

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Crashes to Avoid Deer

A 19-year-old escaped injury when the vehicle he was driving crashed. State police said the driver lost control of the car after swerving to miss a deer. The car went off the road and struck an embankment before coming to a stop.

Troopers said the driver was wearing a seatbelt. As a result of the crash, the driver will receive a citation

Source: www.republicanherald.com.com ♦

Lessons Learned

October through January marks the active deer season. During this time wild animals are searching for food and mates, escaping hunters and very active during dawn and dusk, peak times for driving. At dusk and dawn, there is more precipitation in the air and less visibility and drivers tend to be less alert. The Washington State Department of

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For Teens and their Parents



Transportation (WSDOT) warns that November is the prime time for road kill with the removal of over 3,000 deer carcasses from state highways every year. They offer the following tips that are useful for all animals on the roadway:

- One deer crossing the road may be a sign that more deer are about to cross. Watch for other deer- they will move fast to catch up with leaders, mothers, or mates and may not pay attention to traffic.
- When you see brake lights, it could be because the driver ahead of you has spotted a deer. Stay alert as you drive by the spot, as more deer could try to cross.
- Wonder why the person ahead is driving so slowly? The driver may know where to slow down and be extra alert for deer. Don't be too quick to pass, and watch out.
- Take note of deer-crossing signs and drive accordingly. They were put there for a reason.
- If a collision with a deer seems imminent, take your foot off the accelerator and brake lightly. But—and this is critical—keep a firm hold on the steering wheel while keeping the vehicle straight. Do not swerve in an attempt to miss the deer.
- Do not attempt to touch the animal AT ALL – even if it appears to be dead. Often, the animal is only temporarily stunned and people who attempt to move the animal have been seriously injured by antlers and sharp hooves. Always keep in mind that scared and injured animals are **extremely dangerous**.

If a situation occurs maintain control of your vehicle. Avoid over correcting with your brakes or steering wheel. You can't control what the animal does or if it lives or dies, but you can control how you respond to the situation.

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Five Truly Remarkable Foundations on Teen Driving

Here are five remarkable foundations that have been born out of tragedy, but have blossomed into influential forces when it comes to educating others about teen driving safety. Each one has a different approach on spreading their message, but their goal is the same: keeping teen drivers safe through education. They all stem from the standpoint of relatives and friends of victims of unsafe driving choices, and they're all here to educate others as well.

Journey Safe - <http://www.journeysafe.com/>

Journey Safe is an outreach program initiated by friends and relatives of Jill Sabet and Jonathan Schulte. Jill and Jonathan were passengers in a friend's overcrowded car that crashed on May 26, 2005 and did not survive. Since then, this outreach has formed to change the behavior of teen drivers, as well as teen passengers, so that distracted driving can be fully avoided. The Journey Safe program visits schools and holds teen driver safety education classes called "Start Smart" all over the country. They educate teen passengers on the importance of the critical role they play in ensuring teen drivers retain their focus on the road, and be free from distraction.

The Shelly Cohen Foundation -

<http://shellycohenfoundation.org/>

This foundation was developed to educate both teen drivers and their parents about cell phone and seat belt use while driving. On the day after Thanksgiving, 2006, Shelly Cohen lost her life in a fatal car crash. It was later determined that she was not wearing her seat belt and was talking on her cell phone while driving. Her family donated her organs saving five people lives. Knowing that more needed to be done to raise driving safety awareness; they formed the Shelly Cohen Foundation. Their primary project is providing teen drivers crash avoidance clinics, the SCAAT (*Shelly Cohen Accident Avoidance Training*). They offer both in-classroom and in-vehicle training to highlight the dangers of cell phone use while driving, and the importance wearing of safety belts.

Murphy Sisters Foundation -

<http://www.murphysisters.org/>

A foundation formed on behalf of Shauna and Meghan Murphy, who were killed in October of 2005. Both their lives were cut short by a moment of unsafe driving. The foundation aims to reach out to teenagers and young adults to make them aware of and educated on safe driving principles. The foundation is also committed to financially assisting student athletes who are not otherwise able to attend the college of their choice. Shauna was an athlete and one of her teammates on the gymnastic team came up with the idea of "safe rides." Teenage community volunteers are available on weekends and holidays to monitor calls from other teens that are not able to drive themselves

home. These volunteers then pick up the teen and drive him/her home anonymously.

