

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Car Accident Kills Teen

Jeffrey Lee, 15, of Pleasant Grove, Alabama, died September 24 when he was pinned under a relative's car. Lee apparently put the car in gear, jumped out and was then run over.

Source: *Al.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Getting ready to drive is as much a part of motor vehicle safety as actually driving. From the time you enter your vehicle, you are dealing with a potentially deadly machine. Caution must be exercised around the vehicle at all times. Never exit the vehicle without putting it in the proper gear, turning off the ignition, and, if necessary, setting the parking brake.

Before you start your engine:

- Make sure all windows are clean. Remove anything that blocks your view of the road.
- Adjust the seat so you can reach all controls.

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for Teens and their Parents



- Adjust the inside and outside rearview mirrors. You should not have to lean forward or backward to use them.
- Lock all car doors.
- Put on your safety belts. Ask all passengers to do the same.
- Make sure your car is in park or neutral gear before starting the engine.

Never move your car until you have looked in front, behind and to the side for pedestrians and oncoming traffic. Then, signal and pull into traffic when safe.

Good drivers develop habits that focus their full attention on driving. Some drivers can develop bad habits that can be very dangerous when driving. Some bad habits that distract your attention away from driving are:

- Driving when ill, upset or angry.
- Driving while eating and drinking.
- Driving while adjusting the radio or changing CDs/tapes.
- Driving while calling, answering or talking on a mobile phone.
- Reading while driving.
- Driving while drowsy or fatigued.

Good driving is based on practice and being alert at the wheel from the time you enter the vehicle until you exit.

Teen Passenger Killed in Crash Caused by Speeding

A 17-year-old driver from Salt Lake City, Utah, speeding and possibly under the influence of alcohol, lost control of her car and crashed. The car was filled with five of her friends, celebrating homecoming, and one of them died.

Source: *ksl.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Speed causes many crashes. More drivers are convicted of speeding than any other offense. To avoid being fined or involved in a crash, obey the speed limits. Speed is very important in a collision. If you double the speed of a car, you increase its force of impact four times. If you triple the speed, the impact is nine times as great.

Remember that speed limits show the fastest speed you may drive under good conditions. You are responsible for adjusting your driving speed to the road conditions. For example, if the weather is bad or there is a lot of traffic, you must drive more slowly than the posted speed. The safe speed is the one that allows you to have complete control of your vehicle.

The driver of a car being passed must not increase speed until the pass is complete. Help other drivers pass you safely. Move to the right side of your lane to give them more room and a better view of the road ahead.

You will need to drive with extra care at night. You cannot see as far ahead or to the side, and glare from oncoming cars can reduce your vision even more. Follow these guidelines for driving at night: -

- Use your headlights (low beam or high beam) between the hours of sunset and sunrise.
- When leaving a brightly lit place, drive slowly until your eyes adjust to the darkness.
- If a vehicle comes toward you with high beams, flash your lights to high beam and back to low beam once. Don't look directly at oncoming headlights. Instead, watch the right edge of your lane. Look quickly to be sure of the other vehicle's position every few seconds.

If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chance of being in a crash is much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol. No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if you have been driving for many years. Young drivers are more affected by alcohol because their bodies are still in the growth process and their livers have not developed to the extent that they can efficiently process the alcohol in their bloodstream. Because drinking alcohol and then driving is so dangerous, the penalties are very tough. People who drive after drinking risk heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of license and even jail sentences.

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills necessary to drive safely, such as judgment, reaction, vision and concentration. Alcohol is absorbed into the lining of the stomach and then passes directly into the bloodstream and reaches your brain within minutes after consumption. Alcohol affects those areas of your brain that control judgment and skill and this one reason why drinking alcohol is so dangerous; it affects your judgment. A person's judgment is the first thing affected after drinking an alcoholic beverage. Good judgment is important to driving but in this case, judgment helps you to know when to stop drinking. Alcohol puts good judgment on hold. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. It is a little like a sunburn; by the time you feel it, it is already too late. Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces your ability to see clearly and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and your skills decrease. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds and the movement of other vehicles. You will also have trouble controlling your vehicle.

The best advice is, if you drink alcohol, do not drive.

Ready to get your Learners Permit?



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Teen Charged in Neighbor's Death

A 17-year-old high school senior was driving to school on the morning of September 26 when he struck and killed his neighbor, police said. Ryan R. Bigos was arrested on charges of negligent vehicular homicide and leaving the scene of a personal injury accident resulting in death at the high school.

Source: *masslive.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Defensive driving means doing all you can to prevent crashes. As a defensive driver, you will "give" a little. You will change your driving to fit the weather conditions, the way you feel, and the actions of other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. Follow these steps to avoid crashes:

1. Look for possible danger. Think about what might happen. If there are children playing by the road, plan what you will do if one runs or rides into the street.
2. Understand what can be done to prevent a crash.
3. Act in time. Once you have seen a dangerous situation, act right away to prevent a crash.

More crashes happen at intersections than any other place. Be very careful when approaching any intersection or driveway. Look both ways and be ready to brake or stop. Drive at the slowest speed just before entering the intersection, not while crossing. Do not pass or change lanes. Be aware of vehicles behind you. Will they be able to stop if necessary? If you are stopped, look for bicyclists and pedestrians who may be crossing the intersection from either direction.

