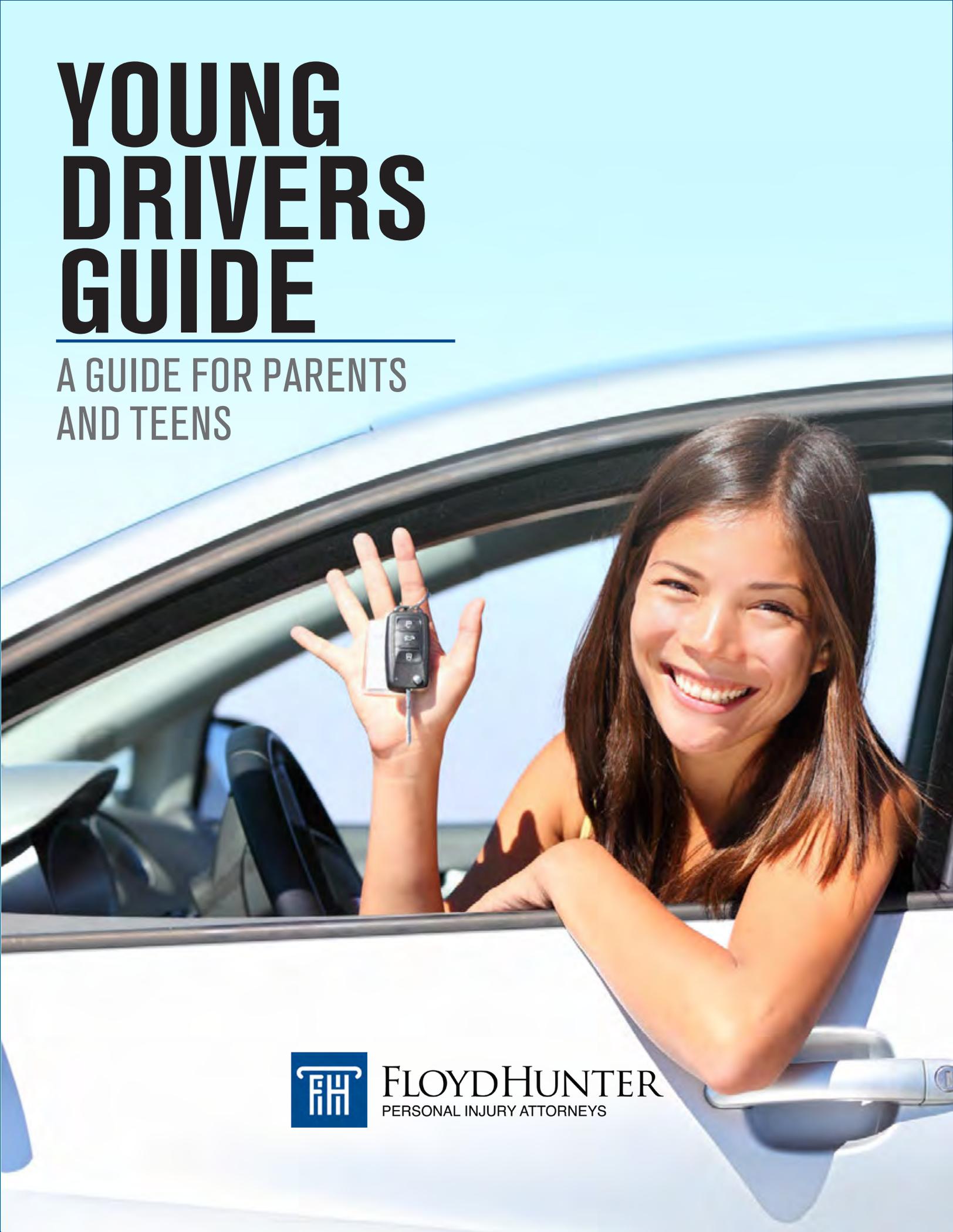


# YOUNG DRIVERS GUIDE

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A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEENS



**FLOYD HUNTER**  
PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS



# THE ROAD GREET'S YOU

## Welcome Teens and Parents:

Learning to drive is an exciting time in a teen's life. The feelings of liberty and independence that follow can be exhilarating. At the same time, these newfound freedoms come with a great deal of responsibility.

