

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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2 Teen Brothers Killed In Train Collision

Two teen-age brothers died and a third is in fair condition after a train struck their car. A preliminary report from the State Patrol said the vehicle came to the railroad crossing and the cross bar was down at the time because of a train coming north. The car apparently went around the cross bar and was struck on its left passenger side at the front end.

Source: <http://www.moultrieobserver.com> ♦

Teen dies tragically in train related accident

A 17 year old male was killed when he allegedly tried make it across the railroad tracks as an oncoming Amtrak train was coming through

Source: <http://www.hopestar.com> ♦

Train Kills 3 Teens Crossing Florida Bridge

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For Teens and their Parents



Three teenage girls crossing a bridge in central Florida were killed by a freight train as they desperately tried to get out of its way and their helpless friend on the other side could only watch

Source: <http://www.time.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

These tragic deaths all happened within the last month and it shows that people either don't know or don't respect the power and limits of trains. Whether as drivers or as pedestrians, people need to learn the rules of railroad crossings and bridges.

A train's large size tends to make it seem to be going slower than it actually is. Freight trains can travel up to 60 mph while passenger trains can reach speeds of up to 80 mph. All that speed and weight make it impossible for a train to stop quickly. A fully loaded freight train can take up to a mile and a half before it can be brought to a full stop. Trains can't stop fast nor can they swerve out of the way. All the railroad engineer can do is brace for the blow and, once he has brought the train to a full stop more than a mile down the track, report the crash and start filling out his incident report.

Regarding trains and railroad crossings, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- Assume that there is a train on every track at all times, even tracks that are rarely used. If there is a stop sign at the crossing, stop! If there is a yield sign or electronic signals, slow and make sure that no trains are approaching.

- If there are two or more tracks, make sure there a train isn't coming in the other direction. The crossbuck railroad sign will indicate how many tracks there are at the crossing.
- When stopping at a railroad crossing make sure you stop no less than 15 feet from the tracks.
- Never cross a railroad track unless you are sure there is room on the other side for your vehicle to completely clear the tracks. Many collisions occur when a vehicle's rear end is still hanging out over the tracks.
- Don't shift gears while crossing a railroad track; it could cause your vehicle to stall.
- If your car stalls on a railroad track, get out of the car immediately, clear the tracks and call 911 for help. If a train is coming, run away from the tracks in the direction of the approaching train. If you run away from the approaching train, you may be injured or killed by flying debris when the train smashes into your car.
- Never try to beat a train at a crossing or snake around the lowered crossing gates. Once the lights start to flash and the crossing gate arms go down, the train will appear in about 20 seconds.

'Car snowboarding' stunt condemned as reckless

Police today condemned thrill-seekers who have been dangerously "car snowboarding" on icy roads. A group of young men filmed themselves on a snowboard which was attached to a moving car.

Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk> ♦

Lessons Learned

There are a lot of videos on Youtube.com and other video and photo sharing sites showing young people, either on skis or snowboards being towed behind a car. Unfortunately, sometimes the videos also capture what

can go wrong when teens engage in this sport.

With this year's winter weather providing record snow falls in areas that rarely see snow, a lot of teens may be tempted to try this sport.

The teens are trying to experience the thrill of going much faster than they might otherwise experience if they were only using gravity or ski poles to propel them but towing a skier, sledder, or a snowboarder behind a car is extremely dangerous.

Several factors play into the dangers of the sport:

- The car can quickly reach speeds that are too high for the snowboarder to control.
- The car can skid on the ice and run out of control.
- The car can stop suddenly sending the snowboarder crashing into the rear of the vehicle.
- If the car veers to one side, the snowboarder will continue traveling at the same speed in a straight line, often off the road or into trees.
- The snowboarder will not be able to see obstacles ahead that are hidden by the car until it is too late.
- Hitting a tree or hard ice at a speed as low as 25 mph can cause massive head trauma or death.

Make sure you discuss the dangers of this sport with your teen.

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Tips for Parents: Toyota Recall; How to handle a Runaway Engine

The news concerning Toyota recalls have a lot of owners of Toyota vehicles concerned and upset. There seems to be a lot of conflicting news coming out and it almost seems that there is a new recall on a weekly basis. Parents of teens who drive Toyotas are probably more upset than most. Putting the vehicle away until all the issues are resolved is not an option for most people. If your teen drives a Toyota, you need to know which vehicles are involved in the recalls and both you and your teen needs to know how to handle an emergency if one should arise.

Vehicles Recalled:

If you are wondering whether your teen's vehicle is involved in the recall, you can visit Toyota's recall website at: <http://www.toyota.com/recall/>.

The latest list of recalled vehicles as of the writing of this publication include:

- [2005-2010 Avalon](#)
- [2010 Prius](#)
- [2007-2010 Camry](#)
- [2009-2010 RAV4](#)
- [2009-2010 Corolla](#)
- [2008-2010 Sequoia](#)
- [2008-2010 Highlander](#)
- [2005-2010 Tacoma](#)
- [2009-2010 Matrix](#)
- [2007-2010 Tundra](#)
- [2004-2009 Prius](#)
- [2009-2010 VENZA](#)

How to Handle a Runaway Engine:

If your vehicle is included in the list of vehicles recalled for runaway engines, you may have already received a recall notice with information on removing the floor mats. If not, you should remove the driver side floor mat until more information is available.

You and your teen should learn and review what steps should be taken if you encounter a runaway engine emergency. If that should happen, here are the steps that should be followed.

Watch the road and Steer – Avoid obstacles and, if the side of the road is clear, you may want to consider steering off the road. Running into soft dirt or into bushes can help to slow the vehicle and is better than running into rigid objects ahead.

Don't Pump the Brakes – Apply hard steady pressure on the brakes and don't let up. If you pump the brakes, the vacuum brake assist could fail and the brakes will stop working.

Shift the Transmission to Neutral – While applying hard steady pressure on the brakes, shift the transmission into neutral. Shifting at high speed could possibly damage the transmission but that is better than allowing the car to run away with you. For owners of the Hybrid vehicles such as the Prius and Camry with electric transmissions you will have to hold the transmission handle on the neutral position for a second or two in order to shift. This procedure should be practiced in a safe place such as a parking lot or deserted road.

Turn Off the Engine – If all else fails, turn off the engine.

- **Standard Key Type Ignition** - Turn the key back one turn to the Accessories position. ***Do not turn the key all the way off to the lock position!!*** Turning the key to the lock position will lock the steering wheel and make it impossible to steer.
- **Electronic Starter Button** - You will have to apply steady pressure to the starter button for at least **three seconds** in order to override the feature that prevents the engine from being turned off by accidentally bumping the starter button.

Consumer Reports produced a very good video with steps to take if you have a runaway engine. That video can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalSafetyComm>



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The advertisement features a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting at a desk with a laptop and a mug. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.