Sean Mullsteff Teen Driving Foundation -

<http://www.teendrivingfoundation.org/>

The SMTDF was established by Perry and Sue Mullsteff, parents of Sean Bryce Mullsteff who died in a single car crash in April 2004. To honor their son's memory, they have made it their goal to better educate and prepare teens for a lifetime of safe driving. They do so by conducting community driving safety workshops, collaborating with educators, law enforcement, traffic safety experts and legislators and also providing resources for teen driving safety. They are available for speaking engagements. Mr. Mullsteff has addressed over 60,000 high school teens and parents on the absolute importance of driving safety.

The Katie Marchetti Memorial Foundation -

<http://www.katiesstory.com/>

The Katie Marchetti Memorial Foundation is dedicated to the memory of Katie Marie Marchetti, who died in a car crash on March 4, 2006. If she had she been wearing a seat belt that day, her parents believe, she would still be alive today. They make it a point for teenagers to make a "Cross Your Heart Promise," which is a verbal promise to their parents that they would always wear their seat belts regardless if they are the driver or the passenger. This foundation, along with the [Dori Slosberg Foundation](#) has also been successful in instituting a primary seat belt enforcement law known as the *Dori Slosberg and Katie Marchetti Safety Belt Law*.

These foundations stem from the efforts, hearts and minds of family and friends of those who have lost their lives due unsafe driving behaviors. The organizations have found ways to truly honoring their loved ones by making sure that the losses they have experienced don't become other people's losses. Check out their programs and events on their respective sites.

National Teen Driver Safety Week

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National Teen Driver Safety Week (Oct 17-23) is a time of the year is dedicated to helping teen drivers understand the responsibility that comes with driving. Each year, the leading cause for unnecessary teen deaths is vehicular accidents, and it's good to know that the Congress is doing something about it.

This year's theme is distraction. Distracted driving is the number one reason why new drivers end up in needless crashes. To help spread the message to stop distracted driving, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, along with State Farm Insurance have teamed up to present the "Park the phone. Drive." (or the NNID) Public Service Announcement (PSA).

Some ways to help spread the message on teen driving safety is to share the PSA through Facebook, Twitter, blogs, websites or find ways to get it shown to local communities. You could also initiate a "Ride Like A Friend. Drive Like You Care." (RLAF) campaign in your school. It is a campaign designed to teach safe teen passenger and driver behavior. Its main goal is for small groups of teens to start informing their fellow teens about teen driving safety and ultimately receiving press coverage. All of the information and materials needed are available for FREE at the RLAF site. (<http://www.ridelikeafriend.org/>)

The NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) has a message for all teen drivers: "Keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road, and both (hands and eyes) away from your cell phone while driving." They have even outlined a specific strategy to combat unsafe teen driving behaviors:

1. Increase safety belt use.
2. Reduce teens' access to alcohol.
3. Implement graduated licensing program by state.

These steps can be adopted by all local driving safety advocates to teach parents, educators and teen drivers that crashes can be prevented by safe driving practices.

Consider starting this campaign from home, this may be a great time to review driving safety habits not just for the teens, but also for all drivers in the family.

Tips for Parents: Thanksgiving is not a Holiday from Safe Driving

Whether it is reflecting on what you have and giving thanks, taking time to gather with friends and family to share a meal, or celebrating the first holiday of the winter season, Thanksgiving a special time of year. It is also a

heavily traveled time of year and for the transportation safety industry, it is one of the busiest.

What steps can you take to be a safe driver during the holiday? Start by making sure everyone wears their seat belt correctly, every time they get into a vehicle. Even though seat belt use is at an 83 percent record high, 45 million Americans still fail to buckle up when they get into a vehicle.

- According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), on any given day about 38 passenger vehicle occupants who are not buckled up are killed in vehicle crashes. During the 2008 Thanksgiving holiday weekend alone (Wednesday, November 26 to Monday, December 1), 231 passenger vehicle occupants were killed in motor vehicle crashes occurring **during nighttime** (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) hours nationwide. Of those, **67 percent were unrestrained** at the time of the crash, based on known restraint use.
- NHTSA statistics also show that those least likely to buckle up are teens; young adults; males; nighttime riders; motorists traveling on rural roads; and individuals traveling in pickup trucks.

Don't push your body limits by trying to drive when you are drowsy or not feeling well. While the food may taste great and be filling, driving when your body is tired can be as deadly as driving under the influence.

If you will be traveling out of town, consider leaving on Tuesday and coming back Saturday to avoid the traffic.

Be extra alert and employ defensive driving strategies. Turkey contains Tryptophan which is used as an ingredient in over-the-counter sleep aids. That combined with drivers rushing home, who are drowsy, distracted or maybe under the influence can be a recipe for disaster.

Exercise extra caution and have a great Holiday!



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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.