

DRIVING PRIVILEGES AGREEMENT

Presented by Bruce A. Hagen

www.hagen-law.com

I, _____, recognizing that my parents are giving me permission to drive a car, and understanding the awesome responsibility that operating a car entails, hereby freely and voluntarily enter into the following agreement and understanding.

____ I understand that I am being granted permission to drive. Permission to drive is **not** a legal right: It is granted to me by my parents, who are under no obligation to do so, and who may withdraw the privilege at any time. The State's role is to determine that I meet the *minimum* requirements for a license. I understand that I will only be allowed to drive when I am willing to abide by the rules and regulations established by my parents.

I recognize that driving a car is a very serious matter. I recognize that...

____ Automobile accidents are the **leading cause of death** of people 16-20 years old.

____ I am **more likely to die** in an auto accident than from any other cause.

____ Recklessness or errors that I make while driving **could kill or hurt me**, passengers in the car I drive, and/or people in other cars and pedestrians. Among those that could be victims of my driving mistakes are: Infants, children, my friends, my family members, parents of children, and many others.

____ I will abide by laws regulating driving. I will observe and abide by posted speed limits. I will abide by rules established by my parents. I recognize these are for my protection and the protection of others.

____ I understand that the car I drive is **property of my parents**. Even a car that is a "gift" to me is still, legally, the property of my parents. I drive the car **only with permission**.

____ I understand that my parents and I must be able to reach a written agreement in order for me to be permitted to drive. I understand that the terms of this agreement may be changed based on how I handle the freedom and responsibility of driving. The rules will get stricter if my parents judge that I am not doing well. The same rules may get somewhat less strict if my parents judge that I am doing well.

____ I understand that, until I reach the age of 18, any criminal or negligent acts that I commit may also lead to personal liability on the part of my parents, including possible incarceration, financial liability for my recklessness, and other serious consequences that threaten the well being that my parents have worked hard to achieve.

____ I must study and be aware of the terms of this contract. "“Forgetting”" any part of the contract is not an excuse.

THREE CRITICAL RULES

- **If my parents deny me permission to drive, for whatever reason, I will abide by this and give them my keys immediately with no argument or debate.** I may ask to meet with my parent(s) no *earlier* than 24 hours later to talk about it. Refusal to immediately surrender keys will result in the car being immobilized. This will be done with a steering wheel lock (“The Club”) or some other method. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** If my parents immobilize the car I drive because I did not obey the above rule, two to four weeks will pass, at my parents’ choice, before any *discussion* will occur about driving again. Another incident of failure to surrender keys on demand will lead to indefinite suspension of driving privileges.
- **If I drive in defiance of my parents’ order not to drive, this contract is cancelled and no driving will be permitted for the next six months.**
- **If I drive in defiance of my parents’ order not to drive, my parents may call the police.**

RULES-Category A

These rules, if violated, will lead to **indefinite suspension of driving privileges**. This is the most serious set of rules. I understand that I may lose my driving privileges **indefinitely** if any one of these is violated even once.

1. **No alcohol use/abuse.** Even though some minors drink, as a minor, it is illegal for me to drink alcohol. I understand that my parents do not permit me to drink. However, if I do so, I will not drive for 24 hours after my last use of alcohol in ANY amount.

2. **No drug use/abuse.** I will not drive for 72 hours after my last use of any "substance." In this agreement, "substance" means any drug or chemical (including but not limited to marijuana, pills, inhalants, and other drugs) which would be expected *by my parents* to alter my ability to drive. **There is no acceptable amount of any substance of this kind.** If I use any drugs, I will not drive for 72 hours. This rule may include medications prescribed to me or over-the-counter medications. In the cases of legal medications, I will inform my parents of any such medications I have taken so that they can judge whether taking these medications will interfere with my driving ability. Furthermore:

a. **No riding with others who have used alcohol or drugs.** I will not ride as a passenger with any driver who has used alcohol or any substance as defined above. I will not ride with any one who it would be reasonable to think may have used alcohol or drugs, when I am unsure if they have.

b. **Alternatives to riding with others who have used alcohol or drugs.** If I find myself in a situation as described above, I will contact my parents or another designated adult to arrange for transportation. I understand that my parents will appreciate that behavior and will make every effort to avoid asking me a lot of questions about it. My parents have assured me that I may call them at any time of day or night if I find myself in a dangerous situation of any kind.

c. **No alcohol or drugs in car.** I will not allow alcohol or illegal drugs in the car. My parents

will hold me responsible for any alcohol or drugs in the car, even if they don't belong to me or it is the fault of someone riding in my car. **IF IT'S IN THE CAR, IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE YOURS AND YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.**

3. **No thrill-seeking/stunts.** I will not engage in any thrill-seeking behavior while driving. I will not drive for recreation. Driving too fast, racing of all kinds, and any kind of "stunt" involving a car is **NOT ALLOWED**. Driving is for transportation **ONLY**.

4. **Informing parents about accidents & police encounters.** I will inform my parents about any and all tickets, accidents, and encounters with police.

5. **No firearms** or other weapons. I will not drive with any guns or other deadly weapons in the vehicle.

6. **No Texting**, emailing, or use of a cell phone, PDA, or other handheld device while the car is moving. If I need to communicate with anyone, I will make sure I am stopped and in a safe area before making any attempt at using the phone or PDA. I know that the use of these devices is a **HUGE** distraction to me and that distracted drivers cause car wrecks.

