

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Pedestrian Suffers Serious Injuries in Crash

A 41-year-old man was hospitalized with major head trauma after he was struck by the 17-year-old driver of a Chevrolet Blazer. The teen was uninjured in the crash.

Source: *LSJ.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

In 2005, 4,881 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States - a decrease of 13 percent from the 5,584 pedestrians killed in 1995. On average, a pedestrian is killed in a traffic crash every 108 minutes. There were 64,000 pedestrians injured in traffic crashes in 2005. On average, a pedestrian is injured in a traffic crash every eight minutes.

In 2005, almost one-fifth (18 percent) of all children between the ages of 5 and 9 years who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians. In addition, children under 15 years old accounted for eight percent of all

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pedestrian fatalities in motor vehicle crashes.

Older pedestrians (ages 70+) accounted for 16 percent of all pedestrian fatalities and five percent of all pedestrians injured in 2005. The death rate for this group, both males and females, was 2.88 per 100,000; this was higher than any other age group.

During 2005, 43 percent of the young pedestrian fatalities occurred between the hours of 3 PM and 7 PM, and 48 percent occurred on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.

Of all the highway users, pedestrians are the most vulnerable. It is the special responsibility of drivers to watch for and protect pedestrians.

Many pedestrians who do not drive are not fully aware of traffic laws, including those that pertain to signals. Many do not know the distance needed to stop a moving vehicle. Children and the elderly are most at risk. Children can act impulsively and may run into traffic without thinking. The elderly may take longer to cross the street. They may not be able to see or hear well and may be unaware of possible dangers. Never assume that pedestrians will move out of the way. In some situations you may have to stop to allow a pedestrian to cross safely. Try to let them know you are there with a tap on your horn or a hand wave.

Many pedestrians assume that drivers will yield the right of way to anyone in the crosswalk. When they cross at an intersection with a Walk signal, pedestrians may not even look for oncoming traffic. Be alert for pedestrians at night, even in well-lit areas. It is often difficult to identify pedestrians at night.

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Bald Tires Contribute to Crash

Three teens were injured in a two-vehicle crash after the driver lost control in a turn and crossed into another lane. Police said one of the teens reported that the tires on the vehicle were bald.

Source: *MetroWestDailyNews.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Tires are very important in having a safe trip. Remember that only a small portion of the tire is used to make the vehicle stop and turn. It is your only contact with the road. It is important to maintain proper air pressure. Too little air even in one tire can make a vehicle difficult to control. Tread on a tire helps to keep traction, which means control and the ability to stop on a wet surface.

You can extend the life of your tires by avoiding fast starts, stops and turns. Check the tires periodically and rotate them regularly. Look for weak spots, cuts, blisters, rocks caught in the tread, and uneven wear. Replace tires before they become unsafe.

Your tires should have visible tread of at least 2/32 of an inch across the base with no worn spots showing the ply. Smooth tires on wet roads contribute to serious crashes.

Flat Tire or a Blowout

When a front tire blows out, the vehicle pulls strongly in the direction of the deflated tire. You must steer firmly against the pull of the vehicle to keep it on its intended path. A left front tire blowout is especially dangerous, since the vehicle may pull left toward the lane of oncoming traffic.

When a rear tire blows out, the back of the car can fishtail. Handle a rear blowout like a skid. Grip the steering wheel firmly and ease up on the accelerator. Avoid braking. Steer the vehicle in the direction you want the front end to go and coast into a safe location.

If you are going to change a tire, check the owner's manual for the correct procedure. A tire change should always be performed off the traveled portion of the highway.

Driving in the rain is a hazard we must consider. When the roads are wet, stopping distance is increased. When braking, friction between your tires and the surface of the roadway affects your

stopping distance. Wet roads have less friction and increase the distance it takes you to stop. Also, driving through water may cause hydroplaning. The tread on a tire prevents hydroplaning which is one reason the law requires tire treads to meet certain standards. As little as 1/16 of one inch of water can 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.

