

Speed Kills



Many drivers think of speeding as a benign infraction where, at worse, you get pulled over, get a ticket and pay a fine.

In reality, speeding and aggressive driving is a leading factor in fatal crashes – more than 11,500 people died

in speed-related crashes in 2023. That represents nearly 29 percent of all fatal crashes. Male drivers ages 21-24 were over-represented, involved in 33 percent of speed-related crashes.

The National Road Safety Foundation is responding on a few fronts.

NRSF is funding a 6-month pilot program, with the Governors Highway Safety Association, national youth career education organization FCCLA, and SCRAM/LifeSafer, to evaluate Intelligence Speed Assistance (ISA) technology with teen drivers. The pilot will involve about 30 families across the U.S. to gather data on the ISA device's impact in changing teen drivers' behavior and perception of speeding. Results of the study will be used to develop a guidebook on ISA technology for use by state highway safety offices, and they will be shared with the traffic safety community at next year's GHSA Conference. NRSF has funded GHSA grants to several states for programs on drowsy driving, speed and micro-mobility.

Our student PSA contests this year will have speeding as the theme. Speed will also be a primary talking point in our media and social media efforts for Teen Driver Safety Week in October.

NRSF Partners with SADD for Teen Driver Safety Week

NRSF and SADD, the nation's premier youth health & safety organization, are partnering to remind parents that National Teen Driver Safety Week, Oct. 19 - 25, is an ideal time for parents to have a conversation with their teens about safe driving habits.

Traffic crashes continue to be a leading cause of death for teens in the U.S. NHTSA reports 2,611 people were killed in crashes involving a teen driver in 2023, while more than 170,000 people were injured in crashes involving a teen driver. Inexperience is a major factor in teen crashes, with teens more likely than older drivers to underestimate or not be able to recognize dangerous situations. They also are also more likely than adults to make critical errors that can lead to serious crashes.

"Parents need to be proactive and begin a conversation about safe driving," said Michelle Anderson, NRSF Director of Operations.



"Teaching teens safe driving behaviors is a shared responsibility, and we parents have a key role to play," said Scott Myers, SADD Executive Director.

Surveys show that teens whose parents have discussions on safe driving behavior and set firm rules are typically engaged in less risky driving behaviors and are involved in fewer crashes.

NRSF and SADD will use social media to spread the message, along with a virtual media tour with SADD student leaders doing TV interviews on local stations nationwide and activities in their schools to raise awareness.



In September 2016, Mitchel Kiefer was returning to Michigan State University

when his car was struck from behind by a distracted driver, forcing him across the median and into the path of an oncoming truck. Mitchel's life was cut short in an instant, at just 18 years old.

Mitchel was a bright student, a loyal teammate on the hockey rink, a son and brother with a quick wit and big heart. He loved music, travel, and time spent with friends. He had dreams for the future that were never realized, because of one driver's split-second choice to look away from the road.

Mitchel's loss changed everything for the Kiefer family. Out of that unimaginable tragedy, The Kiefer Foundation was established with a simple but urgent mission: [to end distracted driving and all associated crashes, injuries, and fatalities](#). The Kiefer Foundation's work is grounded in three pillars: Awareness, Policy, and Technology, each building on the other to change behavior and create safer roads for all.

Awareness: Changing Minds, One Driver at a Time

Changing a culture begins with education. Distracted driving is often misunderstood, seen as a minor inconvenience rather than the deadly risk it truly is. The Kiefer Foundation's awareness efforts focus on bringing this reality to the forefront, sparking conversations and shifting behaviors in families, schools, and communities.

A centerpiece of this effort is the Just Drive Simulator, an immersive experience that places participants in the passenger seat of a distracted driving scenario. Unlike classroom lectures or public service announcements, the simulator allows users to feel the consequences of distraction in a safe, controlled setting. Participants walk away not only informed but moved, more likely to pause before picking up their phone behind the wheel.

To expand the reach of this tool, we've partnered with the National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) to provide 10 simulators to underserved youth



The Kiefer Foundation: Advancing Road Safety Through Awareness, Policy, and Technology

By [Melissa Hamrick](#)
Executive Director, The Kiefer Foundation

across Michigan. This collaboration ensures that young people in communities often left out of safety initiatives have access to cutting-edge tools that build awareness and spark life-saving dialogue.