There are now more distractions in our daily lives than ever before, and these distractions can easily lead to accidents with tragic consequences.

Parents and teens should share this guide, and discuss the valuable information inside. Talk about the risks. Talk about the responsibilities. Talk about how to prevent accidents. Share this guide. Pass it along—so we can build safer roads together.

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***Did You Know?** Teens whose parents drive distracted are 2 to 4 times as likely to also drive distracted.*



# INVINCIBLE?

Are you invincible? No. But, when you're in your teens, you may feel as if you are. However, one small mistake behind the wheel can potentially change your life—and the lives of others—forever.

With this in mind, the attorneys at Floyd Hunter Injury Law have prepared this informative guide for both teen drivers and their parents.

In it, you will find valuable information on getting started as a teen driver, the best ways to prevent an accident, what to do after an accident, how to respond if you have been injured, and much more.

**Drive Safely... and Stay Accident Free.**

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***Did You Know?** Car accidents are higher among 16-19-year-olds than any other age group.*

# LET'S GET GOING



The State of Alabama has a Graduated Driver's License (GDL) Program for new drivers. [Click here](#) to learn more.

New drivers in Alabama earn driver's licenses in three different stages:

- The Learner's Permit
- The Restricted License
- The Unrestricted License



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*Did You Know? The main reason for teen car accidents is inexperience behind the wheel.*



# LEARNER'S PERMIT

At 15 years of age, you are able to take a test for a Learner's Permit. To do so, make an appointment at the DMV and read the Alabama Driver's License Manual.

You will need to take a written exam, which consists of questions to test your knowledge of road signs, state traffic laws and general driving safety, as well as a vision test.

Once you have your Learner's Permit, you can practice driving as long as you have a licensed driver who is 21-years-old or older in the passenger's seat to guide you.

Your parents can choose to teach you themselves, enroll you in Driver's Education courses, or both.

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***Did You Know?*** Teen drivers are three times more likely to be in a fatal car accident per mile driven.



# RESTRICTED LICENSE

Once you've had your Learner's Permit for six months, completed at least 30 hours of driving practice and completed a road-skills test, your parent or Driver's Education instructor can sign off on the Restricted License form.

## **Under a Restricted License, you:**

- Cannot drive between midnight and 6:00 a.m. unless you are accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or responsible adult 21 years or older with your parent's consent
- Cannot have more than one passenger in the vehicle other than parents, legal guardians or family members
- Can only drive past curfew if traveling to or from school, religious events, work, or in a medical emergency
- Cannot use any handheld devices while driving

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***Did You Know?*** At 16-17, a driver's risk of death per mile driven doubles with two passengers under 21.



# UNRESTRICTED LICENSE

Once you're 17 or older and have had your Restricted License for at least six months, you can then apply for your Unrestricted License.

## **Under a Unrestricted License, you:**

- Can drive anytime, without the need of accompaniment by a legal adult
- Have no restrictions on passengers in the vehicle
- Have no curfews applied
- Still cannot use any handheld devices while driving
- Should still consider limiting the number of passengers you have in an effort to reduce distractions

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***Did You Know?** At 16-17, a driver's risk of death per mile driven quadruples with over 3 passengers under 21.*

# SAFETY FIRST

Sadly, Alabama ranks second in the nation for the highest number of teen driving fatalities. Every time you get behind the wheel, there's a risk—either from your own negligence or that of others. Here are some statistics to consider:

- Alabama has the second highest teen driving fatality rate in the nation.
- Car accidents are the number one cause of death for teenagers across the nation, with nearly six teens losing their lives every day.
- On average, a car crash is reported every 202 seconds in Alabama.
- Alabama drivers have a greater than one in three chance of being in a crash that results in serious injuries or fatalities.

While you can't control other drivers, you can take responsibility for your own actions and drive defensively. Below, we take a closer look at effective ways to help reduce the risk of accidents.

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*Did You Know? Cellphones should be on and ready, but never used when driving.*

# KNOW THE RULES

Driving can be exhilarating, and the freedom of being behind the wheel can be exciting, but learning to drive can also be a challenge. It can often frighten many teens who are new to the road.

