

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Summer Months Most Dangerous For Teens

According to news reports thus far, July's death rate for teen drivers was higher than June's. At least 49 teens were killed in motor vehicle collisions. And Driving isn't the only danger for teens as you will see in the following articles.

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

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed thus far in July revealed that at least forty nine teens died in motor

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vehicle collisions during the month. This Google search 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:

- 32 teen drivers were killed.
- 18 teen passengers were killed.
- 11 teen drivers were injured.
- 29 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 6 occupants of other vehicles were killed
- 21 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 55% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.

- Seat belts were not used in 39% of the crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 39% of the crashes.
- 77% 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.)
- 23% of the crashes involved other vehicles but were caused by the teen driver losing control and crashing into the other vehicles
- 4 teens died in motorcycle crashes.
- In two of the fatal motorcycle crashes, both drivers were only 14 years old and crashed into each other.
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 7% of the crashes.
- In 15 of the crashes (34%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- Florida led the nation with at least 5 deaths.

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.

Five teens killed while walking on RR tracks

In July, at least five teens nationwide were killed when they were run over by trains while walking on railroad right-of-ways.

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

Lessons Learned

Summertime is a time to get out and visit friends and sometimes, the shortest distance to a teen's destination is along a railroad right-of-way however, that shortcut can be the most dangerous path.

In three out of the five teen railroad fatalities, the teen was wearing earbuds and listening to music. Teens tend to like their music very loud and, at those volumes, the train's warning horn can easily be drowned out or mistaken for being farther away than it is.

Teens need to realize that the train's

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engineer may not see them until it is too late and, even if they are seen from a distance, it can take a moving freight train more than a mile to come to a complete stop.

According to Federal Railroad Administration Statistics, there were 427 pedestrian rail trespass fatalities in 2011. [Operation Lifesaver](#), a railroad safety organization, offers the following advice:

- It can take a mile or more to stop a train, so a locomotive engineer who suddenly sees someone on the tracks will likely be unable to stop in time.
- Trains overhang the tracks by at least three feet in both directions; loose straps hanging from rail cars may extend even further. If you are in the right-of-way next to the tracks, you can be hit by the train.
- Do not cross the tracks immediately after a train passes. A second train might be blocked by the first. Trains can come from either direction. Wait until you can see clearly around the first train in both directions.
- Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and equipment are private property. Walking or playing on them is not only dangerous, it's illegal. Trespassers can be arrested and fined - the ultimate penalty is death.
- **Be aware trains do not follow set schedules.** Any Time is Train Time!

Teen Killed in Fiery Crash on Freeway

A 17-year-old Santa Ana boy was a rear-seat passenger, who was trapped in a car that was hammered when it was caught between two SUVs,

Source: <http://shermanoaks.patch.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

In this case, the initial crash, when a teen driver rear ended a disabled vehicle in a travel lane, wasn't severe enough to cause any injuries. The teen driver and the front seat passenger got out to check on the other driver but the teen in the rear seat chose to remain in the vehicle. Another vehicle rear ended the

teen's vehicle, trapping the teen who burned to death when his vehicle caught fire.

All drivers and passengers need to know what to do once a collision occurs. After a crash, the chance for a secondary collision is very high due to the volume and speed of traffic or because of rubberneckers who aren't paying attention to where they are going.

While most people believe that the vehicles should remain in place until the police investigate, the opposite is true. If they are drivable, and it is safe to do so, all vehicles should be moved off the roadway to keep the travel lanes clear and to avoid secondary collisions as happened in this case.

Unless they are too severely injured to be moved, all vehicle occupants should exit the vehicle and remain well off the roadway. Standing too close to the edge of the roadway is dangerous because of other drivers swerving to miss the crashed cars.

If flares or other marking devices are available they should be placed at least 200 feet before the crash to warn other drivers.

Teens killed in boating incidents

July also saw a number of teens killed in boating incidents. Teens like speed and, what could go wrong out on the open water?

In at least one incident, teens were on a raft being towed by a speed boat that came too close to a dock; flinging the teens into the dock at high speed.

Other cases involved collisions between boats or personal watercraft or high speed turns that threw the boat's occupants into the water.

Boaters need to be aware of and on the lookout for other craft or floating debris. Turns should be kept to a speed that prevents passengers from being thrown out. Everyone should wear a lifejacket!