

# CHP looking out for young drivers' safety

By Jeff Gartner

Today's youth are tomorrow's future, and we should make it our mission to do everything in our power to protect them on the road. For young drivers between the ages of 15- and 20-years-old, traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for teens in America.

Teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

"Inexperience combined with speed, a lack of seat belt compliance, distractions, alcohol or any other risk-taking behavior can have deadly results behind the wheel," said California Highway Patrol Commissioner

Joe Farrow. "Unlike a video game, you aren't given multiple lives and there isn't a reset button; our goal is to arm California's youth with enough knowledge to make smart driving decisions."

The CHP is hoping National Teen Driver Safety week (Oct. 16-22) will serve as an important reminder for teens and their parents or guardians to get involved with any number of the traffic safety programs the department offers which are geared toward teen drivers, including:

- Start Smart, a driver safety education class targeting new and future licensed teenage drivers between the age of 15-19 and their parents/guardians.
- Impact Teen Drivers, a nonprofit, public awareness and education program designed to educate teens about the dangers of distracted driving.

- Every 15 Minutes, a program focused on high school juniors and seniors, which challenges them to think about drinking, driving, personal safety, the responsibility of making mature decisions and the impact their decisions have on family, friends, and many others.

National Teen Driver Safety week was established by the U.S. Congress in 2007. It is observed annually the third week of each October to raise national awareness to teen driver safety issues and encourage safe teen driver and passenger behavior.

“Kids will imitate you and your behaviors,” added Farrow. “Parents or guardians can help reinforce what their teen drivers learn in these programs by practicing safe driving habits at all times. This will help our young drivers mature into great drivers for the rest of their lives.”

The CHP South Lake Tahoe Area is having a Start Smart Class at South Tahoe High School on Oct. 18 at 6pm. Contact Officer Jeff Gartner with any questions at (530) 577.1001.

*Jeff Gartner is a CHP officer stationed in Meyers.*