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Jersey Drivers Say Teens Should Practice More

New Jersey drivers favor some additional requirements for new drivers. According to a study by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, co-sponsored by the state's Division of Highway Traffic Safety, five of six Garden State drivers (83%) support requiring teenagers to log 50 practice hours with an experienced driver before getting a license.

In addition, nearly four of five New Jersey drivers (78%) support requiring a parent-teen orientation for new teenage drivers and their parents. The orientation, one of the 14 "essential recommendations" made by the Teen Driver Study Commission in its report issued in March 2008, would ensure parents fully understand the graduated driver license law, as well as the important role they play in ensuring their children's safety behind the wheel, the Commission says.

A more controversial proposal is increasing the length of time after receiving a permit, but before becoming eligible for a license, from six months to a full year. On this question, New Jerseyans split, with 49% in favor and 44% opposed. A majority of drivers under 30 years of age oppose the idea (56-41) though drivers over 30 tend to support it by margins of five-to-four. The proposal was also one of the 14 essential recommendations made by the Commission, which stated in its report that more than 1,000 hours of driving are needed before a teen's crash risk drops significantly.

According to the most recent crash data analysis by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, last year in New Jersey young drivers (ages 16-20) involved in crashes fell 22 percent, while fatalities continued to decline from 72 in 2006 to 44 last year (a 38% decrease). Teen drivers, however, continue to have the highest crash risk of any age group on the road, and motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for this age group. Safety agency reviews of crash data show that driver inattention and distractions caused by other passengers, cell phones and inexperience, followed by speed and failure to yield, are the most prevalent contributing factors in young driver crashes.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University survey was co-sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety and carried out by telephone from May 2 through June 2 using a randomly selected sample of 953 New Jersey residents aged 17 and over who report they drive regularly, including an oversample of drivers under the age of 30. It has a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 973.443.8661*

Methods and Table

This study was conducted by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind and co-sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. The survey was conducted by telephone from May 2 through June 2 using a randomly selected sample of 953 New Jersey residents aged 17 and over who report they drive regularly, including an oversample of drivers under the age of 30. The sampling error for 953 randomly selected respondents in a statewide survey is +/-3 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. All interviews were conducted by professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is obtained through computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number an equal chance of being selected, including those with unlisted numbers. Results may be weighted to match known demographics.

Do you support or oppose requiring teenagers to log a minimum of 50 practice hours with an experienced driver before they can get a license?											
	All	All (2009)	All (2008)	Men	Women	Age				Never Married	Married
						17-29	30-44	45-60	60+		
Support	83	80	84	80	86	80	84	84	84	83	81
Oppose	12	14	11	14	10	17	13	12	8	12	14
Don't Know/Depends	5	6	5	6	4	3	3	4	8	5	4
Do you support or oppose requiring a parent-teen orientation for new teenage drivers and their parents?											
Support	78	76	--	75	80	68	85	74	86	80	74
Oppose	18	20	--	21	15	30	12	21	10	16	23
Don't Know/Depends	4	4	--	4	5	3	4	5	4	4	3
Do you support or oppose making the permit time 12 months instead of 6 months before the teenager can get a license?											
Support	49	52	--	43	55	41	52	51	50	53	37
Oppose	44	41	--	49	40	56	44	42	40	40	58
Don't Know/Depends	7	6	--	8	5	3	4	7	10	7	5