Beyond the simulator, The Kiefer Foundation runs social media campaigns, develops educational

Distracted driving is often misunderstood, seen as a minor inconvenience rather than the deadly risk it truly is.

content, and participates in community events where stories like Mitchel's are shared. Awareness is about more than information: it is about changing hearts and minds. By centering real people and lived experiences, we help drivers of all ages understand that distracted driving is not someone else's problem. It's an

issue that touches us all.

Policy: Laws That Save Lives

While education and awareness are critical, we know they cannot stand alone. That's why our Policy Pillar is so vital. The Foundation has been a leading advocate for hands-free legislation, recognizing that strong, enforceable laws create accountability and shift social norms.

In Michigan, The Kiefer Foundation played an instrumental role in supporting the passage of a hands-free law in 2023. The data shows it matters. Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT) analyzed telematics data before and after the law went into effect.

The results revealed a significant decline in distracted driving behaviors in Michigan compared with the national average, a clear indicator that policy can drive measurable change.

But the work doesn't end with passage. We continue to work alongside lawmakers, law enforcement, and

safety advocates to increase education to ensure laws are implemented effectively and understood by the public. The Foundation also lends its voice in other states considering similar legislation, sharing Michigan's story as proof that policy backed by evidence can save lives.

Every law, every policy shift, is part of a broader cultural movement, one that positions distraction as socially unacceptable, just as drunk driving has become over the past several decades. We will remain steadfast in championing policies that put safety first.

Technology: Innovating for Safer Roads

Our third pillar, Technology, is where The Kiefer Foundation helps bridge innovation with impact. Distracted driving is a modern problem, and it requires modern solutions. We invest in and support technologies that reduce distraction, measure risk, and give communities the tools they need to create safer environments.

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The Just Drive Simulator is one example, but The Kiefer Foundation's commitment extends beyond its own tools. By partnering with organizations like Cambridge Mobile Telematics, we ensure our work is guided by reliable data and real-world insights. CMT's analysis of Michigan's distracted driving rates following the hands-free law has provided compelling evidence that legislation works. This kind of independent, data-driven research strengthens advocacy efforts and allows us to speak with authority when working to educate policymakers and the public.

CMT's Street Vision platform is another area of promise. By combining telematics and mapping software, Street Vision identifies risky roadway behaviors and patterns, from

near-misses to speeding hotspots. These insights help cities and states prioritize infrastructure improvements, enforcement strategies, and education campaigns. We support these kinds of advances not as endorsements of a single product, but as part of a broader philosophy: when technology is used responsibly and thoughtfully, it becomes a powerful ally in saving lives.

We are also proud to collaborate with Magna, one of the world's largest automotive suppliers and a trusted partner to automakers across every major market. Magna's innovations in driver monitoring systems and advanced vehicle safety features align closely with our mission to eliminate distracted driving. Their work supports vehicles in becoming active partners in protecting drivers and passengers, from sensing when attention drifts to designing safer in-cabin experiences. By supporting and highlighting this kind of forward-thinking technology, The Kiefer Foundation reinforces the belief that ending distracted driving will require not only behavioral change and strong laws, but also vehicles equipped to help drivers stay safe.

Technology alone is not the answer, but it is a critical piece of the puzzle. The Kiefer Foundation is committed to ensuring that innovations are paired

with education and policy, creating a three-pronged approach that tackles distraction from every angle.

Building a Movement, Honoring a Legacy

From its beginnings as a family's response to tragedy, The Kiefer Foundation has grown into a national force for change. By centering its work on Awareness, Policy, and Technology, The Kiefer Foundation honors Mitchell's life while building a safer future for others.

The Foundation's story is not one of despair, but of determination. Every simulator placed in a school, every hands-free bill signed into law, every data set analyzed for safer roads... These are living tributes to Mitchell's memory. They are reminders that while distracted driving takes lives, collective action can save them.

The road ahead will not be easy, but we are clear in our commitment. We will continue to expand awareness programs, advocate for the passage of strong hands-free laws across the country, and invest in technologies that bring us closer to a world without distracted driving.

Our message remains simple, but powerful: Just Drive.

Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest Returns for 12th Year

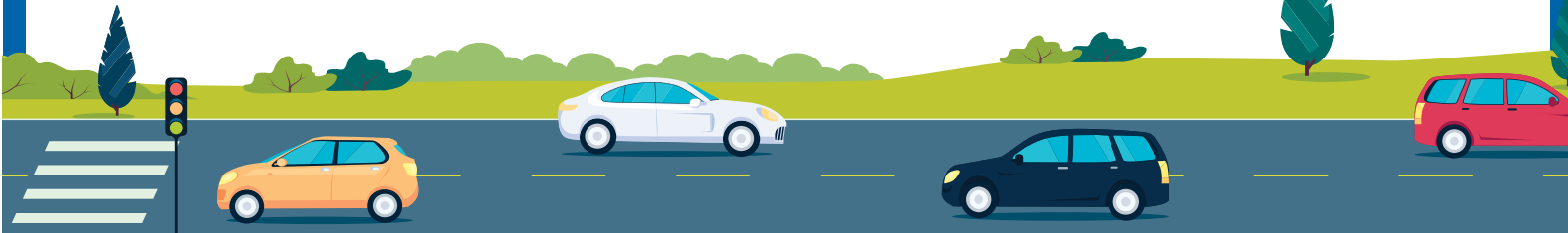
Teens from Chicagoland, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa are invited to help promote safe driving by creating a message about the dangers of speeding.

NRSF and the Chicago Auto Show are hosting the 12th annual Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest, asking teens to send a script or written description of a 30-second television public service announcement that reminds drivers of the dangers of speeding. Entries must be received by mail or email by Dec. 19, 2025. All contest entrants will receive two complimentary tickets to attend the 2026 Chicago Auto Show, courtesy of Chicago Automobile Trade Association (CATA), the new-car dealer association for metro Chicago and producers of the Chicago Auto Show, which will be held Feb. 7-16, 2026 at McCormick Place.

Three student finalists will be selected to work with an Emmy Award-winning director to transform their ideas into

finished TV public service announcements. The public will then be invited to cast votes via the Chicago Auto Show Facebook page to select the winner, who will receive a \$2,000 prize. The winning spot will debut at the Chicago Auto Show and will be broadcast on "Teen Kids News" on more than 160 TV stations nationwide. The first runner-up will receive \$1,500 and the second runner-up gets \$500. The teachers or school advisors of the winner and runners-up will each receive a \$100 gift card.

Info and entry form is at www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago.



Buckle Up Brockton Wins Top GHSA Honor

Buckle Up Brockton, a prototype seat belt campaign sponsored by NRSF last year, was cited by GHSA with the Peter K. O'Rourke Special Achievement Award. Congratulations to Jeff Larason, at Travelers Marketing, who developed and managed the campaign, [which saw seat belt usage in the southern Massachusetts city increase by an amazing 72 percent](#). Brockton traditionally had the state's lowest seat belt usage rate, but the grass-roots campaign took usage from 43 percent to 72 percent.

NRSF helped fund the campaign because it used an innovative ground-up approach, involving the community in supporting and creating the campaign, which was produced in several languages to reflect the city's diverse population. The model is now being used in similar efforts in other states.



Lauren Stewart, Director of Maine Hwy. Safety Office & Co-Chair of GHSA Member Services and Development Committee, presents Jeff Larison with the Peter K. O'Rourke award at the annual GHSA meeting.



MADD Celebrates 45 Years with Breakthrough on Capitol Hill

NRSF was proud to help sponsor "A Day on the Hill" as part of MADD's 45th anniversary celebration in Washington D.C. last month.

More than 250 victims and survivors of drunk drivers gathered not only to

need to be evaluated and regulations and standards written before the mandate can be finalized and set into motion. Anti-drunk driving technology is not a breathalyzer or ignition interlock device. The technology is

according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The MADD participants spent the day meeting with their Representatives and Senators, telling their stories of loved ones lost to drunk drivers, and



NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy with MADD CEO Stacey Stewart and MADD Govt. Affairs Chief Stephanie Manning

commemorate the anniversary, but to push for enactment of legislation that can virtually end all drunk driving. The HALT Drunk Driving Act, mandating passive anti-drunk driving technology systems be installed in all new cars sold in the U.S., was passed in 2021, but the government has not taken the necessary action to implement the law. Various systems

"passive," which means it operates without driver engagement, seamlessly ensuring a normal driving experience — except for those who attempt to drive drunk.

Integrating passive anti-drunk driving technology into every new car will save more than 10,000 lives each year,



demanding action. MADD leadership also met with top NHTSA officials and the Secretary of Transportation, who promised to make implementation of the HALT Act a priority of his department.

The day closed with a moving candlelight vigil for victims of impaired driving on the Capitol Mall.

100 Safest Days Campaign Hits the Airwaves and Social Media

The 100 Safest Days of Summer campaign, led this summer by NRSF with Impact Teen Drivers, SADD, and We Save Lives, brought attention to teen driver safety and the critical role parents play in keeping young drivers safe on the road.

