



PASSENGER *SAFETY*

7th Grade Curriculum





Why Passenger Safety Matters

You may not be driving yet — but that doesn't mean you don't have power.

Most teenagers ride in cars every day, and what you do can affect everyone's safety.

Let's talk about how to be a Street Smart passenger.

Seat Belts *Save Lives*

First up — **SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES**. Period.

It is **SAFEST** to be buckled, no matter where in the car you are sitting. In a crash, unbelted passengers can injure others in the car.

You don't get a warning before a crash happens. Buckle up first thing. You are **TWICE** as likely to be seriously injured in a crash if you're not wearing a seat belt.



Buckle Up. It's the Law!

Arkansas law makes it illegal to drive or to be a front-seat passenger without wearing a seat belt.

Yes, you really can be pulled over for not wearing it!

It's a good idea to buckle up in the back seat too. If you're under 16, you're breaking the law if you don't!



How to Wear Your Seatbelt

It's not enough to hear
the click. Make sure
you're wearing your
seat belt **CORRECTLY.**

Seat belts are designed to distribute force on two areas of the body — your pelvis and your chest.

The lap belt should be **LOW ACROSS YOUR HIPS**, not over your stomach.

The shoulder belt should be **ACROSS YOUR CHEST**, not behind your back or under your arm. If the strap is uncomfortable, you can use a padded seat belt cover.

Make sure the seat belt is **FLAT**, not twisted.

Sit up **STRAIGHT** in your seat. Slouching or leaning can cause the seat belt to rest improperly on the body.



SEAT BELTS ARE YOUR FRIENDS.

Driver Safety Basics



 **PLAY VIDEO**





Help the Driver Stay Focused

Drivers have a lot to manage — speed, traffic, directions, other drivers. Your job as a passenger? Don't make theirs harder.

Be a cool co-pilot, not a chaos creator.

Riding with New Drivers



If you're riding with a new driver, distractions are even riskier since they're still learning how to handle them.

- Keep conversations low-key.
- Don't add pressure by criticizing or "backseat driving."
- Help them watch the road.
- Treat the driver the way you'd want to be treated behind the wheel.

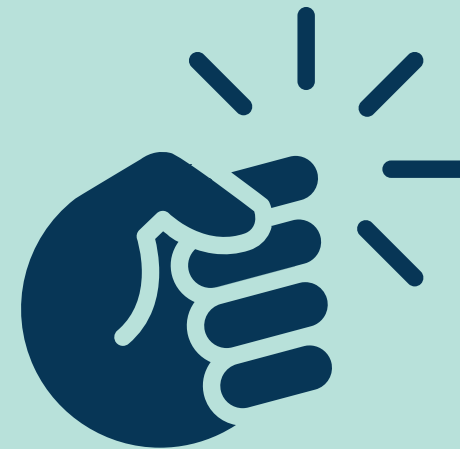
Passengers Can Be *Distracting*

Being a good passenger basically means being chill.

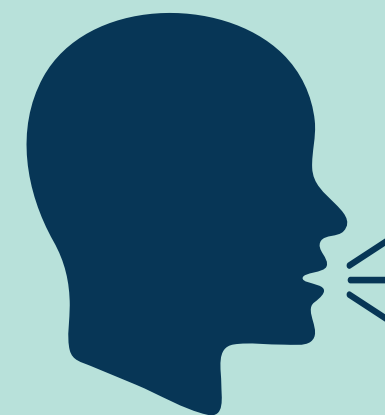
**HELP YOUR
DRIVER FOCUS
BY AVOIDING:**



Loud music



Roughhousing



Shouting



Constantly
asking them
questions



BE A HELPFUL PASSENGER.

Passenger Safety Basics



 **PLAY VIDEO**



Spotting Distracted Driving

Keep yourself and others safe by not letting your driver get interrupted by these and any other distractions.

- Texting
- Eating
- Reaching for stuff
- Looking at passengers for too long

Even a second of distraction can cause a deadly crash.

Offer to help the driver navigate, send a text or change music.





DISTRACTED DRIVING IS NO GOOD.

Driver Safety Basics



 **PLAY VIDEO**

Spotting Reckless or Impaired Driving

You should also watch out for reckless or impaired driving.

Some warning signs:

1

**SWERVING
OR SPEEDING**

2

**RUNNING RED LIGHTS
OR STOP SIGNS**

3

**SLURRED SPEECH OR
BAD REACTION TIME**

4

**TAILGATING OR
BEING AGGRESSIVE**

**It might be a friend, sibling or even an adult.
If something feels off, trust your gut.**

A photograph showing a person's hands on a steering wheel and holding a smartphone. The person is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt. The car's interior, including the dashboard and steering wheel, is visible. The background is blurred, suggesting motion.

What Should You Do?

If a driver is acting distracted or dangerous:

- Speak up calmly. Say something like:
 - “Want me to look up directions for you?”
 - “Hey, I’m kind of nervous about how fast we’re going — can we slow down?”
- **NEVER** grab the steering wheel.

In a **SERIOUS** Situation:

ASK to get out or
pretend to be sick.

Call a **TRUSTED** adult.

Get out of the car
SAFELY if possible.

If needed — **CALL 911.**



SPEAK UP

TO UNSAFE DRIVERS.

Passenger Safety Basics



 **PLAY VIDEO**





Speaking Up Isn't Always Easy

You might feel nervous correcting a friend or adult. **THAT'S NORMAL!**

SAFE > AWKWARD.

YOU CAN ALWAYS SAY: "I just want to make sure we all get there safely."

Cool people will respect that — and thank you later.

NOW THAT'S STREET SMART!

What does being a
responsible passenger
look like to you?

7th Grade Curriculum