Time spent practicing in a safe environment, whether after school or on weekends, can help prepare young drivers and make them more comfortable for what's ahead.

In addition to practicing driving in a safe environment, take the time to review the [Alabama Driver Manual](#) to make sure you know the rules of the road.



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*Did You Know? Learning to anticipate different situations while driving can help make you a safer driver.*

# TALK ABOUT IT

**Parents:** When your teen is ready to apply for his or her permit, talk to your child about his or her options. Ask your teen if he or she wants to learn from you or a certified Driver's Education instructor—and remind your teen that he or she can do both. Give your child a copy of the Alabama Driver's Manual and talk with him or her about traffic laws and the importance of safe driving.

**Teens:** Driver's Education courses with a certified instructor can be an excellent option when it's time to learn to drive. Passing a certified Driver's Education course can even help your parents save money on insurance. Whether it's with your parents or an instructor, be sure to practice your driving in a variety of weather conditions and at different times of the day.



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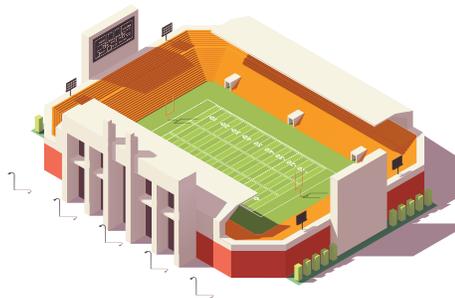
***Did You Know?*** Some insurance companies offer discounts if you take a Driver's Education course.



# STAY FOCUSED

**Parents:** Today's teens are constantly using their cellphones, even while driving. Unfortunately, our increasing reliance on mobile technology has significantly increased the risk of car accidents.

**Teens:** Taking your eyes off the road—even for a split second—can be extremely dangerous. To put this in perspective, taking your eyes off the road for just five seconds while driving at 55 MPH is equal to traveling the length of a football field with your eyes closed.



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*Did You Know? The length of a football field is 120 yards.*



## Here are some tips to help avoid distractions:

- **Focus on the Road:** Keep your eyes on the task in front of you—and not on your passengers.
- **Stay Off Your Phone:** Don't use your phone behind the wheel unless it's a genuine emergency. If a message or call is urgent, pull over.
- **Don't Drive Drowsy:** Drowsiness can slow your reaction time and increase the risk of driver error or even falling asleep behind the wheel.
- **Limit Your Passengers:** More passengers means a greater potential for distractions, and a more dangerous driving environment.
- **Don't Multitask While Driving:** Focus on the road. Don't change the radio, use your GPS, or eat. Do these things when your car isn't moving.



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*Did You Know? [Driver distraction is responsible for more than 58% of teen crashes.](#)*



**Parents:** Don't let your children drink or do drugs while they drive. Talk to your young drivers about the dangers of drinking or doing drugs—and always remind them how important it is to never succumb to peer pressure.

**Teens:** Drugs and alcohol can significantly impair your ability to see, make decisions and operate a vehicle. Drivers under the influence put themselves, their passengers and other drivers on the road at risk. Stay safe, stay sober and avoid a potential tragedy.



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***Did You Know?*** 25% of teen driving accidents involve drinking and driving.

# NOBODY'S PERFECT



Temptation is real—so don't let yourself become a statistic. If you've been drinking, or using drugs, make sure you have a designated driver. Call a sober, responsible adult for a ride. Use a car service if necessary.

If all else fails, spend the night with friends or family and leave the next day. In addition, never let friends or family drive drunk or under the influence of drugs, never get in a car with a drunk or drugged driver and alert police if you see a drunk driver on the road.



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***Did You Know?*** More than seven million Americans aged 12-20 (20% of the age group) consume alcohol.



# TRAVEL LIGHT

**Parents:** When your young driver first starts out, speak to him or her about the dangers of the road—and remind your teen to follow the laws regarding how many passengers he or she can have.

Even after your child earns his or her Unrestricted License, it's still a good idea to talk about limiting passengers until your teen has more experience behind the wheel. You may want to make this one of your rules.

