

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

Volume 144, Issue 108

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October Teen Death Rates Change Little Over September

Source: <http://www.google.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teen fatal collisions in September revealed that at least 77 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 75 reported fatal crashes reported in October:

- 45 teen drivers were killed.
- 32 teen passengers were killed.
- 26 teen drivers were injured.
- 69 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 10 occupants of other vehicles or pedestrians were killed.
- 21 people in other vehicles or pedestrians were injured.
- 69% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts weren't used in 34% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 30% of the crashes.
- 78% 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.)



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- Alcohol use was suspected to be the contributing factor in 14% of the crashes.
- In 31 of the crashes (42%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 41 of the deaths (48%) occurred on weekends.
- 4 of the deaths were on All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- 2 of the deaths were on motorcycles/mopeds.
- At least 8 teens were charged with serious crimes including manslaughter or vehicular homicide.
- Kansas led the nation with 7 deaths.
- At least one teen died while “car surfing.”
- At least four teens were killed and five were seriously injured in cars driven by teens that were violating GDL laws by unlawfully carrying passengers. Two were killed and two injured by a driver who had been licensed for only one day.
- Two teens, including a twin, were killed with their sibling at the wheel.

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.

Teen Arrested In Hit-And-Run Death Of 58-Year-Old Bicyclist

An 18-year-old college student is due in court in connection with the hit-and-run death of a bicyclist in Middleborough.

Source: <http://www.therepublic.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

It’s easy to forget sometimes that sharing the road with other vehicles means not only motorized vehicles but non-motorized vehicles as well. With bicycle riding gaining in popularity more and more each year, motorists need to be more aware of the possibility of encountering cyclists, and both motorists and cyclists need to understand the rules of the road in regard to each other. Cyclists also need to take extra care to protect themselves when riding on the open road because in a conflict between bicycles and motor vehicles, the cyclist rarely comes out on top. During the month of October, at least seven teen bicyclists died in collisions with motorists.

One problem that often leads to conflicts between motorists and cyclists is the lack of situational awareness on the part of the motorist. As drivers, we expect to see other motor vehicles, but, unless we are fully aware of our surroundings, it’s easy to miss bicycles. Often a motorist, after colliding with a cyclist will say “I never saw it.” Part of being a good driver is anticipating everything that could possibly occur on the road. When checking ahead on the road, you should also look for things you might not expect. When slowing to stop at an intersection, check your rearview mirrors to see if a cyclist may be approaching from behind. Check your right-hand mirror before making a right-hand turn to make sure a cyclist isn’t approaching on the right.

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Be aware that cyclists may have to move into the center of the lane to avoid obstacles in the road or in preparation for turning left. When passing cyclists, make sure there is enough room to maneuver and ensure that you give the cyclist three to four feet of clearance as you pass. Don't honk your horn before passing because that could startle the cyclist.

Cyclists need to understand that the rules of the road apply to them just as much as it does to motor vehicles. Cyclists should always ride on the right-hand side of the road, with the flow of traffic, never against traffic. Stop lights, stop signs, and yield signs apply to cyclists as well as motorists. When riding in a group, always ride single file.

Cyclists should always check behind and use hand signals when preparing for a turn. Never assume that just because you can see a motorist's eyes that the motorist has seen you.

Cyclists should do everything possible to ensure that they can be seen at all times. Head and tail lamps aren't just for night riding. Thunderstorms and unexpected pockets of fog can cause visibility problems in broad daylight and you need every advantage you can get. Clothing and helmets should be brightly colored.

Cyclist should always wear a helmet. Severe brain injury can occur even in a relatively slow speed fall from a bike. According to statistics compiled by New York City, 74% of fatal bicycle crashes involved a head injury. Of the bicyclists who were killed in crashes, 97% were not wearing a helmet.

To choose the proper helmet, use the following guidelines: <http://www.bhsi.org/guide.htm>

Tips For Parents: College Student Dies After Being Shot In Road Rage Incident

Cobb County police have arrested and charged a suspect in the fatal shooting of a college student following a road rage incident in Kennesaw early Friday morning.

