

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