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**~ *Office of the Chief* ~**
MEDIA RELEASE

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# *National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 19-25*
# *Parents are key to keeping kids safe behind the wheel*

During National Teen Driver Safety Week, the Citrus Heights Police Department encourages parents and caregivers to talk with their teens about safe driving habits and the Rules of the Road before handing over the keys.

Car crashes are a leading cause of death for teens (15-18 years old) in the United States. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2023, there were 2,611 people killed in crashes involving a teen driver. In 2023, 465 people were killed in crashes on California roads involving drivers aged 20 or younger, accounting for nearly 11.5 % of fatalities in traffic crashes.

The Citrus Heights Police Department reminds parents and caregivers to discuss the dangers of risky driving behaviors like speeding, texting while driving, or not wearing a seat belt. Teens should also understand the serious dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

"Parents and caregivers play a critical role in teaching teens safe driving habits," Citrus Heights Police Department Sergeant Kane Kissam said. "Having these meaningful conversations, setting rules, and being a role model for safe driving can help teens make better choices when they're driving."

The Citrus Heights Police Department offers the following tips to parents and guardians for starting conversations about safe driving with teens:

- Provisional Driver's License: Learn about California's provisional licensing law, which places restrictions on passengers and driving at night during the first year they have a license.
- Lead by example: Have driving sessions with your teen. Tell, but also show, your teen how to drive safely.
- Set ground rules: Be firm on rules such as no phone use, eliminating distractions by friends, always following the speed limit, and always buckling up. Create a parent-teen driving contract to outline specific driving guidelines.
- Sober driving: Emphasize the importance of never driving impaired or riding with someone who has been driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

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