

CHARLOTTE, NC, September 23, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- What's more important than getting a car for your 16th birthday these days? Getting a smartphone.

Less than half of teenagers in the U.S. have a driver's license according to a recent study conducted at the University of Michigan. That may be due, in part, to graduated licensing programs that have raised the age when teens can actually drive themselves legally at any time of day. Or, it could be creditable to the heightened use of social media among today's teens. Being connected to friends and family, at almost all times, has made a car an unnecessary expense for many when a ride is just a Tweet, post or phone call away.

The Dangers of Cyberhitchhiking or Ridesharing

A recent search of the Charlotte, Wilmington and Raleigh community postings revealed more than 100 posts related to ride requests on each site. With college back in session, it's not hard to imagine that students in these areas are looking for rides back home via the internet as well.

#Ineedaride may seem innocent, but it could very well be a dangerous hashtag. Sure, it may get you where you need to go with the help of a friend and his or her car, but depending on who you are sharing your Tweets or Facebook posts with, you could wind up facing a potential kidnapping situation, become the victim of a sex offense or worse.

The same goes for the putting the thumbs up on Facebook or other site, and we aren't talking about simply 'liking' others' content. The internet and particularly social media sites that allow users to post a self-determined quantity of personal information are often considered a playground for those with criminal tendencies.

For those who solicit only friends and family for transportation, the dangers are generally no different than any time you get into a car - you may end up sharing the road with a distracted driver or drunk driver who puts your life at risk - or other motor vehicle accident scenario.

For those who aren't just soliciting family and friends, any of the following could potentially increase the risk you face by ridesharing with a stranger:

Cyber Hitchhiking: Thumbing A Ride On Facebook

Written by Australian Business

- Failing to correctly adjust your privacy settings, allowing a larger audience than intended to see your ride request- Sending out public rather than limited posts to request a ride- Using car-sharing apps like Carma, Ridejoy or eRideshare- Requesting rides on Craigslist- Posting to websites like Ridepost, dedicated to connecting riders with drivers

Whatever age you are, you should be extremely wary of getting into a car with a stranger.

Crowdsourcing A Ride? A Few Safety Tips

For those who still choose to social rideshare, here are a few tips to help you stay safe while doing so:

- Check in with friends or family before and after you ride.- Meet your potential ride mate in a public place.- If you're planning a longer trip, or planning to rideshare in advance, meet with your driver or rider before hand to verify who they are and that you feel safe with him or her.- Dig in to the backgrounds of those who offer you a ride. If they found you by social media, chances are they have information available about them on Facebook or another social media platform.- There's still safety in numbers. Travel with a companion when you can; don't be the only one in the car with a stranger if you don't have to be.

eRideshare may say it best, ""The Internet is like a big city with all kinds of people in it. Don't travel with someone you don't trust."

This informational article is provided by the defense attorneys of [Roberts Law Group, PLLC](#) , for the purpose of education and improving safety of teens and young adults who rideshare or cyberhitchhike throughout North Carolina. To learn more about the firm, please visit our family of criminal defense websites.

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