

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## Teen Killed in Car Accident Caused By Speeding

Christopher Min Sun Park, 16, a student, was killed in a car accident in the early morning hours of Friday, Aug. 18. A Lincoln LS V8 sedan in which he was riding with another 16-year-old boy swerved across the incoming lane of traffic and slammed into a tree; speed was probably a factor in the crash, according to police.

Source: *TimesCommunity.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

Here are two times when you may need to reduce speed for safety:

**Road Obstructions** - Although expressways are built to keep traffic moving, conditions sometimes slow or halt traffic flow. One of these problems is highway construction. Watch for warning signs that are in place

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for Teens and their Parents



before you arrive at the area that is under construction. The closer you get to the construction area, the more you need to slow down and obey special speed limitations.

Lighted sign boards and/or cones may appear as you get closer to the construction area. These may reduce the number of traffic lanes. Check your mirrors and your blind spot before merging to be sure that the lane is clear.

Trucks and other equipment may be using some or your entire traffic lane. Be aware of trucks pulling away from the area. They may leave mud or sand on the road. Slow down, steer gently and obey workers' instructions.

Be especially careful of workers and equipment operators who may not see you. Always use an extra space cushion to protect them.

**Car Crash** - An expressway crash may cause blockage of one or more lanes. When you see a problem ahead, check your mirrors for traffic behind you, flash your brake lights and slow down gradually. Watch for emergency personnel and police officers directing traffic.

If you can go around the crash scene, proceed cautiously. Do not stop unless otherwise directed. Do not slow down to a crawl to look at the crash. You will only slow traffic and may even cause another crash.

Whenever you are not sure about your surroundings or what the actual speed limit is, SLOW DOWN until you're more certain of the speed limit or how well you can handle the situation!

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## Student Killed in Rollover Accident

Derek Adam Garza, age 18, was driving his black Ford Explorer to school when he reportedly drove off the road and then over-corrected in the early morning hours of Monday, August 21. The SUV then slid across the road and flipped, and Garza, who was reportedly not wearing a seat belt at the time of the accident, was killed instantly.

Source: *WOAI.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

When you are driving, things can happen very quickly. You may only have a fraction of a second to make the right move. Here are two emergencies that you may encounter when driving:

If your vehicle's right wheels are off the pavement:

Take your foot off the gas pedal. Hold the wheel firmly and maintain a straight line. If possible, avoid braking. Wait until the road is clear and turn back onto the pavement sharply at low speed. The greater the drop-off between the roadway and the shoulder, the greater amount of steering control you need.

A car will skid when the tires lose their grip on the pavement. Slippery surfaces combined with a sudden movement may cause you to skid. High speed, especially on curves, may also lead to skidding.

If your car skids, you need to respond quickly and calmly. When you feel your car begin to skid, take your foot off the gas pedal. Do not use your brakes, unless you are about to hit something. Steer the car into the direction of the skid to straighten the vehicle out. Then steer in the direction you wish to go. Straighten the steering wheel as soon as you are going in the correct direction. If you do not straighten in time, the car will begin to skid in the opposite direction.

Begin to correct your steering as soon as you go into the skid. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to come out of the skid. All of your steering movement must be quick but smooth. Once you are going straight again, you may begin to accelerate slowly.

Wearing your seat belt helps you cope with vehicle emergencies. Safety belts help keep you behind the wheel of your vehicle, so you can deal with the emergency.

Wear lap belts around your hips, not your stomach. Fasten them snugly. Wear a shoulder belt only with a lap belt. Don't just use your safety belt for long trips or high-speed highways. More than half of the collisions that cause injury or death happen at speeds less than 40 mph, and within 5 miles of home.

What if you're in a collision where you get hit from the side or an angle? The car would spin. You could be ejected from the car. But, if you have your seat belt on, you stay behind the wheel, and you're controlling your vehicle, and you can get out of danger. Some people say, "I'd rather be thrown from the car." You're 25 times more likely to be killed if you are thrown from your car.

Some people think they might burn or drown in their car if they wear their seat belt. Your chance of being involved in a collision and your car catching on fire or landing in water is about .04%. If you're involved in a collision that is so bad that your car is going to blow up or catch fire, what kind of a chance would you have anyway if you don't have a seat belt on? You're going to get knocked out. With your safety belt fastened, you're alive, you're conscious and you can look for a way out of the vehicle.

Safety belts can reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45%.

In 2003, 74% of passenger vehicle occupants who were totally ejected from the vehicle were killed. Studies show you are 25 TIMES more likely to be killed or seriously injured when you are thrown clear than when you remain inside your car.



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# Car Accident Takes Life of Teen

Richard L. Dymond, 19, died after he failed to navigate a 90-degree turn in the road around 1 a.m. on August 18, according to reports from the Sandusky post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol reports. The car struck two wooden posts that outlined an area of gravel parking, then overturned before coming to a rest on its roof near a line of trees, the reports stated.

Source: *Advertiser-Tribune.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

The difference between driving on the highway and the open road (in the country) is the roadways are not well lit. As a result, when you're coming to a curve or going around curves, the road is hard to see. You can't see that there is no shoulder on the side of the road. You can't see road signs until the very last second.

Country roads may have obstacles you wouldn't see in the city, such as animals or farm equipment crossing the road. You may see fruit stands on the side of the road, with other drivers pulling on and off the roadway. Pay close attention to your surroundings.

Country roads may not be well-maintained. There may be potholes on these roads that you cannot see.

Most country roads are narrow two-lane roads without a shoulder. If someone crosses over into your lane and is about to hit you, where do you go? On a highway or on most city streets you have more lanes. You could escape. Country roads may not offer an escape route.

