



## NEWS

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## **Allstate's Family Driving Challenge Reaching all Generations**

*Parents and Teens See First-Hand How Distractions Can Affect Driving*

**COLUMBIA, S.C., (June 16, 2010)** – Columbia parents and teens took a pledge today to limit or altogether eliminate distractions from their cars at Allstate Insurance Company's Family Driving Challenge. The event held at Columbia Place Mall, is a hands-on experience where parents and teens learn what distractions can do to a driver behind the wheel. Professional driving instructors took parent-teen teams through a special advanced driving course which included distractions such as phone calls, texting and rowdy passengers. With each added distraction, the course became more difficult and both teens and parents hit cones and veered off course.

"Driving today is completely different than just a few years ago," said Allstate Spokesman John Heid. "With cell phones, MP3 players and other smart devices, we are constantly multi-tasking, but it shouldn't be done while driving."

After completing the Columbia Family Driving Challenge, several parents and their teens placed their thumbprint on a large banner, symbolizing their family pledge to keep their thumbs-up and off the phone while in the car.

The Family Driving Challenge is being held in 38 cities across the United States and is designed to help reduce the numbers around some alarming statistics around distracted driving. According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration:

- Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted driver
- Driver distraction contributes to 25 percent of all police-reported traffic crashes
- Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.
- Car crashes are the number one killer of American teens, killing thousands each year and injuring hundreds of thousands more.

The Family Driver Challenge is an updated version of Allstate's "Action Against Distraction" campaign that only included teen drivers participating in a similar distracted driver course. The Family Driving Challenge includes parent participation since safe driving habits need to start at home.

According to a recent study by the Allstate Foundation, almost 90% of the teens surveyed said their parents were the biggest influencers on their driving habits.

"Teens are watching what their parents are doing while driving and it influences their behavior," said Heid. "This is why it is so important for parents to put down their phones, limit their distractions and overall, set a good example in the car for their teens."

Allstate Insurance Company encourages safe driving practices among all drivers. Allstate also supports a federal graduated driver licensing law called the Safe Teen and Novice Uniform Protection (STANDUP) Act – H.R. 1895 – which was introduced in Congress in April 2009. If passed, the bill creates uniform GDL standards across all 50 states. To learn more about the STANDUP act visit [www.saferoads4teens.org](http://www.saferoads4teens.org). For additional resources on protecting teen drivers, including an interactive parent-teen driving contract, visit [www.allstate.com/teen](http://www.allstate.com/teen).

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