

Driving course steers students from harm

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Young drivers will have three opportunities this year to become safer drivers and possibly receive lower rates from insurance companies, thanks to the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office.

Want to sign up? More information and registration forms available at www.scnsc.org and www.spartanburgso.org.

Fax completed forms to S.C. National Safety Council at 803-732-6757.

External Links:

- [Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office](#)
- [S.C. National Safety Council](#)

Lt. Crystal Kingsmore said the free defensive driving courses will be offered at the sheriff's office, 8045 Howard St., starting April 27. The courses, which are offered through the National Safety Council's Alive at 25 program, are open to anyone between the ages of 15 and 24. Courses also will be offered July 27 and Oct. 26. Maximum enrollment for each session is 30 participants.

Kingsmore said the goal of the program is behavior modification and having participants realize that bad decisions, whether substance-abuse related, or caused by speeding, distractions from passengers or cell phones, or even inexperience, can have unexpected consequences.

"We ask they make the commitment to take away something they didn't know coming in," Kingsmore said, adding that the program uses a combination of memorial and testimonial videos, discussions and a workbook that participants complete and take home.

Kingsmore said deputies also use the class as part of a pre-trial intervention for young drivers who commit a traffic offense such as speeding, but it is open to people who have never been in trouble.

"It's a pre-trial class, so a lot don't want to be there initially," Kingsmore said. "But by the time they leave, they say they are glad they took the class and would recommend it to others."

Kingsmore said each session is scheduled to last about four-and-a-half hours with breaks, but sometimes end sooner if the group foregoes the breaks. Kingsmore said the sheriff's office began offering the program last June. She said some insurance companies have helped fund the program and others offer discounts to those who successfully complete the classes.