

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Dies After Car Surfing



Another teen has died as the result of “car surfing.” The teen fell off the car and received multiple injuries including injuries to his head. He was taken to the hospital by his parents where he died the next day.

If you aren’t familiar with car surfing, it involves standing on top of a car and trying to “surf” while the

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For Teens and their Parents



car is in motion. It seems like this idiotic practice just won’t go away. It’s a popular subject on Youtube.

The problem with car surfing is that there’s no traction to maintain your footing and it’s almost impossible to maintain your balance. The law of physics that says “a body in motion tends to remain in motion” comes into play if the car turns even slightly or comes to a stop.

Given the relatively short distance from the roof of the car to the ground and the, hopefully, low speed, it may not seem like it would be too dangerous if you were to fall off. However, the low speed and distance are deceptive. Even at just 10 mph, a 140 lb teen boy whose head hits the pavement will strike the pavement with a force of more than 460 lbs. That’s more than enough force to cause serious brain trauma.

The Center for Disease Control conducted a study on car surfing in 2008 and found, among other things, that:

- The researchers found 99 reported incidents of car surfing, 58 percent of which were fatal.
- The average age of those injured or killed was 17.6, with males accounting for 70 percent of the victims.
- Three out of four car surfing deaths were caused by head trauma.

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You can read the CDC press release here: [CDC Media Analysis Examines Car Surfing](#)

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Ask The Driving School Instructor: Two-Second Rule



Question: What is the two-second rule?

Answer: The two-second rule is the rule most states have adopted to keep a safe following distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. It's the most simple way to know if you're following another vehicle too closely or not.

To keep a safe following distance, some older drivers were taught, and still hold to the rule, of keeping a distance of one car length for every 10 mph you're traveling. In other words, if you're traveling at 40 mph, you should keep a distance of at least four car lengths

between you and the vehicle ahead. Some parents may still be teaching that rule to their teen driver but the rule doesn't work very well. The main reason it doesn't work is that it's hard for most people to visually determine a car length. What exactly is a car length? Are you talking about a 1972 Ford station wagon or a VW Beetle? For those of us who may be math challenged, the math just gets too complicated.

The two-second rule is much simpler. When the car ahead passes a line or a shadow in the road, start counting "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two." If you get to that spot in the road before you're finished counting, you're following too close. You need to back off a bit until you're no less than two-seconds behind the vehicle ahead. The great thing about the two-second rule is that it works whether you're traveling at 10 mph in rush hour traffic or at 70 mph on the interstate.

Your reaction to an emergency ahead takes time. If the vehicle ahead should suddenly stop, it can take up to three-quarters of a second before you're even aware that it has stopped. Then you need time to decide what to do; should you slam on the brakes or should you try to swerve into another lane to avoid it? If you want to move over into another lane, are there any other vehicles in the way? The decision-making process takes time. Once you have decided what to do, you have to put your plan into action. If you decide to slam on the brakes, you have to move your foot from the gas pedal over and fully depress the brake pedal and that takes even more time. Once you hit the brakes, it will still take time before your vehicle can come to a full stop.

On average, it can take from up to one and a half seconds from the time the emergency starts until you fully react and put your escape plan into action. That's known as the "reaction time." One and a half seconds may not seem like a long time but remember, if you're traveling at 40 mph, your vehicle will travel almost 60 feet in that amount of time. That's a long way! When you add the distance after you hit the brakes until you

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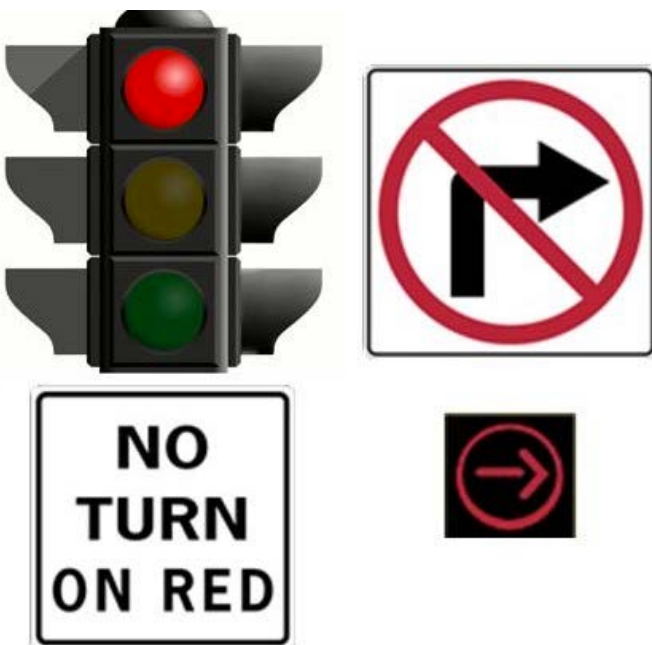


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feet in that amount of time. That's a long way! When you add the distance after you hit the brakes until you come to a complete stop, you have the "total braking time." The distance adds up!

The two-second rule provides the minimum distance to give you enough time to react and take action if something should happen ahead. Three or more seconds is even better and some states require at least a three-second distance. If it's raining or if you're following behind a motorcycle, you should keep a four second distance. In the rain, the roads may be slippery and you need the extra distance in case your vehicle starts to skid. You need to keep a longer distance behind motorcycles because they can stop so much more quickly than a larger, heavier vehicle and you'll need more distance to react if something happens ahead.

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Right Turn On Red

There are several rules and things that you must watch for when making a right turn on red.

The first and most important rule – and this is the law in all 50 states – you must come to a complete stop at the red light before making a right turn on red. There are a lot of good reasons why you must come to a complete stop before making a right turn. Intersections can be a dangerous place and most crashes in the US happen at intersections. When you stop at a red light, before turning right, check for;

- Pedestrians that may be in the crosswalk – they have the right-of-way.
- Vehicles coming from the left on a green light (including bicycles and motorcycles) – they have the right-of-way.
- Vehicles in the oncoming lane turning left on a green left turn arrow – they have the right-of-way.
- Vehicles from the right that are making a U-turn at the intersection – they have the right-of-way.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists entering the intersection from the right- they have the right-of-way.

You're only allowed to turn right on red if the way is completely clear of all pedestrians and other traffic. Don't allow yourself to get in the habit of a rolling right turn on red.

Read more: [Right Turn On Red](#) ♦

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