

Information of Interest to Florida Drivers

Delete Teen Crashes Forever: Florida continues to highlight the dangers of teen's crashes. The week of October 20 – 26 was National Teen Driver Safety Week. We took this opportunity to talk to the teen drivers across Florida to encourage them to put their phone down while driving and keep their eyes (and attention) on the road. We encouraged them to speak up if they are a passenger in a car and the driver uses an electronic device while driving, reminding them to always wear their seat belt.

When you take the seat behind the wheel of a vehicle, you take on a great responsibility. Unfortunately, the significance of that responsibility can be taken for granted. Often, a driver allows his or her focus to be impaired by various distractions that confront us in today's fast-paced and high tech world in which we live. They are distractions that can and **do** turn deadly.

In no age group is that more apparent than for teenagers. Teens have the highest crash rate of any age group in our state. Over 22,000 teen drivers were involved in crashes last year in Florida – 41 of them were killed.

Yet cell phones and texting aren't the only distractions for motorists. Whether it's trying to tune in a radio station, or eating a quick lunch while driving, anything that takes your full attention off the road for even a second is a distraction that could cost you your life, and possibly the lives of others. Teens are particularly vulnerable to distracted driving crashes due to their lack of experience behind the wheel.

Texting while driving is one of biggest distractions on our roads, especially for young people. Eleven teenagers are killed each day in the U.S. as the result of texting while driving. Teens themselves report that texting is their number one driving distraction. A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive.

These statistics are alarming, but they aren't just statistics—they are real people. We see the tragic results of teen crashes every day. Let's delete teen crashes forever.

New Online Traffic Crash Reporting Now Available: The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has a new online traffic crash reporting form. A driver's self-report of a Traffic Crash can save time and postage. Under Florida law, drivers involved in a crash that **does not warrant** a law enforcement report are required to submit their own written report to the Department within ten days of the crash. The online form is intended to make it easier to submit the required form directly to the Department.

If the crash meets the following criteria, the driver may complete the *Driver Self Report of Traffic Crash* form, in lieu of having a crash report completed by the appropriate law enforcement agency:

- No injuries resulted from the crash (no report of pain or discomfort or visible injuries)
- No vehicle involved in the crash required a tow truck (wrecker)
- The crash did not involve (an intoxicated driver)
- The crash did not involve a "hit and run" vehicle (all vehicles involved must have been occupied)
- The crash did not involve a commercial motor vehicle.

A simple-to-use online questionnaire will guide users through the completion of the report. Once completed, the report will be automatically submitted to the Department and can also be saved and printed if needed. The *Driver Report of Traffic Crash* can be found at: <http://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/misc/CrashReport/>.

Put it Down – It’s Official: On October 1st, the “Florida Ban on Texting While Driving Law” went into effect, helping promote safe driving and addressing a critical issue related to driving distracted in the state of Florida.

The specific provisions of the law state that a person may not operate a motor vehicle in motion while manually typing into a wireless communications device known as texting, e-mailing, and instant messaging (non-voice). Law enforcement will have to observe a primary offense such as careless driving, speeding, running a stop sign, etc. and also observe the driver manually texting at the same time in order to cite the texting violation.

Florida also adopted federal regulations regarding mobile phone use and texting as it relates to drivers of commercial vehicles (as defined in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations). The federal rule, and now Florida law, restricts a commercial vehicle driver from texting or even holding a mobile device to make a call. For commercial vehicles, this is a primary offense and can be cited by law enforcement without another traffic violation having occurred.

With more than more than 6 billion text messages sent each day in the United States, it is important to remind everyone, while you are behind the wheel of a car, to ***Put it Down!*** Your life or the life of someone you love depends on it.

Important Advice about Vehicle Cloning: Enterprising criminals continue to invent new scams to defraud vehicle insurers, owners, and prospective owners. One innovative vehicle theft scheme involves copying a vehicle identification number (VIN) from a legally owned and titled vehicle sitting in a public place such as a parking lot or vehicle dealership. The VIN is then used as the basis to create a counterfeit VIN tag.

The next step in the cloning process is to steal a vehicle similar to the one from which the criminal lifted the legitimate VIN. The stolen vehicle's legitimate VIN tag is replaced with counterfeit one. With this counterfeit tag, the stolen vehicle is now a “clone” of the original vehicle that was legally owned and innocently parked.

To complete the scenario, criminals will create counterfeit ownership documents for the cloned vehicle or obtain the ownership documentation under false pretenses. They use this phony documentation to sell the stolen vehicle to an innocent purchaser. With the counterfeit VIN tag, the stolen vehicle can easily be sold without detection by government agencies.

If you have a reason to believe that your car was cloned, contact your local law enforcement or file a complaint with the local DMV Regional Office by using the [Complaint Affidavit](#) located on the department’s website. For a complete list of DMV Regional Offices around the state, click [here](#).

For more information concerning cloned vehicles and other insurance related, please direct your inquiry to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB).

Register Your Emergency Contact Information: More than seven million Floridians have registered their Emergency Contact Information with the Department. DHSMV is proud of the success of the ECI Program and encourages Floridians to give their loved ones the peace of mind that comes with registering their information, especially during the hurricane season. The Emergency Contact Information program allows licensed drivers and identification card holders to submit two contacts to notify in the event of an emergency, such as a vehicle crash. The information can then be accessed, only in the case of an emergency, by law enforcement officers. To record your information, please visit www.flhsmv.gov/eci.

Documentation Requirements in Florida: We urge our customers to visit www.GatherGoGet.com, a website dedicated to assist Floridians and visitors with driver license and identification card requirements. Floridians renewing or obtaining a new license or ID are required to show proof of: 1) identification, 2) Social Security number and 3) residential address (two items). The website and its tools are also available in Spanish at www.ReunaVengaObtenga.com and in Creole at www.RasanbleAlePran.com. The Department is issuing driver licenses and identification cards that meet Real ID federal standards.

An Appointment Helps Speed Up the Process: All customers who must visit one of our offices to renew, replace, or file a change of address to their driver license or identification card, are urged to secure an appointment prior to their visit. Connect via Internet at <https://services.flhsmv.gov/Oasis/> for an appointment to reduce the length of the visit. Driver license offices are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please check our website at www.flhsmv.gov/offices/ for the most up-to-date information on office locations and schedules.

Fees for Driver Licenses and Identification Card

Class E (original and renewal)	<u>\$48</u>	Commercial Driver License (original and renewal)	<u>\$75</u>
ID Card (original and renewal)	<u>\$25</u>		
Replacement License or ID	<u>\$25</u>		
Endorsements	<u>\$ 7</u>		
Driver License Services at Tax Collector Office Service Fees	<u>\$ 6.25</u>		
Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (except official holidays)			

The Department uses a combination of vehicle information to determine registration fees. This includes registration use, license plate type and class code. The class code is determined by the vehicle weight, body type, vehicle type and registration use. To see a sample, click [here](#).

Buckle Up Every Time, Everyone!