

# Toyota's Free Safe Driving Program To Educate Los Angeles Teens and Parents About Crucial Defensive-Driving Skills July 11-12 and August 8-9

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## Toyota Battles Teen Driving Fatalities as Sponsor of National Safety Month's Teen Driving Week

Watch the event documentary here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L86nFVgk1tA>

**TORRANCE, CALIF. (June 2, 2009)** ? California ranks second among states with the highest number of fatalities involving teen drivers in the U.S., according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, making teen driver education a serious issue for the state. In support of measures to reduce teen driving accidents through education and real-world preparation, Southern California-based automotive company, Toyota is hosting its advanced teen driving skills program for Southland area teens and parents, ?[Toyota Driving Expectations](#),? in Torrance Calif., July 11-12 and August 8-9. In addition to the free driver safety program, Toyota is the official sponsor of National Safety Month's Teen Driving Week, June 1-7.

With teenage drivers involved in fatal traffic accidents at more than twice the rate of the rest of the general population, Toyota's free of charge program goes beyond what is taught in typical driver's training classes, putting teens behind the wheel to face challenging, real-world scenarios. One unique element of the program is the requirement of a parent or guardian to attend with the teen. With parents being the main source of information for teens as they learn to drive, it's important that parents also understand the dangers of distracted driving and basic behind-the-wheel skills.

In the Los Angeles area, the Toyota Driving Expectations program will offer 24 four-hour sessions over two weekends ? Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12 and August 8-9 between 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Registration is now open online at <http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com/>.

?Toyota is dedicated to supporting both teens and parents in developing safe, responsible driving habits and protecting them on the road,? said Michael Rouse, Toyota's vice president of philanthropy and community affairs. ?Our goal with Toyota Driving Expectations is to prepare teens with the critical skills and knowledge to handle real-world driving situations and to give parents some guidelines to be an effective coach and mentor.?

Each four-hour Toyota Driving Expectations program begins with an opening session for all participants where they are introduced to the privilege and risk associated with driving. Combining both hands-on and interactive learning through driving courses and classroom style sessions, the program's curriculum covers a variety of topics to increase safe driving practices.

While driving on the courses under the supervision of professional drivers, teens practice ways to best stay focused on the road, learn how to engage anti-lock braking systems on both wet and dry roads and demonstrate how everyday distractions, to which new drivers are especially prone, can have unexpected, dangerous effects.

To combat the increase of accidents associated with distracted driving, California recently passed a law prohibiting drivers under the age of 18 from using a wireless telephone or hands-free device while behind the wheel. Toyota Driving Expectations exposes the risks associated with distracted driving by having both parents and teens drive an actual "distraction course" while talking and texting on a cell phone, drinking water and listening to loud music, to demonstrate how reaction time is affected by these activities.

At the end of the program, to reinforce what they learned, teens and parents develop a safe driving contract together to maintain an open dialogue about responsible driving habits at home.

In addition to Toyota Driving Expectations, participants will also have the opportunity to learn about traffic safety through a variety of interactive exercises that include the Collision Course and Rock Climbing Wall, sponsored by Safe Moves. These hands-on activities will simulate the effects of vehicle-related fatalities and injuries. Representatives from the National Safety Council, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and local law enforcement officials will also be on-site.

Since the program's debut in 2004, over 12,000 teens and parents in 18 cities, identified as having high teen accident rates, have benefited from the program. The National Safety Council, a leading resource on strategies for advancing safety and health programs, has been a partner to Toyota Driving Expectations since its start. The program includes elements of the Council's signature driving programs, including *Alive at 25* and *Family Guide to Teen Drivers*.

#### **About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota directly employs more than 34,000 in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$17 billion, including sales and manufacturing operations, research and development, financial services and design. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit [www.toyota.com/community](http://www.toyota.com/community).

#### **About National Safety Council**

The National Safety Council (<http://www.nsc.org/>) saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes, communities and on the roads, through leadership, research, education and advocacy.

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