

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## May better than April for Teen Drivers but not by much

According to news reports this far, May's death rate for teen drivers was a little bit better than April's but not by much. At least 45 teens were killed in motor vehicle collisions

Source: [http:// http://www.google.com](http://http://www.google.com) ♦

### Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed this far in April revealed that at least forty five teens died in motor vehicle collisions during the month. This Google search

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of news reports is not a scientific survey and it doesn't 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.

In the 44 reported fatal crashes:

- 30 teen drivers were killed.
- 15 teen passengers were killed.
- 11 teen drivers were injured.
- 42 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 2 occupants of other vehicles were killed
- 15 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 68% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.

- Seat belts were not used in 43% of the crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 32% of the crashes.
- 84% 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 teen girls died trying to beat a train at a railroad crossing.
- 1 Teen died in a golf cart crash.
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 14% of the crashes.
- In 15 of the crashes, the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 2 teens died running from the police; one after having his license revoked just hours earlier.
- Mississippi and Ohio led the nation with 5 deaths in each state.

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.

## **It's not just an American problem**

The driver of a vehicle that crashed and burst into flames in Melbourne's inner north yesterday, killing all three men on board, has been remembered by his family as a fun-loving but responsible young man.

But police believe the 19-year-old P-plater, who was killed along with two of his teenage friends, may have been speeding and performing fishtails.

Source: <http://www.theage.com.au> ♦

## **Lessons Learned**

The incident above occurred in Melbourne Australia. Although laws differ from state to state in Australia, overall, their Graduated Driving License (GDL) laws are stricter than those in the US. In the state where these teens lived, a teen can't get a learner's permit until they are 16 and must display a yellow "L-plate" on the car indicating they have a learner's permit and must be accompanied by a fully licensed driver at all times.



The red “P-plate” or “provisionally licensed driver” referred to in the article indicates that the driver is over 18, has held a learner’s permit for a year and passed a computerized Hazard Perception Test, a practical driving test and an eyesight test. They cannot carry more than one other non-family passenger. They cannot be fully licensed until they reach the age of 22.

The 19 year old driver in this crash was no different from teens in the US. In this case, he was carrying more than the allowed number of passengers was apparently speeding and, witnesses said, fishtailing as he rounded corners in a residential neighborhood.

Just like in the majority of teen crashes, he lost control of the vehicle, and jammed the car between a tree and a wall, trapping all three inside. The fuel tank ruptured and ignited burning all three beyond recognition.

Law enforcement officials said this type of crash is more commonly seen in rural areas but is rare on a suburban street.

## **Tips for Parents: Going beyond the typical driving school**

The story above points out the need for driver training beyond what the typical behind-the-wheel driving course teaches. Had the young driver truly known the limitations of his vehicle, he may not have been so anxious to push it beyond its limitations in order to show off for his friends.

There are courses throughout the US that train young drivers in “Collision Avoidance Training (CAT)”. Some are conducted under the auspices of the local police or sheriff’s department and some are provided through private driver training programs.

What they all have in common is a combination of several hours of classroom training along with from four to eight hours of behind-the-wheel training on a closed course.

The closed course behind-the-wheel training allows instructors to teach lifesaving maneuvers such as:

- Control of the vehicle
- Skid recovery
- Crash avoidance braking VS panic braking
- Watching where to steer the car VS watching the hazard
- Understanding the limitations of the vehicle

Most courses require the student to provide the car that they will be driving most often. Others provide their own car.

Some require that the parent attend as a student along with their teen to continuously reinforce what the teen has learned long after the course is completed.

An internet search for “Collision/Crash Avoidance Training”, “Accident Avoidance Training”, or “Car Control Clinics” may show training programs close to your location.

Once your teen attends such a course, he or she may be much more reluctant to try to push a car beyond its limitations.



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