RULES-Category B

Violations will lead to suspension of driving privileges for up to three months.

1. **Permission to Drive.** I must ask permission to drive each time I drive. Exceptions to this rule will be given for regularly scheduled transportation to school, practice, work, regular meetings, etc. I will ask permission to drive to specific locations and will discuss the route planned. I will be certain that my parents know where I am. I will not make unscheduled stops or side trips. **I WILL BE TRUTHFUL AND HONEST WITH MY PARENTS IN MAKING SURE THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF MY WHEREABOUTS.**

2. **Curfew.** I may not drive after Midnight unless I have specifically obtained permission from my parents to do so.

3. **Limit on passengers.** I will abide by State law regarding the number of passengers in my vehicle. I will also abide by any rules that my parents give me regarding the number of passengers I may have in that car at any given time.

3. **Off-Limit Areas.** I will not drive on streets, highways, or in areas that are designated as off-limits. I understand that greater flexibility in these matters will come as I gain experience and show that I am honoring the agreement. For the time being, the following roads and areas are to be avoided if at all possible: I-285, I-85, I-75 and I-20.

4. **No one else drives vehicle.** I will not permit any other person to drive the car without my parents' specific permission for each specific case.

RULES-CATEGORY C

Violations may lead to suspension of driving privileges for up to six weeks.

1. **Weather/road conditions.** I will respect weather and road conditions, slowing down as needed for safety. I will contact my parents to discuss weather or poor road conditions when I am

out driving.

2. **Emotional upset.** Knowing that judgment and driving skills are altered by emotions, I will not drive when I am upset or angry. If upset, I will contact my parents for transportation and I reserve the right to maintain my privacy regarding personal matters. My parents agree not to ask a lot of unnecessary questions.

3. **Taking care of vehicle.** It is my responsibility to protect the car I drive. I will keep it reasonably clean and maintained. I have some specific responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the car as noted below.

4. **Passenger behavior.** I will not allow my passengers to behave in such a way as to damage the car or distract me while driving.

5. **Seatbelts.** I will wear my seatbelt at all times and require all passengers to wear them.

6. **Friends ride only with their parents' permission.** When transporting my friends, I will be reasonably sure that they have their parents' permission to ride with me.

7. **Thank You For Not Smoking.** I will not allow smoking in the car. I will not smoke in the car.

8. **No eating & driving.** I will not eat while driving.

9. **Car audio system.** I will be allowed to have the stereo on but will make no adjustments to it other than changing the volume while driving. Under no circumstances will I change a CD or cassette or adjust my Ipod while driving. I will change these only when stopped or pulled over.

10. **CELL PHONES and Other electronics.** Except in the case of a genuine emergency, I will not talk on the cell phone while the vehicle is moving. Under no circumstance will I send or read text messages while the vehicle is moving. (Initial here to confirm: _____).

11. **No rushing.** Accidents are more likely to happen when I rush. I am more likely to rush when I leave late. Therefore, my parents reserve the right to not allow me to drive unless I leave by a time they specify. For example, if my parents tell me that I must allow 20 minutes to get to something that starts at 7:00, ***I may not leave later than that.*** In such cases, my parents will attempt to provide alternative transportation, to whatever extent possible.

12. **Attention to Driving.** I will not do things while driving that distracts me from the road.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

1. **Tickets and moving violations** will result in suspension of my driving privileges for a period to be determined by my parents. My parents have no obligation to pay my fines for driving-related tickets.

2. **Financial.** I will make certain financial contributions to the purchase of the car, maintenance of the car, and/or insurance, in a manner deemed appropriate by my parents..

3. **Family obligations.** I agree to provide transportation to family members at the directive of my parents. Fulfilling these obligations is a condition of my use of a car. Sometimes these

responsibilities will override my own desires and interests in using the car.

4. General life responsibilities. I agree that I must be responsible to drive safely and that my parents must believe I am relatively responsible in order to allow me to drive. They may, therefore, take into account how I handle my general responsibilities, including schoolwork, athletic participation, employment, household duties, etc. I will also maintain a respectful attitude. I will not ask my parents to allow me to drive when I am rude and disrespectful to them or to others.

5. Right to clear expectations. My parents have a right to expect me to be responsible. I have a right to be told what this means. For this reason, I may ask my parents for clarification of their requirement that I "be responsible."

6. Changes in this agreement. I understand that this contract will be made more strict at any time my parents believe that is the best thing to do. I understand that if I consistently abide by these rules that my parents will work with me to make the contract less strict as I gain experience. However, I understand that--bottom line--it is my parents' choice and responsibility to change or not change the contract. **We will review this agreement and perhaps make changes to it on _____ (insert date 6 months from date of signature) or earlier if my parents or I wish to do so.**

7. All in the Name of Love. I understand that my parents are not insisting that I sign and comply with this contract just to make my life difficult. I recognize that my parents love me deeply and want what's best for me, and that my compliance with this contract will help both them and me to lead happier and more fulfilling lives.

8. Other. (Insert any specifics as needed)

Summary: I agree to abide by the rules in this contract and I accept the consequences and penalties if I do not. I recognize my parents' authority in deciding if I may drive. That authority is final until I am an adult living independent of my parents.

Signatures

_____ (date)

Teenage Driver

_____ (date)

Parent(s)