

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Arrested after Single-Vehicle Crash

An 18-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving following a single-vehicle crash that killed another teen and injured three more. One of his passengers, age 19 was thrown from the car and pinned underneath; he died at the scene.

Source: *Nebraska.tv* ♦

Lessons Learned

If you choose to drink alcohol, you need to consider the alternatives to driving under the influence. These responsible choices could be made with a little planning.

Designated Driver - Choose one person in your group to be the "designated driver." This must be someone who will not even consume one drink, whom you trust to stand by their commitment not to consume any alcohol. If your designated driver does consume alcohol, use one of the other suggested choices to get

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home safely.

Taxi, Friend, Family Member - If you are drinking outside the home and you find yourself and/or your friends impaired you may want to call a cab, family member or a friend who has not been drinking to come pick you up. Nobody wants a loved one to be in an impaired state, but when they consider the alternatives, a friend or relative will gladly pick you up. Nobody who has been drinking should get behind the wheel!

If you are drinking at a friend's home and the suggestion is made that you spend the night, accept the invitation. Sleep on the floor if you have to - wherever you sleep, it will likely be more comfortable than a jail cell.

Try limiting your drinks. Drink bottled water or juice in between. Spacing out your drinks will reduce your BAC. Also, stop drinking several hours before you need to drive. Remember, only time eliminates the effects of alcohol.

BAC levels vary from person to person, and can vary within an individual on a case-by-case basis. An individual's BAC depends on the person's gender, weight, metabolism, the time period over which the alcohol was consumed, and the amount of food that was in the stomach prior to drinking. Although a person's BAC can be estimated, the level cannot be determined solely by the number of drinks consumed, and cannot be precisely calculated by a person's height and weight.

Our recommendation is **DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!**

Teen Faces Charges after Killing Man

An 18-year-old man faces charges of death by auto, driving while intoxicated, and possession with intent to distribute marijuana and oxycodone after he veered his car into oncoming traffic and struck another man who was riding a motorcycle.

Source: *PressofAtlanticCity.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

A drug is any chemical substance taken into the body by mouth, inhalation, injection, or through the skin that causes changes in the body and/or mind of the user. Medicines are drugs; over the counter and prescription medicines contribute to society's drug problems.

Most drugs are classified according to the effects they have on the central nervous system and bodily functions. Drugs that are depressants depress, or slow down, the central nervous system. Alcohol is a depressant. Other drugs stimulate, or speed up, the nervous system, such as cocaine. Drugs can alter a person's thinking process and personality.

When legal drugs are taken in moderate amounts and for the right reasons, they are relatively safe. However, any drug can become dangerous if it is taken in excess or otherwise misused or abused. Any drug can produce unwanted side effects.

When buying any medicine, check the label for warnings of how the drugs might affect driving performance. Some labels specify that you should not drive or operate heavy machinery after taking the drug. As a responsible driver, do not ignore such cautions.

Drugs that can be obtained legally without a doctor's prescription (over-the-counter) can affect a person's driving ability. These medicines provide relief from colds, hay fever, headaches, etc.

A drug that can be purchased legally only when ordered by a doctor is a prescription medicine. Most prescription medicines are stronger than over-the-counter medicines. Ask your doctor how a prescription medicine might affect your driving ability. If you take medicine prescribed by more than one doctor, make sure that each doctor knows about the other prescriptions.

Using two or more drugs at the same time can be very dangerous. You should not take more than one over-the-counter or prescription medicine without first consulting your doctor or a pharmacist.

Many alcohol-drug combinations increase driving risks; some combinations can be fatal.

After alcohol, marijuana is the substance most frequently found in fatal automobile crashes. Even a moderate dose of marijuana can impair driving performance. Alcohol and marijuana are also often found together, resulting in a dramatic spike in impairment levels and decreased driving performance. The effects of a low dose of marijuana combined with alcohol are much greater than for either drug alone.

Combining any two drugs, or a drug with alcohol, may result in the synergistic effect. This means that the combination of drugs produces effects that are greater than the sum of the effects of the two drugs. This is called an additive effect; instead of a $1 + 1 = 2$ result, the synergistic effect may cause a $1 + 1 = 3$ result. Never combine narcotics with alcohol or tranquilizers. Even small doses might cause problems. These drug interactions may result in unconsciousness and death.

For example, if you are taking antihistamines for a cold or allergy and drink alcohol, the alcohol will increase the drowsiness that the medicine alone can cause, making driving even more dangerous. Sedatives and tranquilizers alone can impair driving skills.

Driving skills can also be impaired by other medications, such as codeine. When combined with alcohol, the adverse effects of these medications on driving skills get worse. The same is true of some antidepressants, most antihistamines, certain cardiovascular medications, and some anti-psychotic medications.



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Teen Riding Bicycle Hit by Car

A 15-year-old girl was injured when she was hit by a car while crossing a busy intersection on a bicycle. The teen failed to yield to the car.

