

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen's Quick Reaction Saves Lives

A Texas teen was hospitalized briefly after a two-car collision, but DPS officials credited the boy's quick reactions in preventing injuries to others.

The 17-year-old High School student, driving a Ford pickup, was traveling on CC Woodson Road at 10 p.m. Wednesday when a Cadillac exiting Victory Life Church pulled out in front of him, according to Trooper Mike Sams of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Sams said the teen's actions to avoid hitting the Cadillac were to be commended.

"The kid did an awesome job, because he would have

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For Teens and their Parents



directly hit the passenger," Sams said. "It would have been a T-bone right in the door if he hadn't."

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

Lessons Learned

It's nice to begin a newsletter on a positive note for a change. Most of our newsletters quote articles concerning teens that have died in auto collisions but this article concerns a teen whose quick actions (although it resulted in minor injuries to himself) are credited with preventing what could have been major injuries or even death to the passengers of the other vehicle.

When the other vehicle pulled out in front of him, this young man swerved in time to avoid hitting the vehicle but, after he swerved, his truck went up over a curb into a grassy area where he lost control of the vehicle traveling across two lanes into oncoming traffic. His truck struck another vehicle before coming to a stop but fortunately, the driver of the other vehicle was not injured and the young man was taken to the hospital for observation and later released.

The police spokesman said that, had the teen not swerved to avoid a collision with the Cadillac that

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pulled out in front of him, he would have hit the passenger section of the other vehicle, possibly causing severe injuries to the occupants.

The teen was also traveling below the speed limit which gave him more time to respond.

Often, when faced with options to avoid a collision, we don't have many good choices. Sometimes, the correct choice is just the lesser of two evils. One way or the other, there is going to be damage and possible injuries. The correct choice is the one that minimizes the damage and injuries.

Very often, if there are no obstructions such as light poles or trees, the best choice is to steer off the roadway. You might choose to steer toward some bushes or anything else that will help slow the car while doing minimal damage.

A common mistake though, when drivers steer off the roadway or swerve to avoid a collision, is to over-correct and try to quickly steer the car back onto the roadway. This can cause even more damage because turning the wheel rapidly can cause the car to flip over.

Drivers who use this method to avoid a collision should hold the steering wheel tightly and gently apply the brakes; don't try to re-enter the roadway until your vehicle has slowed down. Then, check to see if the roadway is clear and steer back onto the roadway. While learning to drive, teens should practice how to properly return to the roadway if they should inadvertently steer off the pavement.

Anticipating what could happen and having a plan in mind can go a long way toward preventing a collision. You can use the S.I.P.D.E. method to plan for emergencies and respond correctly should one occur.

Search- Search the roadway both ahead and behind noting the traffic around you and the behavior of other drivers. Look for vehicles pulling out of driveways or parking lots. Scan your mirrors for

vehicles approaching rapidly from behind. Keep in mind that some vehicles, such as motorcycles and bicycles, will be hard to see and can easily be missed if you aren't consciously searching for them as well.

Identify - Identify the potential hazards ahead and behind. Is it possible that the driver pulling out of that driveway doesn't see you? Is the driver coming up from behind driving too fast? Are there pedestrians who may cross the roadway?

Predict – Predict what could possibly happen. Maybe the driver pulling out of the driveway does see you but just doesn't care and will try to pull out to get ahead of you on the road. When you predict, you should try to predict the worst thing that could happen. If you do, it will help you to prepare for what could possibly happen next.

Decide – Decide, if the worst should happen, on what you are going to do to avoid the potential collision. Look for an escape route. Often, your decision can be as simple as temporarily taking your foot off the gas and preparing to step on the brake until you are sure of the other driver's intentions. With a decision in mind on how you are going to respond, you have saved yourself a lot of precious seconds that don't have to be spent trying to decide what to do in a panic situation.

Execute – Execute your decision. If the worst

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should happen, put your plan into action quickly and smoothly.

You never know when a collision situation could spring up and they can happen so quickly, that a collision is often unavoidable but, if you are using the S.I.P.D.E. method, you can still be prepared and hopefully, avoid more serious damages and injuries.

