

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Drivers Continue To Make the Same Mistakes

Thus far, for the month of February, at least 49 teens have been killed in motor vehicle collisions and 35 have been injured.

Source: <http://www.google.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed in February revealed that at least forty nine teens died in motor vehicle collisions during the month. This Google search of news reports is not a scientific survey and it doesn't

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For Teens and their Parents



turn up all of the news articles nor does it reflect the official statistics by state safety agencies. It is safe to assume that many more teens were killed than were reported in this search. This search didn't include teen passengers killed while an adult was at the wheel or teens that were killed in multiple car crashes where an adult was deemed to be at fault for causing the collision. It only included fatal crashes in which the teen driver was alleged to have been at fault.

The article search shows that teens are making the same poor driving decisions and it supports the figures from scientific surveys in regard to teen crashes. In the 34 reported fatal crashes:

- 22 teen drivers were killed
- 26 teen passengers were killed
- 10 teen drivers were injured
- 24 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions
- 2 people in other vehicles were killed as the result of the teen's mistake.

- 6 people in other vehicles were injured
- 71% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes
- Seat belts were not used in 15% of the crashes
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 26% of the crashes
- 91% of the crashes involved loss of control of the vehicle by the teen driver (Loss of control is generally caused by a driver distraction in which the driver leaves the road and tries to over-correct, or when the driver is driving too fast for conditions and fails to negotiate a curve or turn, or a combination of high speed and a driver distraction.)
- 2 fatal crashes involved racing.
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 3 of the crashes.
- In 14 of the crashes, the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- Wisconsin led the other states with 7 teen deaths followed by Texas with 5.

This unscientific article search shows that the statistics on teen driving hold up. Most teen driving crashes are single vehicle crashes and the main causes for teen driving deaths are speeding, driver distraction, lack of seat belt use, and use of alcohol or other drugs.

Graduated Licensing Laws (GDL) are designed to limit the number of passengers a teen driver can carry and to try to limit distractions by prohibiting use of cell phones. Violating traffic laws can result in suspension of a teen driver's license. Both parents and teens should know and understand their state's Graduated Licensing Laws and parents should enforce them.

Seven Teens Killed in Two Wisconsin Crashes

News reports from Wisconsin revealed that seven teens were killed in two separate collisions.

Source: <http://www.fdlreporter.com> ♦
<http://host.madison.com/news> ♦

Lessons Learned

We spoke on this issue last month but it bears repeating, the more teenagers you put in a car, the greater the chances of a serious collision.

When a teen driver has more than one passenger in the car, there are more distractions to divert the teen driver's attention from the road and use of seat belts by the occupants is reduced. Male teen drivers especially, when accompanied by an audience, have a tendency to want to show off behind the wheel. Add night time driving and it becomes a recipe for disaster.

In these collisions, one vehicle was carrying five teenagers while the other was carrying nine. Both of these collisions had all of the warning signs for a teen driving tragedy.

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In one of the collisions, an SUV was carrying nine girls aged 15 through 18. According to officials, the 18 year old driver was driving at a high rate of speed at approximately 3:30 AM on a Saturday when she lost control of the vehicle. The SUV rolled into a field and flipped several times. The article didn't say whether seat belts were used or not. Two of the victims died at the scene and another died in the hospital a day later. The driver and five other girls were hospitalized with three listed as being in serious condition.

The other crash involved a vehicle with 5 occupants driven by an 18 year old driver. Witnesses said that all five had been drinking prior to the crash. None of the vehicle occupants were wearing seat belts.

The driver was driving at a high rate of speed when he drove through a stop sign and went airborne after crossing some railroad tracks. The vehicle struck a utility pole and rolled over.

All four of the victims were ejected from the vehicle. Three died at the scene and a fourth died in the hospital.

The driver was the only survivor. He was hospitalized and is facing four counts of Homicide by Drunken Driving.

Tips for Parents: Trend Shows Teen Driving Deaths Increasing

A study released recently by the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA) shows a disturbing trend among teen drivers. After several years of steady decline, the teen highway death rate seems to be on the rise.

The study looked at the death rate of 16 and 17 year old drivers for the first six months of 2010 and the first six months of 2011. The study did not include

data involving non-passenger vehicles such as motorcycles and ATVs.

The figures showed that, across all fifty states, there was an increase of 11% in the teen highway death rate. The authors fear that, if the trend continues through the remainder of 2011, the death rate for teens will reverse a long and steady decline to "historic lows."

The states with the highest number of teen driver deaths during the study period are Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.

Graduated Driver License (GDL) laws have been shown to be effective in reducing the teen driver death rate.

California, with the largest population of teen drivers and some of the toughest GDL laws in the country showed no change teen driver death rate.

Florida, on the other hand, with rather weak GDL laws (no limits on the number of passengers or use of cell phones/texting while driving), showed an increase of 67% in the 16 and 17 year old driver death rate over the same period in 2010.

If you are unfamiliar with your state's GDL laws, you can look them up at:

<http://www.iihs.org/laws/graduatedlicensestatelaws.aspx?StateAbbr=AL>

To view the GHSA report, visit:

http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/pdf/spotlights/spotlight_teens11.pdf



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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 and smiling while looking at a laptop. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.