

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## August Deadliest Month Of Summer For Teens

Source: <https://www.google.com> ♦

### Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed in August revealed that at least 86 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's safe to assume that 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 81 reported fatal crashes reported in August:

- 54 teen drivers were killed.
- 32 teen passengers were killed.
- 26 teen drivers were injured.
- 75 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 12 occupants of other vehicles were killed.
- 24 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 72% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts weren't used in 30% of the fatal 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.)
- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 7% of the crashes.

- In 27 of the crashes (33%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 50 of the deaths (51%) occurred on weekends.
- 4 of the deaths were on All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- 3 of the deaths were on motorcycles.
- 1 death was on a golf cart loaded with 9 teens.
- 1 teen died in August due to injuries received in a crash that occurred in March.
- 1 teen driver survived his crash but killed 6 occupants in another vehicle.

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.

## Teens Charged With Crimes For Driving Offenses

Houston, TX -- "The 18-year-old woman who police say fled the scene of one accident, only to reportedly cause another, is now facing multiple charges, including murder."

"Police say an HPD officer spotted Dalia Iris Alfaro driving a silver Dodge pickup truck at a high rate of speed on Westheimer near Gessner. As the officer attempted to pull her over, she fled westbound on Westheimer with the officer pursuing.

The Alfaro's vehicle then struck another vehicle at the intersection of Kirkwood and Westheimer and continued without stopping. Police say she then ran the red light at

the intersection of Eldridge Parkway, struck a green Mazda 3 and then struck the driver's side of a gray Chevrolet Impala. The suspect's vehicle then veered to the left and struck a cement mixer truck head-on."

**Source:** <http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk> ♦

## Lessons Learned

At least 15 teens were charged with or convicted of serious crimes as a result of their driving behavior in August.

In addition to the teen mentioned above, one other female teen was also charged with murder for killing another motorist while driving drunk.

Another teen charged with murder was fleeing the police when he struck an SUV carrying seven family members, killing six of them, including four children under the age of six. In addition, he injured two others in another vehicle.

One teen stood trial and was sentenced to ten years in prison. He was charged with reckless homicide for speeding and driving recklessly. A surviving passenger testified that the 17-year-old girl riding in the rear seat pleaded with him to slow down just before he pulled out in front of a gas truck, resulting in the collision that killed her.

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Another teen that was high on marijuana and texting, faces charges of DUI homicide by vehicle for hitting and killing a jogger.

Most of the teens were charged with vehicular homicide/manslaughter.

In one case, the police state that they are trying to send a message to other teens by charging a 17-year-old girl with allowing minors to possess alcohol after she hosted a party where another teen drank and was subsequently killed when her car ran off the road and struck several trees.

Teens rarely consider the consequences of their actions. Research shows that areas of the brain that allow for consideration of consequences and that inhibit impulsive behavior aren't fully developed in the teen brain. Furthermore, that area of the brain won't be fully developed until the mid-20s. Other studies show that, when alone, a teen may be somewhat careful; but, when he or she is in the company of other teen friends, they tend to take even more risks. For example; teens will wear their seat belts when driving alone but, when joined in the car by other teens, seat belt use goes down.

Teens need to be made aware that what may seem at first to be a simple mistake while driving could lead to drastic consequences that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

## Tips For Parents: Molly, A New Drug Danger

A recent article by ABC News reported that several deaths at clubs and music festivals over the summer are being blamed on the party drug "Molly".

Molly, a drug that has recently become popular among the club and rock concert crowd is a powder or crystalized form of the drug MDMA, the main ingredient in the drug ecstasy. Unlike ecstasy, in which MDMA is normally mixed with other drugs such as caffeine or meth, Molly is supposed to consist of MDMA in its purest form.

Experts warn however that Molly is rarely pure and may be cut with anything from baby powder to rat poison. Users who think they are getting the pure drug never really know what other ingredients have been used to cut the drug.

Molly boosts the brain chemicals serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine causing the user to feel happy, experience hallucinations and creates the desire to touch people nearby.

According to [The Partnership at Drug Free.org](http://ThePartnershipatDrugFree.org), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) considers MDMA to be a Schedule I controlled substance, which means it has a high potential for abuse, and no accepted use in medical treatment. The DEA notes that MDMA can cause confusion, anxiety, depression, paranoia, sleep problems, and drug craving. The drug also can cause muscle tension, tremors, involuntary teeth clenching, muscle cramps, nausea, faintness, chills, sweating, and blurred vision. "High doses of MDMA can interfere with the ability to regulate body temperature, resulting in a sharp increase in body temperature (hyperthermia), leading to liver, kidney and cardiovascular failure. Severe dehydration can result from the combination of the drug's effects and the crowded and hot conditions in which the drug is often taken," the DEA reports.

While the same dose may leave one with little or no after effects, it can easily kill someone else.

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