Many times country roads are narrow and hilly. If there is only room for one car on a hill, the car going uphill has the right of way. When you're going uphill, you need momentum to climb the hill. If you stop on the hill, it's extremely hard to build up momentum again to continue climbing the hill. If you're going downhill, you just have to apply the brakes to stop, and release them to start again.

Night driving brings on adjustments that you must deal with successfully. Aside from reducing detail, darkness conceals hazards: pedestrians, bicycles, stalled cars, curves and other objects or conditions. You must make a decision on the basis of a sketchy and incomplete picture.

At night, it is more difficult to judge the speed and position of other vehicles. You must depend largely on

your headlights, which will show only a relatively short and narrow path ahead. Headlights do not bend around corners. Usually, adequate highway lighting is limited. Reduce speed so that you can stop within the visible distance. Glare from roadside lighting and the headlights of oncoming vehicles may impair your visibility. Keep your panel lights dim for better vision, but always keep the panel lights bright enough so you can read your speedometer and other gauges. Increase seeing distance by keeping the headlights clean and properly aimed and the windshield clean.

### Night Driving Tips:

Slow down after sunset.

Increase your following distance and be alert for brake lights ahead.

Don't overdrive your headlights. You should always be able to stop within the distance that you can see ahead in your headlights.

Some drivers do not realize that they have their bright lights on. If the oncoming driver does this, do not put on your bright lights. Slow down and glance down at the right edge of the road as a guide for your lane position. Do not stare directly into the oncoming lights.

High beams will permit you to see further ahead, but switch to low beam headlights when following or approaching another vehicle.

Use your low beam headlights in bad weather. Use of your high beams in heavy rain or fog will reflect the light back into your eyes. Do not drive with only your parking lights on.

Be aware of drowsiness.

Good route planning will help you reach your destination without problems.

Allow yourself enough time to reach your destination.

Leave earlier when traveling at night. Statistically, your chances of being involved in a fatal crash are almost double between 6 pm and 3 am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.



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## Teens Killed in Crash with 18-Wheeler

Elizabeth Pickens, 18, David James Pickens, 14, and Jonathan DeMott, 17, were killed Tuesday, August 8 in a two-vehicle wreck about 2:50 p.m. when they apparently pulled in front of an 18-wheeler as they left the parking lot of a convenience store where they had stopped. The Dodge Stratus in which they were riding was broadsided on the driver's side.

Source: *TexarkanaGazette.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

Whether you are sharing the road with a car, truck, bus, or other large vehicle, it's important for safety's sake to obey traffic laws, abide by the rules of the road, and drive defensively.

Are there any special rules for sharing the road with a truck? Yes! Here are some suggestions from professional truck drivers.

-Blind Spots. Although most large vehicles have several rearview mirrors, it is easy for a car or motorcycle to be hidden in a large vehicle's blind spot. Do not follow closely behind a truck or a bus. When driving near a large vehicle, be aware of the driver's blind spots on the right, left, front and behind.

-Rear Blind Spots. Unlike passenger cars, trucks and buses have deep blind spots directly behind them. Tailgating greatly increases your chances of a rear-end collision with a commercial vehicle.

-Unsafe Passing. Another "No Zone" is just in front of trucks and buses. When passing a bus or truck, be sure you can see the cab in your rearview mirror before pulling in front.

-Wide Right Turns. Truck and bus drivers sometimes need to swing wide to the left in order to safely negotiate a right turn. They cannot see cars directly behind or beside them. Cutting in between the commercial vehicle and the curb or shoulder to the right increases the possibility of a crash.

-Backing Up. When a truck is backing up, it sometimes must block the street to maneuver its trailer accurately. Never cross behind a truck that is preparing to back up or is in the process of doing so. Remember, most trailers are eight and a half feet wide and can completely hide objects that suddenly come between them and loading areas. Automobile

drivers attempting to pass behind a truck enter a blind spot for both drivers.

-When passing a truck, first check to your front and rear, and move into the passing lane only if it is clear and you are in a legal passing zone. Let the truck driver know you are passing by blinking your headlights, especially at night. The driver will make it easier for you by staying to the far side of the lane.

-On a level highway, it takes only three to five seconds longer to pass a truck than a car. On an upgrade, a truck often loses speed, so it is easier to pass than a car. On a downgrade, the truck's momentum will cause it to go faster, so you may need to increase your speed.

-Complete your pass as quickly as possible, and don't stay alongside the other vehicle.

-If the driver blinks his lights after you pass, it's a signal that it is clear to pull back in. Be sure to move back only when you can see the front of the truck in your rear-view mirror. After you pass a truck, maintain your speed.

-When a truck passes you, you can help the truck driver by keeping to the far side of your lane. You'll make it easier for the truck driver if you reduce your speed slightly. In any event, do not speed up while the truck is passing. After passing, the truck driver will signal to let you know that the truck will be returning to your lane.

-When you meet a truck coming from the opposite direction, keep as far as possible to the side to avoid a sideswipe crash and to reduce the wind turbulence between the two vehicles. Remember that the turbulence pushes the vehicles apart; it does not draw them together.

-In general, trucks take slightly longer than cars to stop because of their size. However, at highway speeds or on wet roads, trucks may have better traction and stability, allowing them to stop more quickly. A car following too closely may not be able to stop quickly enough to avoid rear-ending the truck.

-If you are following a truck, stay out of its "blind spot" to the rear. Avoid following too closely, and position your vehicle so the truck driver can see it in his side mirrors. Then you will have a good view of the road ahead, and the truck driver can give you plenty of warning for a stop or a turn. You will have more time to react and make a safe stop.