

Tracking Teen Drivers

How would you feel if you knew that your parents were monitoring everything that went on in your car while you were driving? Today's technology lets them. More and more parents are putting tracking systems into their teenagers' cars. The systems can detect where teen drivers are, where they are going, and how fast they are driving. These systems allow parents to monitor their teens behind the wheel to encourage safe driving practices.

Some tracking systems include a video camera that is placed near the rearview mirror. Parents can watch teens as they drive. Other tracking devices are attached to the car's computer, enabling them to detect everything the car is doing, from turning to speeding up and slowing down. Every tracking system comes with Global Positioning System (GPS), which shows parents exactly where the car is and where it is going.

The Insurance Connection

One reason some parents are in favor of tracking systems is that the systems reduce insurance expenses. Auto insurance usually costs more for teenaged drivers than it does for adult drivers. Rates for teens are higher because teens tend to get in more car accidents than adults do. Statistics reveal that car accidents are the number one health threat to teens, accounting for more than 6,000 deaths and 450,000 injuries yearly, which means parents of teenagers only have two options: get a tracking system or suffer the loss of their child. Car accidents cost insurance companies money, which is why companies encourage parents to use technology to avoid adversity.

One insurance company spokesperson explained that tracking systems could "help drive down insurance rates, which makes customers happy. It's a huge win in building customer loyalty." Despite its initial cost (from \$200 to \$500) and the monthly fee (from \$15 to \$30), tracking systems can be cheaper than high insurance rates.

(1) In addition, the systems give parents peace of mind. (2) In Maryland, 89% of parents use tracking system, so every parent should go and get one. (3) Parents can send a signal to the car to let their teen know when he or she has done something wrong. (4) The signal can be a pinging sound, a text message, or a cell phone call. (5) Some systems even allow parents at home to activate the car's horn and headlights to alert their teen to unsafe driving. (6) Other systems include a device in the car that sends an alarm to the parents if the car is speeding.

Knowing their kids are safe gives parents peace of mind, but the safety issue does not exactly unify parents and teens. Using tracking systems raises questions of privacy and trust. Some parents brush the questions off. "To me, my kids haven't earned their privacy in the car yet," said one parent. "Being in a car is dangerous and life-threatening." Kids often have a different point of view.

The Right to Privacy

Many kids resent having tracking devices in their cars. They oppose their parents' decision to install the devices because they feel that the devices invade their privacy. Some teens also dislike the mistrust in them that their parents show by using tracking systems. "It is like you always have someone in the car watching you," said one seventeen-year-old.

Some experts agree with this opposing viewpoint—up to a point. One expert stated, "I wouldn't encourage parents to use something like this without good reason. Instead, use it as an option when your kid gets stopped for speeding.... It makes more sense than not trusting them from the beginning."

Child psychologists are not unified in their view of tracking systems. One expert supports tracking all teen drivers but tells parents, "You need to talk to your child and say 'This is why I'm doing it... because I'm afraid of what might happen... Our job is to protect you.'"

Teenaged drivers have mixed feelings about tracking systems. Studies show that about 20 percent of teens cover the video cameras placed in their car. For some kids, however, the freedom of driving their own car is worth the compromise on the tracking system. One teen said, "I think it's generally a good thing, as long as you have a trusting relationship and you're honest." Another teen, however, stated, "Tracking systems are not safe. Sending a text to me or turning on my headlights while I'm trying to drive is way more distracting to me than my friends could ever be. It's a joke!"

1. Which sentence in the 5th paragraph is an example of faulty reasoning?
 - A. Sentence 2
 - B. Sentence 3
 - C. Sentence 4
 - D. Sentence 6

2. Which of the following is an unfounded inference?
 - A. More and more parents are putting tracking systems into their teenagers' cars.
 - B. Which means parents of teenagers only have two options: get a tracking system or suffer the loss of their child.
 - C. One reason some parents are in favor of tracking systems is that the systems reduce insurance expenses.
 - D. For some kids, however, the freedom of driving their own car is worth the compromise on the tracking system.

3. Which idea from the passage is faulty due to an error in logic?
 - A. Studies show that 20% of teens cover the video cameras placed in their cars.
 - B. Child psychologists are not unified in their view of tracking systems.
 - C. In Maryland, 89% of parents use tracking systems, so every parent should go and get one.
 - D. One insurance company spokesperson explained that tracking systems could "help drive down insurance rates..."

4. In the following quote: "parents of teenagers only have two options: get a tracking system or suffer the loss of their child," the author incorrectly infers which of the following?
 - A. that parents are not responsible for teen driving
 - B. that people should all do the same thing
 - C. that the issue is complicated and not simply solved
 - D. that there are only two possible outcomes

5. What causes the following line to be faulty: "Being in a car is dangerous and life-threatening"?
 - A. It tries to scare teens into welcoming the tracking system.
 - B. It makes parents sound crazy for wanting tracking systems.
 - C. It creates a peace of mind for parents and teens.
 - D. It keeps people from buying the tracking system.

6. What makes the last sentence of the article faulty?
 - A. It prevents people from buying tracking systems.
 - B. It states the opposing viewpoint on tracking systems.
 - C. It dismisses tracking systems as ridiculous and unsafe.
 - D. It creates fear in parents when using tracking systems.

7. What is the overall tone of this article?
 - A. apathetic
 - B. informative
 - C. optimistic
 - D. whimsical

8. List two direct sentences from the article that supports your tone word.
