

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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September 2012

August Deadly For Teens

According to news reports thus far, August's death rate

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

Lessons Learned

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

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For Teens and their Parents



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 46 reported fatal crashes:

- 24 teen drivers were killed.
- 22 teen passengers were killed.
- 15 of the teen drivers were injured.
- 30 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 5 occupants of other vehicles were killed
- 9 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 67% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts were not used in 28% of the crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 33% of the crashes.

- 86% 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.)
- 3 teens died in motorcycle crashes.
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 9% of the crashes.
- In 15 of the crashes (35%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Illinois tied to lead the nation with at 4 deaths each.

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.

College Student's Last Text Almost Prophetic

A Texas college student sent a text message moments before he crashed that almost came true.

Source: <http://www.today.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

Last January, Chance Bothe was driving home from school and carrying on a text conversation with a childhood friend when he veered off the road and crashed into a deep ravine.

In an ironic twist, a text he sent moments before the crash read; "I need to quit texting, because I could die in a car accident."

Luckily the crash was witnessed by others or it could have been a long time before the crash scene was found. Witnesses managed to pull him from the wreck moments before the vehicle erupted in flames.

Chance barely survived the crash. He was rushed to a hospital in critical condition and his recovery is still ongoing.

After watching her son battle to stay alive and witnessing his long recovery, Chance's mother, Vicki Bothe, created the website UnSend: <http://www.unsend.org/> to help sound the alarm on the dangers of distracted driving.

This month, the review of teen driving deaths, showed one crash in which distracted driving was blamed for the deaths of a teen driver and his two passengers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- 40% of all American teens say they have been

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in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger.

- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind

When you create a driving contract with your teen, make sure that texting, cell phone use, and all other forms of driving distractions are strictly forbidden. No matter how much experience a driver has, they cannot pay full attention to the road when they are distracted by electronic devices.

Teens Killed In Bicycling Crashes

The summer months have also seen a large number of teens killed and injured while riding bicycles. While the message of this newsletter is normally devoted to teen motor vehicle drivers, we can't ignore any type of situation in which teens put themselves in danger on the road.

Reviewing this month's news articles showed that at least four teens were killed and seven were critically injured while riding bicycles.

Having taught our kids to ride bicycles when they were very young, we tend to assume that the child, by now, should be an expert at riding a bike however we forget that the same risk taking tendencies that put teens in such danger in a motor vehicle can also be seen while they are riding a bike.

In several of the crashes between teens on bikes and motor vehicles, the teen had run a red light or a stop sign or had failed to yield in other ways.

Teens and all children should be reminded that the same traffic rules that apply to motor vehicles apply to bikes as well. In fact, a cyclist can receive a ticket for failing to obey the traffic rules just like the driver of a motor vehicle.

Getting a teen that is approaching driving age to start applying all of those traffic rules is good practice for driving a car and can reinforce the information they learn once they start to study the driving manual.



"MOM, I LIKE LOVE YOU AND STUFF BUT I THINK DAD BETTER TEACH ME HOW TO DRIVE...HE DOESN'T BULLDOZE HIS NAILS INTO MY THIGH WHEN I MERGE INTO TRAFFIC!"

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