

Teen drivers in the US

1 Learning to drive

In a few US states teenagers can get a learner's license from the age of 14 – if their parents agree and after they have had an eye test. In most other states the lowest age is 15 or 15½. To get a learner's license a teenager may also have to pass a test on traffic laws and signs. For example, in California there are 46 questions and a learner has to answer at least 39 correctly to pass. You only have three chances to pass the test. Many, but not all states, say people who want a full driver's license must then drive for six months or a year and must have a certain number of hours (30–60) of driving with a teacher from a driving school. Ten hours of this must be driving at night. They can then apply for their driver's license.

Do you know what the rules are in Germany? Find out and compare them with the ones in the US.

2 Teenage drivers in fatal crashes

Fatal¹ crashes 2006

Driver Age:	16	17–19	20–49
Cause: Driver's mistake	76 %	71 %	56 %
Cause: Going too fast	39 %	34 %	24 %
No other car in crash	52 %	48 %	41 %
3+ people in car	31 %	24 %	17 %
Drivers with 0.08 % alcohol in their blood	16 %	25 %	45 %



¹fatal ['fɛtəl] – tödlich

Which figures in the table support these statements?

Fatal crashes with passengers in the car are more likely to happen with 16-year-old drivers than with older drivers.

There are fewer crashes with 16-year-olds in which the driver doesn't do anything wrong.

16-year-old drivers have a higher rate of fatal crashes caused by fast driving than older drivers.

Although alcohol is a problem among drivers, it's actually less of a problem for 16-year-olds.

16-year-olds' fatal crashes usually involve just one car.

In fatal crashes with drivers over 20, alcohol often plays a role.

3 Dangers to young drivers

Read these facts about young US drivers. Find out on the Internet what the situation is in Germany. Compare this with the US facts.

- Motor vehicle crashes cause 36% of U.S. teen deaths – the main cause of death of teenagers.
- The risk of having a crash is particularly high during the first year that teenagers are allowed to drive.
- Most teenagers who are killed in crashes weren't wearing seatbelts.
- In 2005, more than one and a half times as many boy drivers and passengers aged 16 to 19 died in crashes than girls.