Safety rules for pedestrians are:

- Look to the left and the right before stepping off any curb.
- Cross only at intersections or designated crosswalks. Drivers are always more alert for pedestrians when they approach intersections.
- Cross with the green light or "WALK" signal.
- Make sure you have enough time to cross. Although the motorist must yield, the motorist may not see you in time.
- While walking along a highway, always walk on the shoulder on the left side, facing traffic.

- Wear light colored clothing or use a flashlight to make you more visible to drivers at night.

It is the motorist's responsibility to do everything possible to avoid colliding with any pedestrians. Bicyclists, skaters and skateboarders in a crosswalk or driveway are considered pedestrians. Turning motorists must yield to pedestrians at intersections with traffic signals. Motorists must yield to pedestrians crossing the street or driveway at any marked mid-block crossing, driveway or intersection without traffic signals.

The primary traveling aids for a person who is blind are often a white cane or a trained guide dog. Independent travel involves some risk that can be greatly reduced when you, the driver, are aware of the use and meaning of a white cane or guide dog. Drivers must always yield the right-of-way to persons who are blind.

Drivers must yield the right-of-way to mobility-impaired persons and pedestrians utilizing the assistance of a guide dog or service animal.

Crossing guards are posted in areas when it is unsafe for children to cross alone. When you see a guard, reduce your speed. You are near a school and children are in the area. Watch for school zone posted speed limit. If necessary, stop at the marked stop line. Never stop in the crosswalk. Obey signals from any crossing guard. It is the driver's responsibility to do everything possible to avoid colliding with pedestrians. Remember that children are unpredictable. Do your part to make every crossing a safe crossing.

No matter how well you drive, you are not safe unless your vehicle is in good condition.

Check the brakes to see that the pedal stays well above the floor when you step on it. If the car pulls to one side when you use the brakes or you hear any scraping or squealing noises, your brakes may need to be repaired.

Replace burned-out bulbs and clean the lenses on your lights often. Dirty headlights can cut your night vision by one-half.



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The advertisement features a woman sitting at a desk with a laptop, smiling. The text is overlaid on a dark background.

Teen Killed in Rollover Crash

Krystle Accardi, 14, died on the night of September 23 from injuries suffered in a car accident the previous afternoon; one of eight passengers, she was ejected from the front passenger seat of a sport utility vehicle when the teen driver lost control and the SUV rolled over Accardi, investigators said. She was sitting on another teen's lap and not wearing a seat belt, deputies said.

Source: *news-journalonline.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

In a crash, you are far more likely to be killed if you are not wearing a safety belt. Wearing shoulder belts and lap belts make your chances of living through a crash twice as good. In a crash, safety belts:

- Keep you from being thrown from the vehicle. The risk of death is five times greater if you are thrown from a vehicle in a crash.
- Keep you from being thrown against others in the vehicle.
- Keep the driver behind the wheel, where he or she can control the vehicle.
- Keep you from being thrown against parts of your vehicle, such as the steering wheel or windshield.

Remember to wear your lap belt low on your lap and against your thighs. Wear your shoulder belt over your shoulder and across your chest. Never wear your shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm. Your shoulder and lap belts should be snug without any slack. Pregnant women are much safer if buckled up by wearing the belt as low on the pelvis as possible.

Don't just use your safety belt for long trips or high-speed highways. More than half of the crashes that cause injury or death happen at speeds less than 40 MPH and within 25 miles from home.

The number one killer of young children in the United States is traffic crashes in which children were not restrained at all. Over 90 percent of the deaths and 80 percent of the injuries in car crashes could be prevented by using crash-tested child restraints.

Children should be secured in the rear seat. Never secure a child in the front passenger side, especially if your vehicle has an air bag.

What is the best child seat?

- The one that fits your child.
- The one that fits your vehicle.
- The one that you will use correctly every time.

Whatever your reason for not wearing safety belts, it is not reasonable and may violate the state law.

Driving is complex. Gaining the necessary skills and experience takes time. Unfortunately, the learning period is also full of risks. New drivers are much more likely than experienced drivers to crash and get injured or even killed.

Young drivers need time to develop their driving skills and the judgment to counteract their lack of on-the-road experience. Young drivers tend to overestimate their own physical and driving abilities and underestimate the dangers on the road.

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is the system of laws and practices that gradually introduces young drivers into the driving population.

Graduated driver licensing often limits the number of passengers a teen driver may have in the vehicle. Passengers are often a distraction that inexperienced drivers are not equipped to handle, and the more passengers, the greater the distraction.

Graduated licensing requirements vary by state. In addition to limiting the number of passengers allowed in the vehicle, they often restrict the hours during which the teen driver may be on the road and require a parent or guardian to certify that a minimum number of hours of driving, including night driving, have been driven with a licensed, practiced driver in the front passenger seat.

Some states add other requirements including safety belt use provisions, cell phone use restrictions, penalty systems so that violations result in license suspension or extension of the holding period, and driver education.

As the new driver gains skills and experience and demonstrates skills and responsibility, the restrictions are removed from the driver license.

Learn about and follow the graduated driver licensing requirements in your state.