

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

June 2021



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Life decisions

Life decisions are decisions that a people make, for good or bad, that will affect the rest of their lives. Decisions such as picking the right school, joining the military, or getting married are all examples of life decisions. Unfortunately, one life decision that too many people make is the decision to drink and drive. On January 1st of this year, one young teen driver in Miami made a life decision that affected a lot of lives other than his own.

Only 15 years old and with only a learner's permit, he took his mother's car and went out to celebrate the New Year holiday with some of his friends. After consuming alcohol and marijuana, he and two of his friends set out on the road. Authorities estimate that he was driving at 111 miles per hour when he crashed into another vehicle at an intersection. All four occupants of the other vehicle were killed.

Authorities are charging him as an adult, meaning that, if he is convicted of the many charges against him, he could spend a good portion of his adult life in prison. He recently appeared in court and asked to be released on bond until his trial date. The judge stated that, based on the nature of the charges against him, she felt that he is still a danger to society and ruled that he must remain in jail.

buzzed
driving is
drunk
driving
designate a sober driver

NHTSA

Any time someone makes the choice to drink and drive, no matter how small the amount of alcohol, they are making a life decision. In this case, this teen's life decision not only affected his life but ended the lives of four other young people and plunged their families, along with his, into a lifetime of grief.

<https://www.local10.com/news/local/2021/04/30/drunk-high-teen-with-only-learners-permit-when-he-killed-4-according-to-authorities-will-remain-behind-bars/>

100 Deadliest Days for Teen Drivers

As we enter into the summer months, we are also entering into the deadliest days of the year for teen driver. The period between Memorial Day at the end of May and Labor Day at the beginning of September typically mark the most dangerous months for teen drivers.

As you can see in the table below, the number of fatal crashes involving teen drivers aged 15 to 20 rises significantly during the months of June through August.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
266	224	299	297	374	395	340	340	326	348	331	293	3,833

Data for 2019

There are several reasons for this.

- Teens are home from school and, unless they have a summer job, they have a lot of time on their hands and are looking for something to do.
- Teens are typically risk takers with little regard for consequences and they're looking for something exciting to relieve their boredom.
- The warm summer months offer more opportunities for fun and adventure.
- Teens often fail to pace themselves – spending all day doing physically taxing activities at the beach and then going out late into the night.
- More teen passengers in the car add to distractions for the driver.
- Unsupervised teens are tempted to use alcohol and drugs and think they are capable of driving safely under the influence of those drugs.

The three most common causes for the crashes are:

- **Excessive speed** – high speed limits the time a driver has to react and avoid a dangerous situation ahead.
- **Driver distraction** – The chances of being involved in a crash increases with every teen passenger in the car.
- **Alcohol and drug use** – Driving under the influence leads to poor choices, erratic driving, and slows a driver’s reaction time.

Parents can help reduce the chances of their teen becoming involved in a crash by understanding and enforcing your state’s Graduated Driving Laws (GDL). GDL’s were enacted to give the teen more time to adapt to the driving environment before taking on the additional driving distractions of passengers, nighttime driving, and cell phones.

An effective tool for ensuring that the rules are followed is a parent/teen driving contract where the rules are spelled out along with clear consequences for violating the rules.

Even if your state’s GDL laws don’t have any limits on teen passengers or cell phone use, you can include those limits in your parent/teen driving contract and have the teen sign the contract showing that he or she fully understands the rules and the consequences for breaking them.

In fatal speeding-related crashes with teen drivers:

- The risk increases exponentially with **each additional peer** in the vehicle
- The driver is more likely to be **male** (37% versus 28%)

Source: FARS

GHSA | Ford | FORD MOTOR COMPANY FUND

Pedestrian Deaths At An All-Time High

The Governor's Highway Safety Administration (GHSA) is reporting that 2020 saw the largest ever annual increase in pedestrian deaths in the US.

According to the GHSA, there were 6,721 pedestrian deaths in 2020 – a 4.8% increase over the 6,412 deaths reported by the states in 2019; this is in spite of the fact that there were fewer drivers on the road due to the pandemic. Even though there were fewer vehicles on the road during the pandemic, figures showed that the pedestrian death rate was primarily due to speeding, alcohol use, and driver distractions.

As the nation tries to get back to normal and the amount of traffic increases, drivers need to be on the look out for pedestrians and use extreme care in areas with high pedestrian traffic.

