

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Drives Car into House

A teenage driver jumped a curb and crashed his car into a house on the afternoon of December 21; wet roads and driving too fast for conditions contributed to the crash. No one was injured.

Source: SuburbanChicagoNews.com♦

Lessons Learned

We drive in environmental conditions each time we make a trip. Understanding better how to handle changing conditions will make the trip more enjoyable and safer.

When roads are wet, stopping distance increases. When braking, friction between your tires and the surface of the roadway affect your stopping distance. Wet roads have less friction and increase the distance it takes you to stop.

Heavy rain reduces your ability to see and be seen. In the daytime, turn on your windshield wipers, low beam

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headlights and, if needed, your windshield defroster.

Heavy rain at night can almost blind you. Driving the speed limit under these conditions is too fast.

In rainy weather, the hazard of reduced visibility is compounded by reduced traction. Traction is the grip between your tires and the road. As the moisture reduces friction, tires lose their grip. The distance needed to stop a car increases and the driver has less control of the vehicle. The danger of reduced traction is greatest within the first half hour of rainfall. At that time, the pavement becomes especially slippery, when the rain mixes with the oil and the dust on the surface of the road.

Driving through water may cause hydroplaning. Hydroplaning occurs when your tires ride on a thin layer of water and do not touch the road. When the car is riding on a film of water, there is no friction between your tires and the road. Hydroplaning also affects your ability to steer and brake. As little as 1/16 of an inch of water can cause hydroplaning.

If you find yourself driving on slick roads, here are some safety tips to follow:

- Gradually reduce your speed. Do not brake hard or suddenly on wet or slippery pavement.
- Avoid sudden acceleration.
- When you change your speed or direction, do so smoothly and gradually rather than sharply.
- Increase your following distance to allow more time to stop.



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Teens Injured in Wreck Caused by Speeding

Jessica L. New, 17, and Jennifer R. Irwin, 17, were injured when the car New was driving went left of center in a curve, struck a guard rail, and hit a tree. New was driving at a high rate of speed.

Source: TMNews.com◆

Lessons Learned

Speeding:

- reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves on the highway or avoid objects in the roadway.
- extends the distance necessary to stop the vehicle.
- increases the distance a vehicle travels while a driver reacts.
- reduces the effectiveness of the vehicle's safety features.

The faster the vehicle is traveling, the greater the impact if the vehicle does crash. Inversely, the effectiveness of restraint devices like airbags and safety belts and vehicular construction features such as crumple zones and side member beams decline as impact speed increases. The probability of a disfiguring or debilitating injury or death increases with higher speed on impact.

Speeding is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. The economic cost to society of speeding-related crashes is estimated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to be 40.4 billion dollars per year. In 2004, speeding was a contributing factor in 30 percent of all fatal crashes, and 13,192 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes.

Speeding was a factor in 29 percent of the fatal crashes that occurred on dry roads in 2004 and in 34 percent of those that occurred on wet roads. Speeding was involved in one-third (31 percent) of the fatal crashes that occurred in construction/maintenance zones. Eighty-six percent of speeding-related fatalities occurred on roads that were not interstate highways.

Alcohol and speeding are clearly a deadly combination. Alcohol involvement is prevalent for

drivers involved in speeding-related crashes. In 2004, 40 percent of the intoxicated drivers (.08 BAC or higher) involved in fatal crashes were speeding, compared to only 15 percent of the sober drivers (0.00 BAC) involved in fatal crashes.

For both speeding and non-speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes, the percentage of those who had a BAC of .01 or greater at the time the crash occurred was higher at night than during the day. Between midnight and 3:00 a.m., 77 percent of speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.

In a 2002 survey, the NHTSA found that speeding is a pervasive behavior, with about three-quarters of drivers in the survey reporting they drove over the speed limit on all types of roads within the past month.

One way to look at speeding is in terms of benefits and risks. This means that the benefits and risks of speeding will be evaluated and the decision of whether or not to continue speeding will be made based on that comparison. On a piece of paper, create one column labeled "Benefits" and another labeled "Risks." In the Benefits column, list all the good things you can derive from speeding. For example, you might write down that the benefits of speeding are saving time and having fun. Once you have completed your list of benefits, write down all the bad things you could derive from speeding. Your list of risks might include tickets, poor gas mileage, higher insurance rates due to tickets or accidents, and greater risk of property damage, injury, and death if you are involved in an accident. After the list of risks is complete, compare your lists of benefits against your list of risks. Are the benefits you receive from speeding worth the risks you face?

Ready to get your Learners Permit?



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Teen Dies after Rolling Her Car

Ashley Vanbebbek, 19, died at the scene after losing control of her vehicle due to speeding, overcompensating, and rolling her car across the highway. She was not wearing a safety belt and was ejected from the vehicle.

Source: wibw.com♦

Lessons Learned

Rollover resistance ratings measure the chances that your vehicle will roll over if you are involved in a single vehicle crash. Vehicles with a higher number of stars are less likely to rollover if involved in a single-vehicle crash. A single-vehicle crash is one that does not involve another vehicle. It is important to note that these ratings do not directly predict the likelihood of that single-vehicle crash occurring.

Driver behavior, speeding, distraction and inattentiveness play a significant role in rollover crashes. Almost all vehicles involved in a rollover somehow lost control, ran off the road and struck an object such as a ditch, curb, guardrail or soft soil, causing the wheels to "trip" on the object and the vehicle to roll over. It is also important to note that rollover crashes have a higher fatality rate than other kinds of crashes. More than 10,000 people die each year in rollover crashes. Remember: Even the highest rated vehicle can roll over. By wearing your safety belt you can reduce your chance of being killed in a rollover by about 75 percent.