Source: KSALink.com ♦

Lessons Learned

The first automobile crash in the United States occurred in New York City in 1896, when a motor vehicle collided with a bicycle rider (Famous First Facts, by Joseph Kane).

In the United States in 2005, bicyclist fatalities occurred more frequently in urban areas (69 percent), at non intersection locations (70 percent), between the hours of 5:00 PM and 9:00PM (31 percent), and during the months of June, July, and August (31 percent).

Most of the bicyclists killed or injured in 2005 in the United States were males (87% and 80%, respectively), and most were between the ages of 5 and 44 years (57% and 72%, respectively).

As the driver of a motor vehicle, give bicycles extra space whenever possible. Some riders may not be able to control their bicycles well and may suddenly get in your path. Be sure to give extra space to young riders, riders who may be distracted, riders who may have been drinking and older riders. As you start to pass, approach slowly and try not to frighten the rider. Before passing, be aware of the possible path the bicyclist may take. A cyclist may swerve into your path for a variety of reasons that you may not be aware of such as potholes, puddles, and storm drains. If you can predict a possible change of direction, you may be able to stop in time to avoid a crash.

Always start your pass well behind the bicycle. You should have at least a half-lane of space between your vehicle and the bicyclist. If you do not have this much space, wait for a gap in oncoming traffic and then pass. Before you move over to pass, signal to traffic behind you to let them know that you are changing lanes. You may want to warn the cyclist by tapping your horn.

Large three-wheel cycles are popular in some communities especially retirement areas. They provide transportation and exercise. In retirement areas, riders of three-wheel cycles may travel in large groups.

At night, use your low beam headlights when traveling near bicyclists. Avoid shining your high beam headlights into riders' eyes.

When parallel parking, check for all types of pedalcycles before opening the driver's side door.

When You Ride a Bicycle

Persons riding bicycles or mopeds on a roadway have the same rights (with certain exceptions) and duties as motor vehicle drivers and may be ticketed for traffic violations. Know and obey these laws:

- Bicyclists must obey all traffic controls and signals
- An adult bicyclist may carry a child in a backpack or sling, child seat or trailer designed to carry children
- You may not allow a passenger to remain in a child seat or carrier when you are not in immediate control of the bicycle
- Bicycle helmets are recommended for all ages
- Keep at least one hand on the handlebars
- On the roadway, check behind you before changing lanes
- When operating a bicycle on a one-way street with two or more traffic lanes, you may ride as close to the left-hand edge of the roadway as practicable
- Do not ride two abreast when this will impede the flow of traffic
- If you intend to make a left turn, you are entitled to full use of the lane from which the turn is made
- In addition to the normal vehicular-style left turn, you may proceed through the right-most portion of the intersection and turn as close to the curb or edge as possible at the far side. After complying with any official traffic control device, you may proceed in the new direction of travel.
- Signal your intent to turn to other vehicle operators by pointing in the direction you are going to turn
- Do not wear headphones or any other listening device except a hearing aid while bicycling
- Do not ride a bicycle when under the influence of alcohol or drugs



Want to pass your DMV Exam the first time?

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The advertisement features a photograph of a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The text is overlaid on a dark brown background.

Pedestrian Teen Killed by Car Driven by another Teen

A 14-year-old boy was killed and another boy seriously injured when they were struck by a car driven by a 19-year-old man. A witness said people routinely speed down the street. The district attorney will decide if charges should be filed.

Source: KCBS.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 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.

Pedestrians waiting to cross the street often stand in the street instead of on the curb. They may even dash across the street without warning. During a rainstorm, pedestrians may be more concerned about protection from the weather and pay little attention to moving traffic.

You should also attempt to predict when pedestrians may step out in front of you. By making this prediction, you will be able to slow or stop in order to avoid a conflict.

Be alert for pedestrians at night, even in well-lit areas. It is often difficult to identify pedestrians at night.

Watch for pedestrians when leaving an alley or driveway. Always stop before crossing the sidewalk and look for pedestrians. You may tap your horn as a warning. Once across the sidewalk, be prepared to yield the right of way to other traffic on the street.

Although a jogger is safer using a sidewalk or jogging path, you may encounter joggers on the street. A jogger who is coming toward you should see you, but a jogger whose back is towards you may not hear you coming. Be aware of joggers who are wearing music headsets as their hearing ability will be compromised.

The primary traveling aids for a person who is blind are often a white cane and/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.

Whenever a pedestrian who is mobility impaired (using a wheelchair, crutches, a cane or a walker) is in a crosswalk, it is the driver's responsibility to stop at the intersection to allow the pedestrian to cross safely. Once the pedestrian has crossed safely, the driver may proceed with caution.

The moment you step from your vehicle, you are a pedestrian. The knowledge you have about driving should make you more aware of possible problems and conflicts with pedestrians.