

OPINION

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OUR VIEWS

Parents still have role in teen driving safety

ONE OF the few positives to come out of this year's General Assembly is a new, tougher set of rules for young drivers.

The rules, which go into effect Jan. 1, will require teenagers to have their learner's permit for nine months instead of three, make driving curfews earlier, limit the number of unrelated teen passengers allowed for a full year and stiffen penalties for street racing.

The moves, which were proposed by Secretary of State Jesse White, will make Illinois rules for new drivers some of the toughest in the nation.

The aim, White said, is to reduce the number of driving-related deaths by teens.

The new rules are a good step. It's safe to say that new drivers will be better trained and more prepared to begin driving.

However, there is one component of making teen drivers responsible that cannot be legislated: parental responsibility.

Parents are best situated to judge whether a teen is ready to accept the responsibility of driving and also can see when a new driver isn't taking proper precautions.

Parents and other adults should emphasize that driving is a privilege, not a right. If new drivers don't show enough responsibility to operate a motor vehicle, parents shouldn't hesitate to take away the keys.



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