

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## 47 Teens Killed in May

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

## Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed thus far in May revealed that at least 47 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 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.

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For Teens and their Parents



In the 49 reported fatal crashes reported thus far this month:

- 31 teen drivers were killed.
- 17 teen passengers were killed.
- 16 of the teen drivers were injured.
- 20 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 1 occupant of another vehicle was killed.
- 17 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 78% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts were not used in 29% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 41% 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.)
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing

factor in 18% of the crashes.

- In 9 of the crashes (18%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 24 of the deaths (51%) occurred on weekends.
- 5 of the deaths were on All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- 3 of the deaths were on motorcycles.

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 GDL 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.

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## Teens And Texting

“One day after Savannah Nash celebrated her 16th birthday on May 8, she picked up her Missouri driver's license.

One week later, she died in a traffic accident while texting on her phone.”

**Source:** <http://www.kansascity.com> ♦

## Lessons Learned

Two studies appeared in May that show that texting and driving by teens may more prevalent and dangerous than previously thought. Both studies used data taken from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2011 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS consists of confidential questionnaires filled out by thousands of students nationwide. The questionnaire asks whether the students had engaged in any of the listed risky behaviors within the past 30 days.

The first study, conducted by researchers at Cohen Children's Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY, based on data from the YRBS, suggests that texting while driving among teens has surpassed driving under the influence as the most dangerous driving hazard.

Driving under the influence by teens has gone down significantly over the past ten years. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), the number of fatal crashes involving teen drivers who had any measurable amount of alcohol in their blood fell by 45 percent between 2002 and 2011. The YRBS showed that while 8.2 percent of students admitted to driving under the influence one or more times over the previous 30 days, 32.8 percent of students had texted or e-mailed while driving during the same period.

The second study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that teens who engage in texting while driving are much more likely to engage in other risky behaviors such as not wearing a seat belt, driving under the influence, or riding as a passenger with a driver who is under the influence.

In instances of both texting while driving and driving under the influence, the rates of those driving behaviors increased with age and were higher for males than for females.

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## Tips For Parents: Summer Months Are Most Dangerous For Teen Drivers

Now that the summer is here, it's important to remember the dangers faced by teen drivers during the summer months. Traffic fatality statistics have long shown that the death rate for teens rises significantly for teen drivers and their passengers during the summer months. Twenty-nine percent of all the teen drivers age 15 to 19 who were killed in traffic collisions in 2011 were killed during the months of June, July, and August. Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day is the most dangerous time for teen drivers.

With up to three months of largely free, unsupervised time on their hands, teens have many more chances to get into trouble while driving.

Parents can be pro-active in preventing their child from becoming a summertime driving statistic in a number of ways:

- If this is your teen's first summer with an operator's license, consider limiting their driving time.
- Set consistent curfews and enforce them.
- Limit the number of passengers your teen can carry.
- Prevent your teen from riding as a passenger of a teen driver with more than one other passenger.
- Ban not only texting but any type of cell phone use while driving; they must pull over and stop to use a cell phone.
- Ensure that your teen gets plenty of sleep.

To help ensure that your rules are followed, negotiate a "teen driving contract" with your teen. Make sure that

the rules are clear and the consequences for breaking them are well understood.



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