

Passengers: Speak Up for Safe Driving!

Anyone in the driver’s seat of a car has a big responsibility. They need to follow driving laws and traffic rules to keep themselves and others safe on the roads. *What about passengers?* Like drivers, passengers also have responsibilities. For everyone’s safety, passengers need to be considerate and refrain from doing things that disturb or distract the driver. Passengers also need to speak up to protect themselves and others if a driver or other passengers are being reckless or if a driver should not be behind the wheel.



PART 1 Imagine a few friends are driving together. Review the list of passenger actions and behaviors in the chart below. Decide if each action is safe or unsafe and put a checkmark in the corresponding column.

Passenger Action or Behavior	Safe	Unsafe
1. Buckles up before the car starts moving.		
2. Speaks very loudly so the driver and everyone else can hear.		
3. Changes the radio station to skip commercials.		
4. Asks the driver to let it go to voicemail if they get a phone call.		
5. Keeps music at a regular listening level.		
6. Won't let a friend drive buzzed, drunk, or drugged.		
7. Shows the driver a funny text message to read.		
8. Says "Stop it" if the driver is being reckless or unsafe while driving.		
9. Has a loud, lively discussion with the other passenger.		
10. Talks non-stop with a driver who is feeling sleepy to help them stay awake.		

PART 2 For their own safety, passengers need to speak up when a driver makes them uncomfortable or if they feel that they are in danger. This might mean not getting into a car or asking the driver to pull over safely so the passengers can get out. Read each situation below. What would you do if you were the passenger? Write your answers on the back of this sheet and then role-play your responses with your partners.

- Your friend is taking you home after school and they're talking to their cousin on the phone. They're more focused on the call than the road and miss a stop sign.
- Your friend's brother and his friends pick you and your friend up from a Friday night football game. They're super loud. You see beer cans in the car.
- Your friend has been sick with a bad cold but wants to go to the mall. The friend tells you that they're taking medicine and will collect you in 30 minutes. When they pick you up, you notice that they look sleepy.
- You're walking home from school and your friends drive by. They tell you to jump in and they'll give you a ride home. You get in the back and as you pull away the other passengers start arguing over a text and grabbing a phone from each other.

PASSENGER TIPS FOR SPEAKING UP FOR SAFE DRIVING

- If your friend is impaired:
 - Don't get in the car. Tell them not to drive.
 - Tell your friend you're not comfortable.
 - Remind your friend that the possible consequences aren't worth it.
 - Arrange another ride for both of you.
 - Call your family for a ride.
- If your friend is driving recklessly, tell them to stop and get out.
- If you're hesitant about being direct, use the "Three Ps" – just say:
 - I've got to pee!
 - I've got to puke!
 - I hear the police!
- Create a "safe word" with your family that you can text them to signal you need a ride. When they receive the text, they will call and say that they need you to come home and are coming to pick you up.

