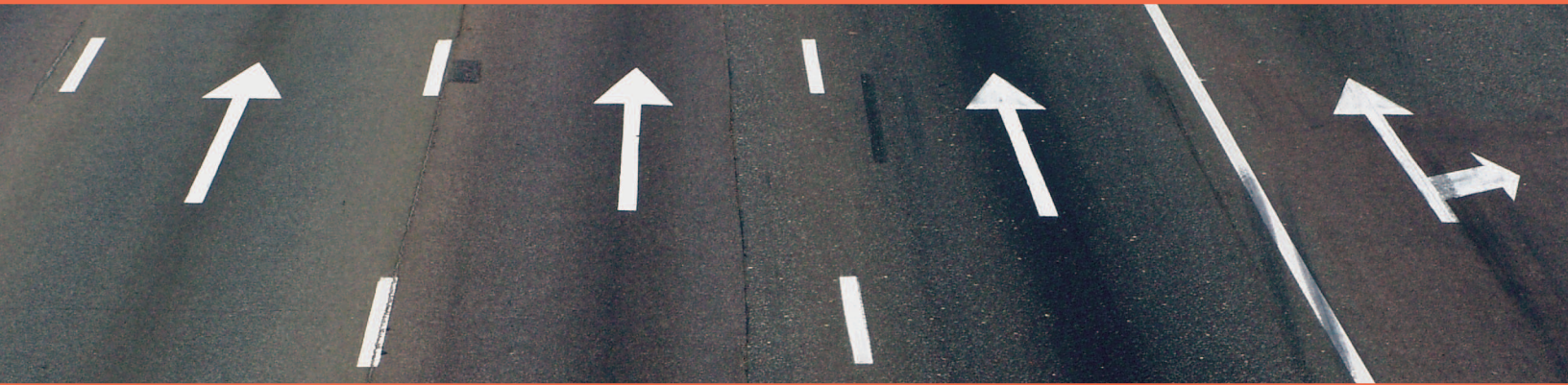


# Stop Driving Distracted: Rules of the Road for ADD Teen Drivers

Help young drivers avoid distractions while behind the wheel. Follow these safety instructions to prevent car accidents and reduce your teenager's risk of getting a ticket.



- 1) GPS and/or printed directions can prevent distracted driving.** If your attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) teen is driving to a destination that he hasn't been to before, have him ask for detailed directions beforehand or use an online mapping service to print out driving instructions. Even better: Install a GPS navigation system in the car that "speaks" directions instead of requiring him to look at a distracting display.
- 2) Use E-Z Pass to fight distractions in traffic.** Have your daughter's car equipped with an E-Z Pass tag or other automatic toll-paying system, so she won't have to hunt for change as she approaches tollbooths. This way she can keep her eyes on the road as traffic and congestion build with drivers jockeying to get in the appropriate lanes.
- 3) No cell phone calls allowed—even if it's via Bluetooth, headset, or hands-free.** Cell phones—hands-free or hand-held—are distracting. Have your teen shut off the phone before she gets in the car. If she must take—or make—an important call, tell her to pull over before answering or punching in the phone number.
- 4) Monitor ADHD medication.** If your teen does a lot of driving—especially at night—speak to your doctor about switching to a long-acting medication. Studies have shown that it works better at boosting the performance of drivers with ADD than multiple doses of a short-acting drug.
- 5) Don't let music cause a car accident.** If your teen listens to music in the car—whose doesn't?—ask her to pick a favorite radio station, CD, or iPod playlist and to set the volume *before* she pulls out into traffic. If she wants a change in music, she should find a safe place to pull over.
- 6) Ban texting and other distracting technologies while driving.** A Virginia Tech study conducted from 2004 to 2007 found that when participating truckers texted while driving, their risk of crashing was 23 times greater than when not texting. Your teen should tell friends that watching videos or taking photos with a cell phone isn't allowed in the car. Both are distracting and might take your driver's eyes off the road if a friend asks him to take a quick peek at a cool website or photograph.
- 7) No eating while driving.** It's hard to stay focused on the road ahead if your teen is struggling to get the wrapper off an energy bar or to pull open a potato chips bag. The rule should be: Eat only when stopped—on a shoulder, at a rest station, or in a parking lot.
- 8) Crowded car? Let someone else drive.** A car full of noisy friends can be dangerous for a teen with ADD. Let someone else shuttle the group to the mall or the baseball game.