

ROAD TO SAFETY

Technology Saving Teen Drivers' Lives

(NAPSA)—A three-pronged strategy of education, enforcement and technical innovation is helping to reduce the number of traffic accident fatalities among teenagers.

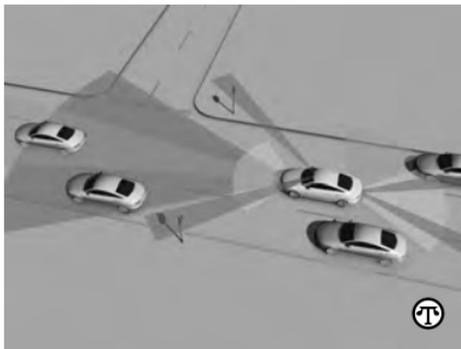
According to government authorities, graduated licensing programs and strict enforcement of drunken driving and seat belt laws are having a definite effect in reducing fatal accidents among young drivers. In addition, programs such as National Teen Driver Safety Week address such serious issues as driver distraction.

Established by Congress, National Teen Driver Safety Week and the "Ride Like A Friend" campaign focus on increasing teens' awareness of how passengers contribute to driver distraction, a leading cause of accidents.

For decades, traffic accidents have been by far the leading cause of accidental death among teenagers. Currently, approximately 13 teens die per day in traffic accidents.

On the technology front, companies such as automotive supplier Continental, which works with nearly every global automaker, offer new features that help drivers avoid accidents and make these less severe when they do occur.

"Already, we have saved thousands of lives in this country and billions of dollars by making vehicles more crashworthy and improving enforcement and education," said automotive expert Samir Salman. "Just think of the benefits to society if we can cut accidents in half and eventually to zero through active and passive safety technologies. It's millions more lives protected and billions more dollars saved."



New car features help drivers avoid accidents and make them less severe when they do occur.

One of the new technologies at the forefront of this safety revolution is Collision Mitigation Braking, which uses radar and in-car cameras to monitor traffic ahead and activate the brakes automatically if a collision looks imminent.

Lane departure and blind-spot warning systems are two other innovative features that rely on in-car cameras to help drivers avoid accidents. These systems give audible and visual warnings if a vehicle begins to drift out of its lane or begins to change lanes with another vehicle in the way. The most advanced lane departure system will actually steer the vehicle back into its lane, if necessary.

According to a recent report from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, these and other new crash-avoidance technologies may prevent or reduce the severity of 3.4 million accidents per year and save as many as 20,700 lives for a 60 percent reduction in highway fatalities. Improved safety systems could also reduce the economic impact of motor vehicle-related deaths, injuries and property damage, which together cost the country more than \$150 billion per year.