**Teens:** Remember, the number of passengers you can have in your car is limited while you have your Learner's Permit or Restricted License. This is because driving with other passengers—especially other teens—can cause distractions that can lead to accidents. That risk increases with every additional teen passenger in car with teen drivers.

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***Did You Know?** At 16-17, a driver's risk of death per mile driven increases 44% with one passenger under 21.*



# BUCKLE UP

**Parents:** Have a conversation with your teen about the importance of wearing a seat belt—and how to wear it properly. Teen drivers are the least likely to use seat belts, even though they have the highest accident rate of all age groups.

**Teens:** Make sure you always wear your seat belt, and encourage your friends and family members to do the same. Don't drive away until you and all your passengers are buckled up.

- 67% of parents report speaking to their children about wearing a seat belt.
- Teens are twice as likely to wear seat belts if parents set clear rules and monitor driving.
- Those not wearing seat belts are 30 times more likely to be ejected from a vehicle, and 75% of those ejected during an accident die from serious injuries.

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***Did You Know?** [Seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45%.](#)*

# NOW WHAT?

Despite your best efforts, a day may come when you get into an accident.

**Parents:** Teen drivers who are new to the road are statistically at the highest risk of being in a car accident when compared to any other age group. With this in mind, young drivers should be aware of the very real possibility it will happen to them.

**Teens:** Immediately after a car accident; you will likely be frightened, shaken and disoriented. Your adrenaline levels will be high, and you may even be injured. Try to relax, collect your thoughts and try to remember to do the following things on the next page.



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*Did You Know? One-third of accidents happen within 5 miles of home.*



# KEEP CALM

- **Call the Police:** Call 911 to inform them of the accident. Be sure to include your location. Let the police know if there have been any injuries.
- **Be Calm:** Do not let yourself get angry or discuss fault with any other drivers. However, be sure to exchange information with any other drivers, including full names, license numbers, phone numbers, addresses and insurance policies.
- **Pull Out of Traffic:** If you are not blocking traffic, do not move your car. However, pull to a safe area off the road and put your flashers on if you are blocking traffic and can do so safely.
- **Take Pictures:** Take clear photos of any damage to all vehicles involved, and of the accident scene itself, to accurately document the incident.
- **Collect Witness Information:** If there are any witnesses to the accident, be sure to collect all contact information, including full names and phone numbers.

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*Did You Know? Frontal collision injuries are often concussions, internal damage and dislocations.*

# WERE YOU INJURED?

If you have suffered injuries in a car accident, let first responders evaluate your injuries and treat you. Allow them to transport you to the hospital, if needed. Otherwise, make sure you visit a doctor within 48 hours after an accident—and follow your doctor’s treatment instructions.

Be sure to document all aspects of your medical treatment—including doctor’s visits, medications and bills.



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*Did You Know? Injuries due to a car accident may take several days after the accident to register.*

# DO YOU NEED A LAWYER?



While speaking to an attorney after an accident is not required, requesting a consultation about your legal options before contacting the insurance companies may prove to be helpful.

An experienced car accident attorney can fight for you and help you receive the compensation you need after an accident, including medical expenses, lost wages and pain and suffering.



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***Did You Know?** Only a fraction of car accidents involving personal injury claims ever go to trial.*



Now more than ever, it is vital that all drivers understand just how much is at stake, and how one small mistake can bring consequences that last a lifetime.

Parents and teens should share this guide and discuss the valuable information inside. Talk about the risks. Talk about the responsibilities. Talk about how to prevent accidents. Pass it along, so we can build safer roads together.

**Learn More about Traffic Safety:**

- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- [Drive Safe Alabama](#)
- [The National Safety Council](#)
- [Mothers Against Drunk Driving](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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***Did You Know?** Following the advice in this guide can help make you a better, safer driver.*

## This Guide Provided Courtesy of Floyd Hunter Injury Law

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Floyd Hunter Injury Law is a leading personal injury law firm dedicated to protecting rights of injured people throughout Alabama. The attorneys at Floyd Hunter devote themselves to your case—and will work tirelessly to help you receive the justice you deserve.

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Over 80 Years Combined Experience  
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