

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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New Year Deadly For Teens

Source: <http://www.google.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teen fatal collisions in January revealed that at least 62 people died in teen related 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 60 reported fatal crashes reported in January:

- 40 teen drivers were killed.
- 17 teen passengers were killed.
- 18 teen drivers were injured.
- 34 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 5 occupants of other vehicles or pedestrians were killed.
- 30 people in other vehicles or pedestrians were injured.
- 68% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts weren't used in 33% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 42% of the crashes.
- 90% 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 7% of the crashes.
- In 17 of the crashes (28%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- New Year's Day was the single deadliest day of the month with 6 deaths.
- 26 of the deaths (42%) occurred on weekends.
- One of the deaths was on a motorcycle.
- At least 6 teens were charged with serious crimes including manslaughter or vehicular homicide.
- Florida led the nation with 8 deaths.
- Eight crashes were blamed on the weather.

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.

Texting Dangerous For Pedestrians Too

San Diego police say a 15-year-old girl was distracted by her cellphone when she was struck and killed by a semi-truck.

Source: <http://www.utsandiego.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

In the incident above, law enforcement authorities feel

that this girl was distracted by texting before walking into the path of a semi. Her brother tried to pull her back but she slipped and fell under the wheels of the truck.

We have spent a lot of time talking about the dangers of cell phone use and driving but little attention has been paid to the dangers of cell phone use by pedestrians, but authorities are beginning to notice.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), while motor vehicle deaths are declining, pedestrian deaths are on the rise. NHTSA figures show an 8% increase in pedestrian deaths between 2009 and 2011. Some pedestrian deaths can be blamed on distracted drivers but evidence is mounting that shows that distracted pedestrians are responsible too.

Most have heard the famous story of the teenage girl who fell into an open manhole while texting but, unless there are witnesses, it's harder to determine whether or not a pedestrian was distracted in the moments before the crash.

According to [Dietrich V. Jehle, MD, professor of emergency medicine at the University at Buffalo](#), as many as 15% of pedestrian injuries seen by emergency rooms in the US involve cell phone use.

A [study by Stony Brook University](#) had 33 men and women walking to a target eight meters away. After testing their ability to walk comfortably to the target, the subjects were tested with cell phones. According to the results, only one-third of the subjects were able to complete the task while talking on a cell phone or texting.

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It's time to start spreading the word that cell phone use and texting while walking can be just as dangerous as cell phone use while driving.

Tips For Parents: "Selfies" While Driving Are Dangerous

While we are discussing cell phone use, we should also talk about the new phenomenon of "selfies." Selfies are the act of taking self-portraits with cell phones and they are cropping up everywhere. One has only to look at a young person's Facebook page to see a selfie or two. Selfies of celebrities and politicians are also showing up on Twitter and in newspapers.

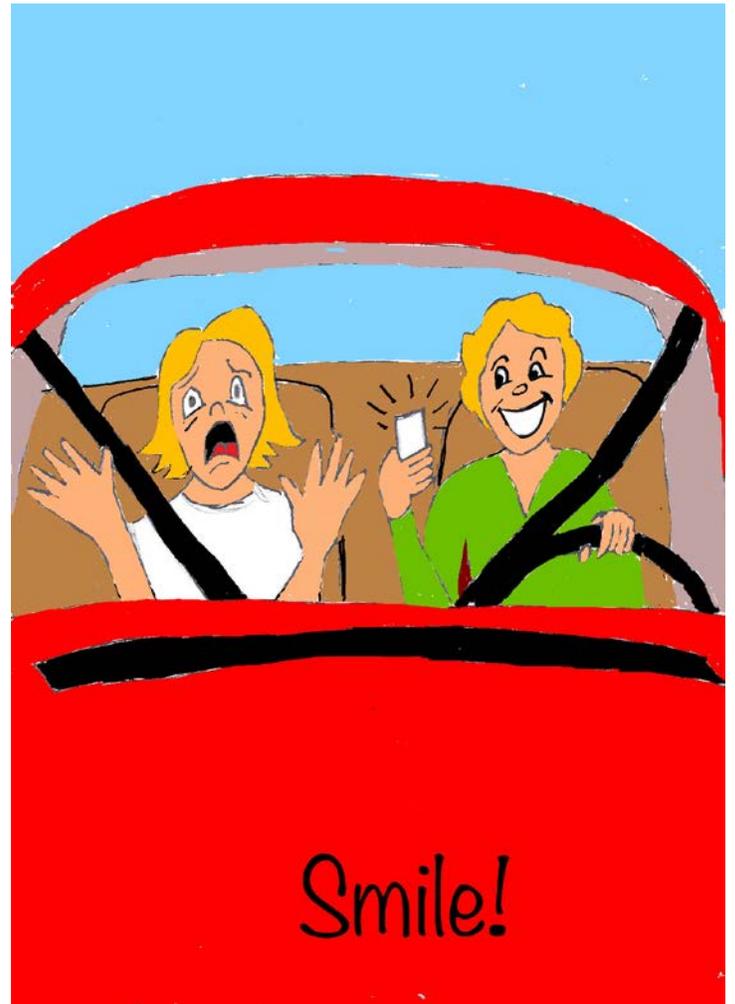
Taking a selfie while driving though can be extremely dangerous. Taking a selfie requires that you look at the camera (and not the road) and wait while the camera focuses and snaps the picture. Just the act of setting up the camera on a smart phone to take the picture can take time and distract a driver long enough to lead to a collision.

It's important to remember how much distance is covered while posing for a selfie. At 45 mph, a car will travel more than 66 feet per second. For a driver looking at the camera and taking a picture, those two to three seconds mean that the vehicle has traveled from 132 to 198 feet. That's two-thirds the distance of a football field. A lot can happen in that distance and a driver's attention needs to be on the road ahead.

Along with selfies, taking videos of passengers or objects outside the window can be just as distracting. In a video making the rounds on social media, a mother videoing the actions of her kids in the back seat almost turned a precious moment with her children into a tragedy. The video can be seen at:

http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=60d_1392830284

Warning! There's a little bit of foul language in the video.



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