A summer-long campaign included ongoing social media outreach by the lead partners as well as more than 50 other partnering groups. The messaging changed every week,



covering the full range of traffic safety issues. Two virtual TV tours were also conducted, with more than 50 interviews by NRSF and our partners on TV stations nationwide. More than 250 minutes of local TV time was generated, putting teen driver safety in the spotlight. We also received nearly 300 electronic safe driving pledges, and many of our partner groups got printed pledges from teens and adults.

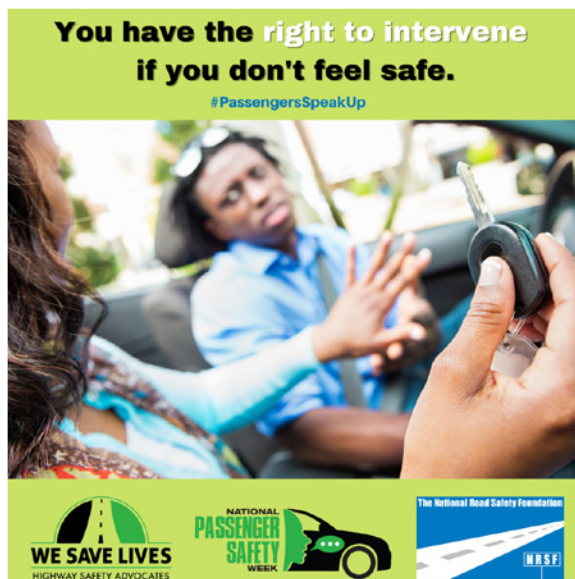


National Passenger Safety Week Set for Last Week in January

NRSF is leading the effort to encourage passengers to **SPEAK UP** if in a vehicle being driven unsafely.

NHTSA has again designated the last week of January (Jan. 25- 31, 2026) as National Passenger Safety Week. A coalition of more than 60 organizations will again place a focus on passenger empowerment with media and social media outreach and a virtual media tour.

If you'd like to have your organization participate, please contact Michelle Anderson of NRSF at info@nrsf.org and she will notify you of upcoming planning meetings. Information is at www.nationalpassengersafety.org



END OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS INCREASES DROWSY DRIVING RISK

When we move our clocks back an hour on Nov. 2 to end daylight savings time, the risk of drowsy driving increases.

An AAA survey showed more than 60 percent of U.S. motorists have driven while fatigued, and nearly 37 percent admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel. NHTSA says an estimated 100,000 crashes each year are caused by drowsy driving, and 21 percent of fatal crashes involve driver fatigue.

NRSF urges drivers to be alert to these signs of drowsiness while driving:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, rubbing eyes
- Daydreaming or not remembering the last few miles driven
- Head snaps and yawning
- Drifting out of your lane, tailgating or hitting rumble strips

If you experience any of these warning signs, find a safe place to pull over and take a break. Have a cup of coffee or a caffeinated snack or take a 20-minute nap. Some common remedies like blasting the radio or opening the car windows are not effective to avoid drowsiness while driving.

Free NRSF programs on drowsy driving include "Almost Home," a compelling 18-minute video, as well as a drowsiness self-assessment quiz and a personal sleep log. Download at <https://www.nrsf.org/resources/drowsy-driving>



Watch us on Teen Kids News



Watch for news and PSA's from NRSF every week on **Teen Kids News**, the nationally-syndicated news show for young people. Visit www.teenkidsnews.com to see when and where it airs in your area.



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Like us and follow us for the latest news, contest updates and PSAs.

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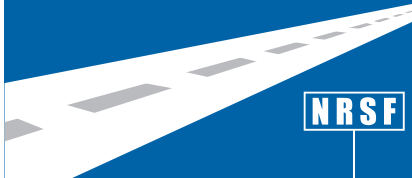
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 youtube.com/nationalroadsafety

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that for more than 60 years has been dedicated to reducing crashes, deaths and injuries on our nation's roads and highways by promoting safe driving habits through greater public awareness.

NRSF produces educational programs for broadcast and for use in safety, educational and enforcement programs by police, teachers, traffic safety agencies, healthcare professionals, youth advocacy groups and other grass-roots related agencies, as well as federal, state and local government agencies. NRSF programs, which are free, address distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and passenger empowerment. The Foundation works with youth advocacy groups and sponsors national and regional contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For information and to download free programs, visit www.nrsf.org.

The National Road Safety Foundation



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