Beginning with the 2004 model year, the rollover resistance rating is based on:

1. An at-rest laboratory measurement known as the Static Stability Factor (SSF) that determines how "top heavy" a vehicle is, and
2. The results of a dynamic maneuvering test.

In short, the rollover rating brings together a measure of how "top-heavy" a vehicle is with how well it performs in a severe turning maneuver on a test track. The lowest rated vehicles (1-star) are at least four times more likely to roll over than the highest rated vehicles (5-stars).

For model years 2003 and earlier, rollover resistance ratings are based on the SSF rating only. Consumers making cross year comparisons of vehicles' rollover star ratings will need to be aware of this difference starting with model year 2004 and later vehicles.

NHTSA's rollover resistance ratings of vehicles reflect the real-world rollover experience of vehicles involved in over 86,000 single vehicle crashes. Like side-impact crash test ratings, it is possible to compare vehicles from different weight classes when looking at rollover ratings.

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. If you are involved in a crash, your seat belt will keep you from being thrown from your vehicle. If you are thrown from your vehicle in the crash, your risk of death is five times greater. In fatal crashes in 2004, 74 percent of passenger vehicle occupants who were totally ejected from the vehicle were killed.

Seat belts keep you from being thrown against others in the vehicle. Seat belts also keep you from being thrown against parts of your vehicle, such as the steering wheel or windshield. They keep the driver behind the wheel, where he or she can control the vehicle.

Research has found that use of lap/shoulder belts reduces the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger-car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light truck occupants, safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent. In 2004, the use of safety belts saved 15,434 lives. If all occupants of passenger vehicles wore their safety belts, an additional 5,839 lives could have been saved in 2004.

Wear a shoulder belt only with a lap belt. Wear your safety belt every time you get in your vehicle, not just for long trips or on 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.

Speeding is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. In 2004, speeding was a contributing factor in 30 percent of all fatal crashes, and 13,192 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes.

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your DMV Exam
the first time?

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Teen Dead after Car Collides with Truck

Tascha Brown, 16, died and her two passengers were injured when she ran a stop sign and the car she was driving hit the rear wheels of a semi-tractor before going under the trailer on December 7.

Source: Radiolowa.com♦

Lessons Learned

In 2004, 416,000 large trucks (gross vehicle weight rating greater than 10,000 pounds) were involved in traffic crashes in the United States: 4,862 were involved in fatal crashes. A total of 5,190 people died (12 percent of all the traffic fatalities reported in 2004) and an additional 116,000 were injured in those crashes. Large trucks accounted for 8 percent of all vehicles involved in fatal crashes and 4 percent of all vehicles involved in injury and property-damage-only crashes. One out of eight traffic fatalities in 2004 resulted from a collision involving a large truck.

Of the fatalities that resulted from crashes involving large trucks, 77 percent were occupants of another vehicle, 8 percent were non-occupants, and 15 percent were occupants of a large truck.

Of the injuries that resulted from crashes involving large trucks, 73 percent were occupants of another vehicle, 3 percent were non-occupants, and 24 percent were occupants of a large truck.

For safety's sake, you must understand all traffic laws, be courteous, abide by the rules of the road and drive responsibly. Large trucks include not only trucks but also any vehicle you have trouble seeing around, such as buses, vans, delivery trucks, motor homes, and some sport utility vehicles (SUV).

When you are driving in the vicinity of a large truck, stay out of the driver's blind spots. Remember that a large vehicle's blind spots may be different from the blind spots you have in your vehicle, which is smaller, shaped differently, and sits differently in relation to the road. The "No Zone" is the area around the vehicle that a driver can't see in her or his rearview or side mirrors. Many trucks have a sign that reads, "If you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you." When you see this sign, make sure you can see the vehicle's mirrors. If you can't, speed up or slow down until you are out of the driver's No Zone.

Otherwise, you might be involved in a crash if the driver of the large vehicle swerves or changes lanes.

Another No Zone is the area directly behind large vehicles. Tailgating greatly increases your chances of a rear-end collision. When you follow a large vehicle, you cannot see what the driver of that vehicle can see. If the driver must stop suddenly, you may not know why. You must rely on the brake lights of that vehicle. By the time the brake lights are on, the driver's reaction distance has passed and her or his braking distance has begun. Your total stopping distance must be less than that driver's braking distance. You need as much time and space as possible to make this happen.

The area directly in front of large vehicles is another No Zone. When passing a bus or truck, be sure you can see the front of the vehicle in your rearview mirror before pulling in front of the vehicle.

Another No Zone is between a large vehicle and the curb on the shoulder to the right when the vehicle is making a wide right turn. When a vehicle makes a wide right turn, sometimes the driver needs to swing the vehicle wide to the left to safely negotiate the turn. The driver cannot see directly behind or beside the vehicle. Cutting in between the vehicle and the curb on the shoulder to the right greatly increases the possibility of the crash.

The area behind a large truck when the truck is backing up is another No Zone. Sometimes a truck 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. Most trailers are eight and a half feet wide and can completely hide objects that suddenly come between them and loading areas. 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.

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; don't stay alongside the other vehicle.

When a truck passes you, you can help the truck driver by keeping to the far side of your lane.