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November 13, 2003  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **“BLACK BOX” AIMS AT IMPROVING TEEN DRIVING HABITS**

Wisconsin Insurance Companies and Agents Believe New Tool Could  
Reduce Insurance Premiums for Parents of Teens

MADISON, Wisconsin (November 12, 2003) – The “black box” used in airplanes is being adapted for a new use ... to improve teen driving habits.

Road Safety International, Inc. recently introduced a “black box” for teen drivers at the 2003 National Safety Council’s 91<sup>st</sup> Congress & Expo in Chicago. The devices monitor the driving habits of teens and can provide parents with information about how their teens drive and even pinpoint where the vehicle is at any given time.

Once the device is installed, any time the vehicle is operating in an unsafe manner, such as driving at high speeds, performing high g-force maneuvers or failing to buckle up seat belts, the “black box” give the driver an audible warning alert. If the driver fails to take corrective action, a steady tone sounds until the unsafe condition is

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stopped. Driver-scoring reports can be downloaded to a PC and provide a record of all unsafe actions. Future components of the “black box” will include a “GPS” satellite receiver for real-time vehicle location to make sure teens reach their destinations.

“I’m sure auto insurance companies are going to be researching and testing the impact of this new equipment as soon as they are able to,” said Ron Von Haden, executive vice president of the Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin. “If the use of this device is proven to actually improve the driving habits of teens, parents may be able to significantly lower auto insurance premiums by installing ‘black boxes’ in their cars,” he added.

The PIA of WI, which represents over 500 independent agencies across the state, will be monitoring the progress of the ‘black box for teens’, according to Von Haden.

Many insurance companies are already involved in testing the affect a “black box” has on driver habits.

“My understanding is that insurance companies that have done studies on the impact the ‘black box’ has on adult drivers, found that it helps promote safe driving habits and aids in accident investigations,” said Von Haden. “Apparently, when drivers know that their insurance providers can check their driving habits those habits tend to improve,” he added.

The “black box” for teens is scheduled to be available later this year. Installation will consist of plugging the “box” into a 1996 or newer vehicle’s OBD-II connector, generally hanging under the vehicles dashboard.

For more information about the ‘black box’ or to locate a PIA member near you, go to [www.PIAW.org](http://www.PIAW.org).