

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Woman Dies One Day after Car Hits Her

A 73-year-old woman who was struck by a sedan died. At about 8:10 a.m. day, police and fire personnel responded to a traffic collision between a vehicle and the victim.

The pedestrian was transported by paramedics to a local hospital and was initially listed in critical condition. However, the victim died the next day.

An 18-year-old driving the four-door sedan that hit the woman remained at the scene. Police could not say how the collision occurred or if the teen driver will be charged a crime stating, "The case was still being investigated by officers in the traffic division."

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For Teens and their Parents



The deceased woman's name has not been released, nor has the driver's.

Source: mercurynews.com ♦

Lessons Learned

Spring break is upon us; sun, fun and a break from school, who doesn't look forward to it? The weather is great and more people are out and about biking, skateboarding, walking, running and taking in the sunshine. It is a great time to catch up with family, hang out with friends or just chill. While you are taking in the reprieve, don't take a break from safe driving. Don't let the eagerness for some carefree time turn into driving carelessness.

During spring break drivers should plan to encounter increased pedestrian traffic. Predict that pedestrians may dart in and out of traffic, be impulsive, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, distracted by friends, cell phones or what they are carrying. Driving requires constant attention and awareness, along with the ability to make complex decisions and act on them quickly. Be prepared that they may not use the crosswalks and could step out into traffic at any time.

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. Be on the lookout for children who can act impulsively and may run into traffic without thinking. Keep in mind that 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. 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.

Be alert for pedestrians at dusk and night, even in well-lit areas. It is often difficult to identify pedestrians when the driver's visibility is already reduced.

Of all roadway users, pedestrians are the most vulnerable and it is the driver's responsibility to watch for and avoid hitting them. Enjoy spring break, the weather and watch out for pedestrians.

Court Upholds Drunk Driving for Teen Passenger

An inebriated passenger who yanks on the steering wheel and causes a crash can be guilty of drunken driving.

That was the conclusion of a state appeals court, which upheld the conviction of a juvenile who sent her boyfriend's car tumbling into a ditch.

The crash happened late one night in July 2009. The driver bruised and in shock, flagged down a policeman who found the overturned car alongside the road several miles away. The teenage passenger was lying about 20 yards away covered in dirt, with a broken leg and spinal injuries

Source: SFGate.com◆

Lessons Learned

Alcohol and drugs, whether legal or illegal have no place in a vehicle. It is hard enough to control a vehicle and be a defensive driver under everyday normal conditions, but adding a passenger that is impaired can have deadly consequences.

Per passenger your chance of a crash doubles according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

When you add a passenger that is impaired, whether legally or illegally, you increase the distraction in the vehicle for the driver, increasing the risk of a crash.

Under the influence, people become unpredictable and sometimes unreasonable.

Alcohol quickly diminishes the ability to make sound judgments and concentration. Once judgment and reasoning are affected, a person's actions and behavior change. Just one drink can affect a person's behavior. The same amount of alcohol does not affect all people the same way. Alcohol does not even affect one person the same way in all situations.

So if you are in a situation where someone impaired needs a ride, what are some things you could do?

- Give it time- it takes 1.5 -2 hours per drink to move through the system. Stay with the impaired person and distract them before getting into the vehicle.
- Call a Taxi for the impaired person or consider calling someone sober to help keep an eye on them so that you can focus on driving.
- If you absolutely can't wait it out, belt the impaired passenger in the back seat. If they get sick, fall over, or become agitated, pull over to the side of the road until everything is settled.

Keep alcohol, drugs and distractions away from driving. The penalties are stiff, the costs are high and the regrets can be permanent.

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Tips for Parents: Teaching Teens to Speak Up

Most parents try to be proactive when it comes to teaching their kids about safety. During their teen years as they become more independent, typical safety reminders about driving include:

- Don't drink and drive
- Always wear your seatbelt
- Never text while driving

Each of these reminders are important, but one of the most important safety skills that is often overlooked is teaching your teen to speak up when they feel that what someone is doing is unsafe.

After a crash, teens often report that they thought that the driver was driving too fast, shouldn't have pulled out in front of the other vehicle, wasn't paying enough attention to driving, or was taking some uncomfortable risk and they regret not speaking up.

There can be many reasons teens fail to assert themselves. Some teens say that timing was a factor; things happened too fast. Others report that they didn't say anything because of intimidation or peer pressure or that they didn't want to hurt the driver's feelings. No matter the reason at the time, it was not more important than their safety.

So how do you tackle teaching your teen to be assertive when riding as a passenger?

- Start by talking with them about the importance of assertiveness. Give examples of situations they could be in and have them come up with sample responses they could use at that time. Include speeding, driving under the influence, driving fatigued, reaching for things in the vehicle, distractions from passengers, cell phones, animals in and outside of the vehicle, low fuel, travelling in unsafe areas and driving conditions, following too closely and pulling out in front of another vehicle. Thinking through these dilemmas in advance can go a long way in avoiding risky circumstances.

- Teach the value of I statements. *I am feeling uncomfortable with how fast we are going. Can we slow down? In a crash, I could die because you didn't want to wear your seat belt and became a flying missile into me. So for my safety won't you put it on?*
- Encourage them to speak up when they are riding with you or another family member. Even if you disagree with them as to whether it was a risky situation, recognize them for making their opinion heard. Be careful not to shoot their perception assessment down, when explaining why you made the decisions while driving that you made. If it becomes a habit at home, it will be easier to do with friends.
- Have them state the solution that they want and offer alternatives. *Don't turn yet. Let this group of cars go by and then we can turn after the truck. Don't reach for that. We can get that later, it's not a big deal.*
- Limit who your teen can ride with. Just because they are licensed and insured doesn't mean that they are a safe and defensive driver. The teenage brain is still developing and even the most responsible teen can make poor impulsive decisions. Let your teen know that you are not judging their friends and may think that they are great kids, but when it comes to their safety in a car, your standards are high.

Being assertive is a lifelong skill. Speaking up when someone else is driving could save their life and your teen's too.