Fatal Crashes By Teen Drivers Are Down

NHTSA Says Teen Fatality Rates Reduced Dramatically

The latest edition of the “Traffic Safety Facts for Young Drivers,” produced by the national Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that the traffic fatality rate for 15 to 20 year olds has fallen by 37 percent between 2000 and 2009. The rate of teen drivers involved in fatal crashes decreased by 13 percent between 2008 and 2009 alone.

Source: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811400.pdf> ♦

Lessons Learned

The Good news from this report is that the rate for teen deaths and for teens involved in fatal collisions has fallen dramatically. A comparison of rates between 2009 and other years shows that:

- The rate of 15 – 20 year old drivers involved in fatal collisions fell by 37 percent between 2000 and 2009
- The rate for 15 – 20 year old drivers killed in motor vehicle collisions fell by 15 percent between 2008 and 2009
- The rate of 15 – 20 year old drivers injured in car crashes fell by 14 percent between 2008 and 2009.

- The rate of 15 – 20 year old drivers involved in fatal collisions fell by 13 percent between 2008 and 2009

NHTSA attributed the lower rates to several factors but the primary factor, it is believed, is due to the enactment of Graduated Driving Laws (GDL) by more and more states throughout the US.

GDL’s act to restrict the type of driving and activities that a young driver can engage in, giving them time to concentrate on driving and to develop good driving skills. The restrictions include: (these vary from state to state)

- A limit on night time driving – usually banning driving by teens between the hours of 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM
- A limit on the number of non-family member passengers a teen can carry. Many states ban passengers for the first six months and then only allow one other teen passenger after that until the teen reaches the age of 18
- Bans on the use of mobile communication (cell phones and texting) devices while driving

The teen death rate has fallen dramatically in states with strong GDL laws compared to states with weak or no GDL laws.

NHTSA feels that other factors that contributing to the reduction in teen deaths includes stronger seat belt laws and safer cars.



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The economy has also played a part. With higher gas prices and lower incomes, there is little money left for discretionary driving which makes up a major portion of a teen's driving.

The bad news from this report is that, in 2009, 2,336 15- to 20-year-old drivers were killed. This figure is still way too high.

If your state does not have strong Graduated Driving Laws, contact your state representative. You can also impose your own GDL on your teen, even if your state's laws are weak.

Tips for Parents: Bath Salts- A New Drug Hazard

Five teens in Florida recently had to be hospitalized after using a hallucinogenic drug known as "Bath Salts".

St. John's County deputies were called to a home by the father of a 17 year old who was "out of control". The teen fought both his father and several deputies and at one point was able to throw off all four men. The use of a Taser and striking the teen with a baton had no effect. It took 15 minutes for the deputies to subdue the teen and restrain him in a stretcher for transport to the hospital. Deputies also found three other teens on the property who were exhibiting unusual behavior but were not combative.

The deputies learned that the teens had received the substance from another teen and, when they went to his home, the teen's mother reported that her teen was also out of control. The deputies found the teen in the back yard being subdued by a family friend.

Bath Salts are a relatively new fad and the drugs can

be purchased legally online. Early in 2011, the drugs were commonly being sold legally in convenience stores and drug paraphernalia shops. Once the effects of the drugs became known, many states took emergency action to ban their sale and state legislatures followed up by passing laws against their sale and use.

In the case of the Florida teens, the drugs were purchased online directly from China.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the drugs are sold under a variety of names such as "Ivory Wave," "Purple Wave," "Red Dove," "Blue Silk," "Zoom," "Bloom," "Cloud Nine," "Ocean Snow," "Lunar Wave," "Vanilla Sky," "White Lightning," "Scarface," and "Hurricane Charlie."

According to NIDA, "the products often contain various amphetamine-like chemicals, such as methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV), mephedrone and pyrovalerone. Mephedrone is of particular concern because it presents a high risk for overdose." The drugs are sometimes advertised as "cocaine substitutes". They have also been known to trigger intense cravings and present a high danger for abuse and addiction.

NIDA says that "bath salts" have already been linked to an alarming number of ER visits across the country. Doctors and clinicians at U.S. poison centers have indicated that ingesting or snorting "bath salts" containing synthetic stimulants can cause chest pains, increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, agitation, hallucinations, extreme paranoia, and delusions." In the first two months of 2011 alone, there were a reported 251 calls to poison control centers regarding bath salts.

For more information, visit NIDA at:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDAHome.html>