RURAL ROAD CRASHES — THEY’RE PREVENTABLE!

Coaching Guide

Driving rural roads is dangerous.

- Crashes on rural roads occur at more than twice the rate of crashes on state roads.
- Driving too fast for conditions is the number one reason for rural road crashes.
- Driving or riding in a motor vehicle is THE MOST dangerous activity for a teenager, and motor vehicle crashes are the cause of more than 40 percent of all the deaths of Iowa teens.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING RURAL ROAD CRASHES:

- **Slow Down**
  Drive a speed that is appropriate for the conditions and type of hazards on the roadway.
- **Pay close attention**
  Keep your mind on the road. Don’t be distracted by passengers or anything else.
- **Be patient**
  Slow down and be patient behind slow-moving vehicles.
- **Use your seatbelt**
  Always buckle up and be sure others in the vehicle do too.
- **Be aware of road conditions.**
  Road conditions vary throughout the year or just around the corner.

PARENT / INSTRUCTOR RURAL ROADS AWARENESS ACTIVITY

Use this checklist and the “commentary” method of driving. For this exercise, ask your teen driver to report rural road characteristics, roadside hazards, and sharing the road challenges as they see them. Check off items as they are mentioned. Use the commentary method yourself to demonstrate.

For example,

“As I turn onto this gravel road I am slowing down while I look for loose gravel and other road conditions. “Ahead I see a narrow bridge so I am looking for oncoming traffic before I move toward the center.”

“I see activity in this field so I am watching for movement of any vehicles on the field driveway.”

When your practice drive is over or you are parked for a break, review the list. If possible, seek out locations where the driver can see or experience some of the unchecked items. By helping your teenager learn to drive safely, you are contributing to Iowa’s overall highway safety effort and helping your teenager develop safe driving habits that will last a lifetime.

RURAL ROAD CONDITIONS CHECKLIST

**Rural road characteristics**
- Little or no shoulder
- Narrow lanes
- Soft shoulders
- Steep hills
- Fewer signs
- Narrow bridges
- Sharp curves
- Less maintenance
- Rough road surface
- Changes in road surface
- Poor drainage
- Crowned road surface
- Limited sight distance
- Blind driveways
- Intersections without stop signs
- Potholes
- No street lights
- Faded or hidden signs

**Gravel road characteristics**
- Loose gravel
- Washboarding
- No center line
- No edge markings
- Unmarked curves
- Seasonal roadbed changes
- Limited snow removal
- Few signs
- Obscured road edges
- Soft road edges

**Dust — reduced visibility**
- Varied gravel depth
- No marked passing zones
- Mud and standing water

**Rural roadside hazards**
- Deep ditches
- Trees and bushes
- Utility poles
- No guard rails
- Closer fences
- Culverts and driveways
- Mailboxes and signs
- Adjacent ponds/water
- Tall crops and weeds
- T-intersections/dead ends

**Sharing the road**
- Slow-moving farm vehicles
- Oversize vehicles
- Livestock, deer, pets
- Vehicles using field drive-ways
- Large trucks (especially during planting/harvest)
- Working ATVs
- Rural mail carriers
- Horses and buggies
- School buses
- Pedestrians and bicyclists
- Railroad crossings without gates or lights

For more “coaching tips” use the Iowa DOT “You’re the Coach” guide: www.iowadot.gov/mvd/ods/coach.pdf