



## Ford Driving Skills for Life Advanced Driving Skills Program Begins Second Decade with New Content, Technology

- Ford Driving Skills for Life begins its second decade in 2014 with evolving and expanding content to help new drivers gain skills not taught in traditional driver's education programs
- Use of a new drunk driving suit simulates the physical effects alcohol impairment can have on a driver
- Curriculum adds a driving selfies warning to address dangerous new trend of drivers snapping photos of themselves while behind the wheel
- Ford Driving Skills for Life, now operating in more than 15 countries, continues global expansion; program to start in Belgium, Romania, Malaysia and Myanmar

Ford Driving Skills for Life, the free, advanced driving skills program for novice drivers, is launching its second decade in 2014 with an expanded reach and mission as it continues to address dangerous trends and challenges faced by teens and other new drivers.

“Over the last 10 years we have taken pride in our ability to adjust the curriculum to keep up with the constantly changing world awaiting teens and other new drivers,” said Jim Graham, Ford Driving Skills for Life manager. “We listen to the needs and concerns of teen drivers, and modify the program to keep it fresh and relevant.”

This year Ford Driving Skills for Life will continue to reinforce the importance of “hands on the wheel, eyes on the road” while driving. A new element in the curriculum is designed to warn of the dangerous new trend of taking mobile self-portraits while behind the wheel, known as driving selfies. The hands-on portion of the program will demonstrate the distraction created by taking selfies while driving on a closed course. The online portion will also explain the risks associated with taking driving selfies.

Ford's Driving Skills for Life program was established in 2003 by Ford Motor Company Fund, the Governors Highway Safety Association and a panel of safety experts with the mission of teaching newly licensed teens the necessary skills for safer driving, and the importance of making good decisions while driving. The program encourages parental involvement, which can contribute greatly to developing safe driving habits. In its first 10 years, Ford Driving Skills for Life has directly trained more than 30,000 teens in nearly 900 school districts in 39 states, plus 15 international markets.

### **New technology**

To address the issue of impaired driving, this year also marks introduction of a drunk driving suit that was initially created for the program's recent expansion into Europe. The suit replicates some of the physical challenges experienced by a person under the influence of alcohol.

“Currently, we use goggles that cause a driver to become disoriented to help demonstrate some of the effects of impaired driving,” said Graham. “The drunk driving suit will take this demonstration to a whole new level by adding features to the rest of the body to simulate how alcohol impairs the driver physically.”

Weights added to the arms and legs of a student wearing the drunk driving suit cause that person to be encumbered and off balance. Weights and pads also slow reaction time, which creates the sensation of a driver's reflexes and movements being impaired.

## **Global expansion**

Ford Driving Skills for Life is helping novice drivers learn critical skills in emerging markets. In many cases, these drivers are not teens, but adults who are driving for the first time.

“We are expanding our work to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries among new drivers across Ford’s global markets,” said Graham.

Teams are exploring the needs of first-time drivers in the different places where the program is being deployed so that the curriculum can be designed to address the specific needs of each market. In India, Ford Driving Skills for Life is used to assist first-time vehicle owners and drivers who may be in their forties and fifties. These drivers learn such basics as the importance of using a safety belt. In parts of Europe, the program is aimed at college-age students because licensing in these areas often starts at a later age than in the United States.

2014 marks continued global expansion of Ford Driving Skills for Life, with the program now under way in 15 international markets – Canada, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, India, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates. New programs are scheduled for Belgium, Romania, Malaysia and Myanmar.

## **2014 U.S. schedule**

In 2014 Ford Driving Skills for Life will hold hands-on driving programs in at least 11 U.S. cities including Dallas; Springfield, Ill.; Chicago; Detroit; Salt Lake City; Denver; Kansas City, Kan.; Indianapolis; Charleston, W. Va.; Phoenix; and Tucson, Ariz.

## **Upgraded website, advanced new curriculum**

Other changes coming to the program this year include an upgraded website and new materials in the free, online Ford Driving Skills for Life Academy, which can be found at [www.drivingskillsforlife.com](http://www.drivingskillsforlife.com).

“Our redesigned academy will feature video elements that are appealing to teens,” said Graham. “We will also showcase a wealth of information on the latest safety trends; from distraction to safety technology to driver education and relevant legislation, teens and their parents will have access to the information they need to help them make safer driving decisions.”

## **Collaborations**

Ford Driving Skills for Life, along with its primary collaborator in efforts to better train teen drivers, the Governors Highway Safety Association, will continue to work closely with state highway safety agencies to help supplement state-run driver’s training programs.

“Due to tight state and federal budgets, states are increasingly relying on private funding such as Ford Driving Skills for Life to reach new drivers and their parents,” said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of Governors Highway Safety Association. “The Ford curriculum is a top-notch driver training program that complements state efforts.”

To help reach teens with important safe driving messages, Ford Driving Skills for Life in the United States is launching a new collaboration with bowling legend Walter Ray Williams Jr., and is continuing its relationship with NHRA driver Courtney Force. Ford is also making a new contribution to Operation Teen Safe Driving in Tazewell County in Illinois to help improve teen safe driving practices there, and will continue its relationships with KDKA-TV’s Taking the Lead program in Pennsylvania, the Student Leadership Services program in Missouri and Strive for a Safer Drive in Michigan.

## **About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. For more than 60 years, Ford Motor Company Fund has operated with ongoing funding

from Ford Motor Company. The award-winning Ford Driving Skills for Life program teaches new drivers through a variety of hands-on and interactive methods. Innovation in education is encouraged through programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. Through the Ford Volunteer Corps, more than 25,000 Ford employees and retirees work on projects each year that better their communities in more than 30 countries. For more information, visit [www.community.ford.com](http://www.community.ford.com).

### About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 196,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).