Source: <http://www.ajc.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

This incident technically doesn't involve teens but those involved were just barely out of their teen years. In this incident, two carloads of young women in their early twenties apparently were involved in an altercation at the entrance to an apartment complex and it resulted in one of the drivers shooting the other driver to death.

The American Psychiatric Association refers to road rage as "Intermittent Explosive Disorder" or "IED". Basically, it's a form of temporary insanity in which a driver, who feels he or she has been wronged in some way, tries to retaliate, violently, against another driver. Road rage is a growing problem on America's roads and it's important to know how to avoid getting into a road rage situation.

You never know when another driver may be at that tipping point where he or she could explode into a road rage state of mind and try to come after you.

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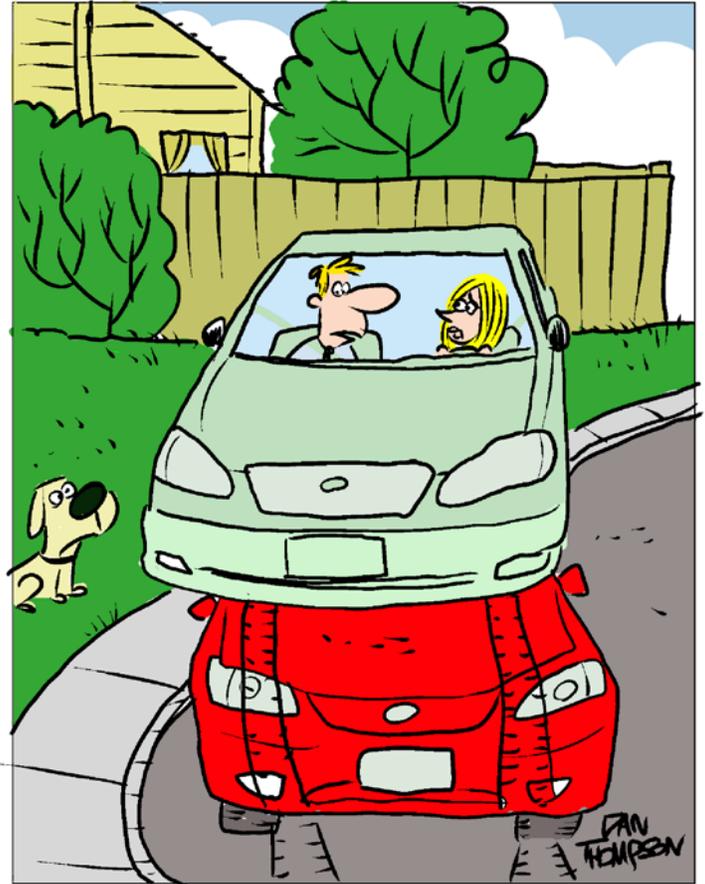


Don't allow yourself to be that tipping point that sends another driver over the edge. The best way to avoid triggering a road rage situation in another driver is by:

- Driving safely and obeying the traffic laws.
- Don't speed!
- Don't drive slower than the posted speed limit unless the flow of traffic prevents it.
- Don't tailgate! Maintain a safe following distance of two or more seconds.
- Don't talk on your cell phone or text! It slows you down and keeps you from paying attention to the road.
- Don't try to cut off another driver!
- Don't try to compete with another driver for the right-of-way! Even if you feel it should be yours, let the other driver have it.
- Don't honk your horn, yell, or make gestures to another driver.
- Be courteous to other drivers, even if the courtesy isn't returned!

If you find yourself in a possible road rage situation:

- Do not open your car doors or windows under any circumstances!
- Keep your doors locked.
- Don't acknowledge the other driver.
- Don't try to argue with the other driver!
- Avoid stopping your car, if possible.
- If the other driver has blocked your path, try to back up and find a safe escape route, if possible.
- Call 911 and let the other driver see that you are doing so.
- Honk your horn repeatedly to summon help.
- Remain calm! Don't let the other driver antagonize you into a situation where you feel the need to retaliate back.



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