



**Press Contact:**

Glenn Greenberg  
Liberty Mutual  
617-574-5874

[glenn.greenberg@libertymutual.com](mailto:glenn.greenberg@libertymutual.com)

**DO AS I SAY NOT AS I DO: NEW LIBERTY MUTUAL SURVEY REVEALS THAT PARENTS  
SET POOR DRIVING EXAMPLES FOR THEIR TEEN DRIVERS**

***Survey Finds Dads are the Most Distracted While Driving and Aren't Making Safe Driving  
a Priority for Their Teens***

**BOSTON – September 9, 2009** - Parents play a critical role in their teen's safety behind the wheel. And when it comes to demonstrating safe driving behaviors, their actions need to speak as loud as their words. However, a new survey conducted this summer by Liberty Mutual Insurance reveals that Mom and Dad aren't always setting a good example: 69 percent of parents of teen drivers report they practice at least two dangerous or distracting behaviors while driving, and nearly half (49 percent) do at least three.

Specifically, it's Dad who's more likely to be guilty of unsafe driving habits. Three-quarters (75 percent) of the fathers surveyed admit to at least two distracting or dangerous driving behaviors, compared to 63 percent of the mothers. Dads are significantly more likely than Moms to be distracted by changing the radio station using the radio dial or tuner (61 percent of Dads vs. 48 percent of Moms) and using a GPS system (39 percent of Dads vs. 26 percent of Moms).

"Teens get safe driving examples and advice from many sources, television ads, driving instructors, friends and family members, but no one more than Mom or Dad," says Dave Melton, a driving safety expert with the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety. "And if they grow up watching their Mom or Dad speed, talk on their cell phone, text and email, or pay more attention to what's on the radio than their driving, they are going to think it's okay to do the same thing."

Further, while the activity is far less prevalent, Dads also are significantly more likely than Moms to read an e-mail on a PDA (6 percent vs. 2 percent), take and upload pictures with their cell

phone (7 percent vs. 2 percent), and even post updates to their Facebook or MySpace profiles (4 percent vs. 1 percent) while driving.

Other distracting or dangerous behaviors among parents include:

- 59 percent talk on cell phones (59 percent of Dads, 58 percent of Moms);
- 42 percent speed (43 percent of Dads, 40 percent of Moms);
- 39 percent listen to loud music (40 percent of Dad, 39 percent of Moms); and
- 17 percent text or email using a PDA (19 percent of Dads, 15 percent of Moms).

Parental enforcement starts with setting safe driving expectations, and the survey again finds Dad as less likely than Moms to encourage their teens to practice safe driving in general. While 85 percent of Moms discuss safe driving often with their teen drivers, only 73 percent of Dads have had the same conversation.

“Learning the rules of the road isn’t like learning how to throw a baseball or ride a bike where parents can teach the basic skills and leave their children to further develop the technique. Safe driving goes beyond learning a skill set, it’s a two way street and requires daily precautions and parental enforcement with clear rewards and consequences,” says Stephen Wallace, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Chairman and CEO. “While Moms are more likely to continue to treat safe teen driving as a priority after their teens pass their driving tests, Dads tend to let driving enforcement slip.”

Past Liberty Mutual/SADD research found that nearly 60 percent of high school students think their parents are the biggest influence on their driving and moms are indeed the better enforcers of safe driving rules. That research shows that more than half of teen drivers (58 percent) say that Mom follows through on consequences for breaking driving rules more than Dad. Additionally, according to Liberty Mutual’s new survey, Moms are more likely than Dads to follow precautions to protect their teen while on the road, such as asking that their teen call them when they reach their driving destination (89 percent of Moms vs. 79 percent of Dads) and limiting the number of passengers their teen can have in the car (84 percent of Moms vs. 76 percent of Dads).

Some additional precautions set by parents include:

- setting curfews on nighttime driving (84 percent of Moms and 81 percent of Dads);

- banning their teens use of cell phones or any other electronic communication while driving (82 percent of Moms and 74 percent of Dads); and
- limiting the distance their teen can drive (65 percent of Moms and 58 percent of Dads).

Since 1991, Liberty Mutual and SADD have collaborated on research and responsible solutions to help families stay safe behind the wheel. Parent involvement, including open lines of communication with their young drivers, is an important component in helping teens maintain safe driving habits. Parents can easily access resources to help facilitate a responsible driving conversation at [www.LibertyMutualTeenDriving.com](http://www.LibertyMutualTeenDriving.com). This interactive resource is complete with tools such as a customizable parent/teen safe driving contract created by SADD; tips on how to talk to teens about driving distractions and dangers such as cell phones, text messaging, speeding, and alcohol and drug use; video demonstrations of safe driving techniques; state-by-state teen driving laws; individual car safety scores; tips on buying and caring for a car; and an exclusive 50 percent discount for teens to take the National Safety Council's online Defensive Driving Course.

## **Methodology**

Liberty Mutual commissioned KRC Research between June 30 – July 9, 2009 to conduct an online survey of 500 parents of teenagers who have a driver's license or permit and are between the ages of 15-18 and just starting to drive.

## **About Liberty Mutual Group**

"Helping people live safer, more secure lives" since 1912, Boston-based Liberty Mutual Group ([Libertymutualgroup.com](http://Libertymutualgroup.com)) is a diversified global insurer and fifth-largest property and casualty insurer in the U.S. based on 2008 direct written premium. Liberty Mutual Group ranks 86th on the Fortune 500 list of largest U.S. corporations, based on 2008 revenue. The company has over 45,000 employees located in more than 900 offices throughout the world.

The eighth-largest auto and home insurer in the U.S., Liberty Mutual ([www.libertymutual.com](http://www.libertymutual.com)) sells full lines of coverage for automobile, homeowners, valuable possessions, personal liability, and individual life insurance. The company is an industry leader in affinity partnerships, offering car and home insurance to employees and members of more than 12,000 companies, credit unions, professional associations and alumni groups.

## **About SADD**

For more than 27 years, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) has been committed to empowering young people to lead education and prevention initiatives in their schools and communities. Founded as Students Against Drunk Driving in 1981, SADD ([www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org)) has become the nation's preeminent peer-to-peer youth education, prevention and activism organization, with nearly 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges nationwide. SADD now highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, substance abuse, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide.

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Liberty Mutual founded the Responsible Sports program in 2007 as a means to celebrate the positive impact that everyday, responsible actions can have on our youth. As a responsible insurance company, Liberty Mutual believes that youth sport coaching and youth sport parenting are clear examples of how people can unite to promote the fundamental ideals of community.