

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: NHTSA Tips for “SAFE” Prom Season

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Prom season is historically recognized as a dangerous time for teenagers due to a sharp rise in binge drinking, impaired driving, and motor vehicle crashes. Nationwide data indicates that about one-third of all alcohol-related teen traffic fatalities occur during the spring prom and graduation months.

Understanding the trends and realities of prom season can help parents and teens plan safer celebrations:

- **High Fatality Rates:** Approximately 1,000 teens die in preventable crashes each year during prom and graduation season.
- **Binge Drinking Prevalence:** Surveys indicate that a significant portion of teens engage in heavy drinking on prom night, and emergency rooms routinely report a spike in alcohol poisoning and related injuries.
- **Distraction and Inexperience:** Even without alcohol, high crash rates are driven by driver inexperience, speeding, and overloaded cars with distracting groups of friends.

NHTSA Tips for Teens:

- **Pay Attention:** Distracted driving, especially texting or using social media while driving, is common among younger drivers. Passengers can also be a distraction in the car. Of the 3,208 people killed in distraction-related crashes in 2024, 186 were teens 15 to 19 years old. #JustDrive, save the selfies for prom.
- **Slow Down:** Faster speeds rob drivers of the extra reaction time they may need to avoid a crash, and inexperience behind the wheel makes speeding especially dangerous for young drivers.
- **Stay Alert:** Prom usually ends around midnight, and after-parties can end much later. Make sure you get home before the exhaustion hits, or work out a plan with friends to stay the night in a safe place so you won't be driving drowsy.

- Buckle Up: Remember to buckle up, every trip, every time, and ask your passengers to do the same.
- Drive Sober: It is illegal for people under the age of 21 to consume alcohol, and it is illegal to drink and drive. Under no circumstances should high-school prom-goers drink alcohol. But if you have consumed alcohol, hand your keys to a sober driver so you can get home safely.

NHTSA Tips for Parents:

- Hire a Ride: Talk to other parents about springing for a chauffeur. Your inexperienced teen drivers are already distracted by the excitement of the evening and knowing they're in the hands of a capable driver will bring you peace of mind and help keep the roads safe.
- Set the Rules: If your teen is planning to drive to prom, talk to him or her about safe driving habits, and what behavior is expected when he or she is behind the wheel. Remind your teen that many States' graduated driver licensing laws restrict the number of passengers they are legally allowed to have in their car. Have your teen sign a safety agreement, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Parent-Teen Driving Contract](https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving) at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>.
- Open Your Home: Prom night is a late night. Encourage your teen to ask friends to spend the night to keep them off the roads. Provide plenty of snacks and non-alcoholic beverages to facilitate a sober night of fun.
- Be the Example: Your kids are paying attention, so model good habits every time you drive. Practice what you preach and put down your cell phone, buckle your seat belt, and always obey traffic laws.

According to SAFE, the best method of protecting against underage alcohol use and binge drinking is early prevention education and encouraging a goal to "Live SAFE" and substance free.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health and wellness. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit www.safeglencove.org.

Stay "SAFE" this Prom season!