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Florida to Observe National Teen Driver Safety Week
October 19 – 25, 2009

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA - The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Safety Office announces that October 19-25, 2009 has been designated **National Teen Driver Safety Week**.

Florida recognizes that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen fatalities in this country. Teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers nationwide. Inexperience and immaturity combined with speed, alcohol, lack of use of safety belts and distracted driving are key factors in many teen crashes. It's vital for parents to take an active role in teaching their teens to drive safely. Teens often learn by example.

"Despite efforts aimed at increasing belt use among teens, safety belt use among teens and young adults is low. In Florida in 2008, 68.3% of children ages 0-17 killed in vehicle crashes were not using either a child passenger seat or a safety belt. We must all make every effort to reverse this deadly trend and teach our teens safe driving habits and to make wise decisions when riding with other teens," said Marianne Trussell, FDOT Chief Safety Officer.

- In 2008, 18-year-old drivers in Florida had the highest rate of crash involvement in all crashes, while 19-year-old drivers had the highest rate of fatal crashes.
- Nationwide in 2008, 37% of 15-20 year old drivers involved in fatal crashes were speeding.
- Nationwide in 2008, passenger vehicle occupants ages 10 to 24 involved in fatal crashes had the lowest restraint use rate (59%).
- Nationwide in 2008, 4,054 teens between the ages of 13-19 years of age died in motor vehicle crashes.
- In the United States, teens account for only 6.3 percent of the population but are involved in 14 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities.
- Distractions are deadly for teen drivers. Distractions are the No. 1 reason new drivers crash.
- While all teens are at a high-risk of experiencing a fatal crash, young males, pickup truck drivers and passengers, as well as people living in rural areas are among those least likely to buckle up.
- 60% of teens know inexperience heavily influences safety, but only 15% correctly view their peers as inexperienced drivers.

The high fatality and low seat belt use rates among teens and young adults is why the Florida Department of Transportation is joining with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Governors Highway Safety Association, and other state and local highway safety and law enforcement leaders across the nation to bring this issue to the forefront of everyone's minds, especially teens and their parents and guardians. Together we can help remind teens, particularly during **National Teen Driver Safety Week**, to **always buckle up, day and night, to insist everyone in your vehicle is buckled up, and to avoid in car distractions.**