



## Safety Division

For More Information:

Sue Riehl, (503) 986-4197

### **ODOT encourages parents to enroll teens in a driver education course**

**Salem, OR - September 29** - With the fall term underway, parents will want to consider enrolling their teens now in a driver education course for the winter and spring terms. The Oregon Driver Education program provides young drivers a comprehensive understanding of standard rules of the road, Oregon state laws, safe driving techniques, as well as driver courtesy and cooperation — all important in saving the lives of Oregon teenagers.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. In the last two years, 83 Oregonian teens age 15 to 19 died as a result of a motor vehicle crash, or about one every nine days. And drivers under age 20 were involved in fatal and injury crashes at about twice the rate of the population as a whole.

Under Oregon law, new drivers under 18 must either complete 50 hours of supervised driving in conjunction with driver education or complete at least 100 hours of supervised driving with an adult driver.

“Parents can be great role models for young drivers, but one of the best ways to ensure your teen is safe is to make sure they have professional instruction from a specially-trained licensed instructor,” said Sue Riehl, Youth Safety Program manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) Transportation Safety Division. “Every hour of formal driver education instruction can keep your young driver safer on the road.”

—MORE—

Indeed, a study published by NHTSA in September 2007 reviewed the elements of Graduated Driver Licensing to compare teens who took a formal driver education course to those who chose 100 hours of driving practice with their parents. The study found that for each teen who took an approved driver education course:

- The crash rate was 11 to 21 percent lower.
- The traffic citation rate was 39 to 57 percent lower.
- The driver license suspension rate was 51 to 53 percent lower.

“Research shows that a comprehensive driver education program, such as the Oregon Driver Education program, saves lives and reduces injuries,” continued Riehl. “The program also dramatically reduces the impact of teen driving and makes Oregon’s newest drivers better and safer.”

By completing a driver education course, teenage drivers may also save up to 20 percent on insurance premiums.

To find a driver education course, contact your local school and ask if they offer a course. If not, there is a list ODOT-approved commercial providers available at [www.Oregon.gov/ODOT/TS](http://www.Oregon.gov/ODOT/TS).

###