Do not drive through large bodies of standing water, which can affect brake performance and the vehicle's electrical system and can cause engine failure, which could result in costly repairs. If the standing water is concentrated on one portion of the road and only one side of the vehicle goes through the water, the vehicle will often pull in that direction. The force of the pull is dependent on the depth of the water and the speed of the vehicle.

As you approach standing water, lift your foot off the gas pedal and check your rearview mirror for vehicles that are following you too closely.

Remember:

- Slow down before driving through the water.
- Turn your windshield wipers on.
- Tap the brakes as you exit.
- Use caution when checking the outside mirrors. Rain can distort or obliterate images.
- NEVER drive through standing water if you do not know how deep it is.



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Teen Trying to Perform Stunt Rolls Vehicle Over

A teen driver trying to perform a stunt as his car traveled around a curve caused the vehicle to roll over and come to rest on its top. The teen was charged with reckless driving, operating an uninsured motor vehicle, allowing unauthorized passengers, and violating restrictions on a temporary permit, and he sustained moderate to serious injuries.

Source: *9News.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:

- An at-rest laboratory measurement known as the Static Stability Factor (SSF) that determines how “top heavy” a vehicle is, and
- 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.

If your vehicle skids, you need to respond quickly and calmly. A vehicle will skid when the tires lose their grip on the pavement. Slippery surfaces combined with sudden movement may cause you to skid. High speed, especially on curves, may also lead to skidding. When you feel your vehicle 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 more difficult it will be to get out of the skid. All of your steering movements must be quick but smooth. Once you are going straight again, you may begin to accelerate slowly.

The way that the road you are traveling on is structured is also important to watch. Speeding reduces a driver’s ability to steer safely around curves on the highway or avoid objects in the roadway. It extends the distance necessary to stop the vehicle, increases the distance a vehicle travels while a driver reacts, and 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.



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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 Dies Three Weeks after Crash on Icy Road

An 18-year-old man who was the front-seat passenger in a crash on icy roads has died of his injuries. The teen and two others had just dropped their mother off at work.

Source: WoodTV.com♦

Lessons Learned

Safe Winter Driving Tips

Winter driving can be hazardous and scary, especially in northern regions that get a lot of snow and ice. Additional preparations can help make a trip safer, or help motorists deal with an emergency.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, there are Three Ps of Safe Winter Driving:

- PREPARE for the trip;
 - PROTECT yourself; and
 - PREVENT crashes on the road.
-
- PREPARE
 - Maintain Your Car: Check battery, tire tread, and windshield wipers, keep your windows clear, put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir, and check your antifreeze.
 - Have On Hand: flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter, even floor mats), shovel, snow brush and ice scraper, warning devices (like flares) and blankets. For long trips, add food and water, medication and cell phone.
 - Stopped or Stalled? Stay with your car, don't over exert, put bright markers on antenna or windows and shine dome light, and, if you run your car, clear exhaust pipe and run it just enough to stay warm.
 - Plan Your Route: Allow plenty of time (check the weather and leave early if necessary), be familiar with the maps/directions, and let others know your route and arrival time.

- Practice Cold Weather Driving!
 - During daylight, rehearse maneuvers slowly on the ice or snow in an empty lot.
 - Steer into a skid.
 - Know what your brakes will do: stomp on antilock brakes, pump non-antilock brakes.
 - Stopping distances are longer on water-covered ice and ice.
 - Don't idle for a long time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.

- PROTECT YOURSELF

- Buckle up and use child safety seats properly.
- Never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag.
- Children 12 and under are much safer in the back seat.

- PREVENT CRASHES

- Drugs and alcohol never mix with driving.
- Slow down and increase distances between cars.
- Keep your eyes open for pedestrians walking in the road.
- Avoid fatigue – Get plenty of rest before the trip, stop at least every three hours, and rotate drivers if possible.

Other Tips:

- Weather conditions may warrant detouring traffic from the main roadway. It is strongly suggested that drivers always keep an updated map containing the areas of travel.
- Put an extra car key in your pocket. A number of motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when putting on chains and at ski areas.
- Keep your gas tank full. It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad storm or you may be caught in a traffic delay.
- Be more observant. Visibility is often limited in winter by weather conditions. Slow down and watch for other vehicles that have flashing lights.