

The logo features the words "GET TO KNOW" in a bold, sans-serif font inside a grey speech bubble with a white arrow pointing to the right. To the right of the speech bubble, the word "Newton" is written in a large, bold, cursive-style font.

GET TO KNOW **Newton**

National Teen Driver Safety Week:
October 19-25, 2014

Newton, IOWA – Today’s youth are busier and more engaged than ever. Unfortunately, this also means they have more things to distract them, especially while they are driving. Iowa’s young drivers travel many miles over local, state, interstate and rural roads. Many of these miles are before and after school as well as late at night, after work or sporting events--in all kinds of weather.

October 19-25, 2014, is dedicated to raising awareness and seeking solutions to unnecessary teen deaths on the road. National Teen Driver Safety Week was established by Congress in 2007 and is held annually on the third week of each October, its goal is to focus the country’s attention on this serious issue. The Newton Police Department is asking parents, educators and other influencers to be vigilant in the awareness, experience and education of teen drivers.

Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen deaths in Iowa and the U.S. Research shows that teen drivers are at a greater risk of injury and death than all other age groups. In 2012, there were 859 teen drivers killed in crashes across the U.S. In Iowa, driver’s ages 14-19 make up 7.4% of Iowa licensed drivers. Factors such as not using safety belts, speed, time of day, number of passengers and the use of electronic devices continue to be primary causes of crashes among teens.

Although it’s illegal in all 50 States and DC for youth under age 21 to buy or drink alcohol, nationally in 2012, 28 percent of the young drivers (15 to 20 years old) who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Also in 2012, of all the young (15- to 20-year-old) passenger vehicle drivers killed in crashes, more than half (55%) of those killed were not wearing seat belts.

Texting and driving has become a national epidemic, and teens are some of the worst offenders. In 2012, among drivers 15 to 19 years old who were distracted in fatal crashes, nearly 1 in 5 was distracted by their phones. Speeding is also a common contributing factor in fatal crashes. In 2012, speeding was a factor in almost half (48%) of the crashes that killed 15- to 20-year-old drivers. By comparison, 30 percent of all fatal crashes that year involved speeding.

Parents, teachers, mentors and adult influencers are encouraged to help keep our teen drivers safe by setting a positive example while driving. Drive responsibly by buckling up, driving the speed limit, not drinking and driving and not driving distracted.

“We are hoping that Teen Driver Safety Week will get the word out to all parents of teens, and help them discuss these important issues,” said Mick Mulhern, Youth Coordinator for the Iowa Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau. “I get it,” he added. “You probably think your teens aren’t listening, but if this one conversation could save a life, isn’t it a conversation worth having?”

Please contact your county sheriff’s office or local police department for local crash statistics. To view a young driver fact sheet go to: <http://www.iowagtsb.org>. Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/iowaGTSB/> or Twitter: @IowaGTSB.

For more statistics and information involving Iowa’s youth, contact:

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