gave them control of their lives
- 9% were afraid of bad drivers and hoped for enforcement
- 9% needed more time behind the wheel
- 12% didn't realize a car was so powerful.

When learning to drive, as you'll find out shortly, there's a difference between what you can expect and reality.

*Discuss:*

- Seat Belts – your best defense in a crash
- Graduated Licensing Program – learning to drive at a safe, measured pace
- Defensive Driving – you might be a good driver, but not everyone else is
- Maintaining Control – you are responsible for your life (and the lives of your passengers) whenever you get behind the wheel – take it seriously

*\*Passengers need to exercise good judgment when deciding with who they want to ride. Explain the possible consequences of making poor choices.*

## **PART TWO – BEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES**

Seat belts are your best defense in a crash. Together with airbags, they could reduce your chance of death by up to 60 percent.

“What is the most dangerous thing a 15 year old can do? Turn sixteen.”

That’s a fact. When you reach legal driving age, your chance of being killed or injured in a car crash increases substantially. Teens and young adults are at the greatest risk for severe injury or death in a crash. In fact, more injuries occur than fatalities, and many serious injuries can result in being paralyzed for life.

When you are in control of a vehicle, what you do can have serious consequences. Some behaviors that can lead to a crash include the following:

- Aggressive driving
  - Speeding
  - Red light running
  - Weaving, racing
- Distracted driving
  - Cell phone use
  - Turning to talk to friends
  - Eating
  - Playing with the radio
- Impaired driving
  - Alcohol
  - Drugs
  - Prescription medications
  - Lack of sleep

Chances are everyone here will be in a crash at some point in his or her life. You don’t have control over when that day may be, but you do have control of your behavior and of your power to defend yourself.

## **PART THREE – ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTY – CLICK IT OR TICKET**

(Pennsylvania's seat belt law and provisions for those under 18)

In Pennsylvania, we believe in Click It or Ticket.

If you are stopped and cited for a primary offense (i.e. speeding, running a stop sign) and you are found to be unbelted, you will receive a second ticket for not buckling up. There will be no warnings and we enforce the law 24/7 – no exceptions.

If you are stopped and cited for a primary offense and any of your passengers (ages 17 and under) aren't buckled up, *you* will receive citations for them as well.

Each seatbelt citation adds an extra \$60 or so to your fine.

These laws exist for a reason – to keep you safe. We don't write tickets to give you a hard time; we write them to save your life.

Remember, driving is a privilege, not a right.

Buckle Up Every Time – Click It or Ticket.