

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## Hollywood Teen Dies in Dania Beach Accident

A Hollywood, Florida teenager died on the night of May 23 in a car accident where his car was traveling at such a high rate of speed that it wrapped around a pole.

The Broward Sheriff's Office is investigating the single-vehicle crash that killed 18-year-old Chadwick Hopkins, who was driving a 2004 Chevrolet Impala westbound on Sheridan Street.

He lost control of the Impala, crashing just before 11pm at the 300 block of Sheridan.

Hopkins was the only person in the car. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Source: CBS4.com♦

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for Teens and their Parents



## Lessons Learned

Speeding is one of the most prevalent factors in crashes. Thirty percent of all fatal crashes are caused by speeding. In 2004, 13,192 lives were lost nationwide as a result of speeding.

Speeding affects the way the driver handles the car because it prevents the driver from being able to control the car around curves and bends. It increases braking distance. It also increases the distance that the car travels before the driver can react to a dangerous situation.

Some typical reasons for speeding are: late for school or work, late getting home, late for an appointment or no reason at all! We are trying to turn the clock back. Before we speed, we should ask ourselves, "What will we gain by speeding?" Are we trying to save time?

Let's take a look at that for a minute. You have a twenty-mile trip to make. If you go the speed limit, which is 55 miles per hour, it will take you approximately 21 minutes and 48 seconds. However, you are late, so you are going to travel at 75 miles per hour, so that will only take you approximately 15 minutes and 59 seconds. That is a saving of 5 minutes and 49 seconds. You are stopped by a highway patrolman and it takes him 10 minutes to write the ticket. Add time taken to complete a driving school course (4 hours), and you haven't saved any time at all!

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Hollywood Teen Dies in Dania Beach Accident
- 2 2<sup>nd</sup> Teen Dies from Accident
- 3 Teen Injured in One-car Accident
- 4 Laughter Dies as Coroner, Grim Reaper Arrive at School



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## 2nd Teen Dies from Accident

In Maine, Messalonskee School District's crisis team once again mustered its counselors to provide support and grief counseling to students as a second student died early Tuesday, May 23 following an accident involving only one car on Saturday, May 20.

Christopher J. Curato, 13, an eighth-grader at Messalonskee Middle School and an Oakland resident, died at 1:10 a.m. on May 23 of complications sustained in the accident, according to Mary Saucier, a spokeswoman for Maine Medical Center in Portland.

The eighth-grader's death, coupled with that of Kahlen K. Coulombe, 16, of Belgrade, a Messalonskee High School sophomore, has shaken an entire school system, school superintendent James Morse said.

"This morning was very traumatic for the middle school youngsters," he said. "They're not used to loss at that age -- you know, the death of a friend. There were lots of tears, lots of hugs, lots of supportive environments for the kids to go to. They were as you might expect in a situation like this: very, very, very sad."

Parents should find opportunities to let their children talk to them about their grief without forcing them to do so, Morse said.

School administrators are encouraging parents to accompany their children to Coulombe's funeral, which has been designated as an approved absence from school.

Christopher Curato's older brother, 15-year-old Nicholas Curato of Oakland, is the only survivor of the accident.

"We're all assuming that he's going through an extremely tough time right now," Laughlin said of Nicholas Curato. "He's definitely with his family. I would assume that this is tragic as it could be for him."

Police still have not determined which of the boys was driving the minivan, according to Kennebec County chief deputy Randall Liberty.

The vehicle was traveling at 91 mph, according to

later police estimates, Liberty said. The posted speed limit is 45 mph.

Source: *MorningSentinel.MaineToday.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

Consider how much roadway you need to stop your car at different speeds. At 25 miles per hour, it takes you about 62 feet to stop a car. At 35 miles per hour, it takes almost twice as long to stop the car, and at 65 miles per hour, it takes you a whopping 306 feet to stop that car. That's about the length of a full football field.

The force with which a moving car hits another object is called the "Force of Impact." Three factors affect the force of impact:

- Speed of the car: The force of impact at 20 mph is four times that at 10 mph. And the force of impact at 30 mph is nine times greater than at 10 mph. At 60 miles per hour, the force you produce is 4 times greater than at 30 miles per hour.
- Weight of the car: The heavier a car is, the harder it will hit any other object.
- Impact distance: The force of impact also depends on the distance a moving vehicle travels between first impact with an object and the point where the vehicle comes to a full stop. When a car hits an unmoving solid object, the impact distance is short. The object does not "cave in" at impact, and so kinetic energy is spent immediately on impact. The shorter the impact distance, the greater the damage.



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## Teen Injured in One-car Accident

A 16-year-old Oshkosh boy was transported to the hospital Saturday, May 20 after a nighttime accident in which he failed to negotiate a turn and crashed his vehicle.

The teen was traveling east on Highway N near Clairview Road in the Town of Nekimi when he entered the north ditch and rolled his car.

He was ejected from his vehicle, said Sgt. Gordon LeDioyt of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.

The teen was transported to Mercy Medical Center where he was treated for non-life threatening injuries.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin State Patrol, Oshkosh Fire Department and the Nekimi Fire Department assisted in the accident.

The driver was cited for using an unreasonable speed, LeDioyt said.

Source: [theNorthwestern.com](http://theNorthwestern.com) ♦

## Lessons Learned

Turning a corner may seem to be a simple operation, but many traffic crashes are caused by drivers who do not turn correctly.

Here are some tips for making a good turn:

- Make up your mind about your turn before you get to the turning point. Turn signals are required when changing lanes. Never make "last minute" turns.
- If you must change lanes, look behind and to both sides to see where other vehicles are located before making your turn.
- Move into the correct lane as you near the intersection.
- Give a turn signal before you make your turn. Let other drivers know what you are going to do.
- Slow down to a safe turning speed.
- When you are slowing to make a right turn, the bicyclist you passed may be catching up to you. Search over your shoulder before turning. Yield to bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Yield to pedestrians who may be crossing your path when turning left. Always scan for pedestrians before starting the turn.
- Make the turn, staying in the proper lane. Yield the right-of-way to vehicles (including bicycles) coming from the opposite direction.

- Finish your turn in the proper lane.
- If you reach an intersection where you wish to make a right or left turn and are not in the proper lane, you should drive to the next intersection. Then make the turn from the proper lane.

## Night Driving

Night driving brings on adjustments that you must deal with successfully. Aside from reducing detail, darkness conceals hazards: pedestrians, bicycles, stalled cars, curves and other objects or conditions. You must make a decision on the basis of a sketchy and incomplete picture.

At night, it is more difficult to judge the speed and position of other vehicles. You must depend largely on your headlights, which will show only a relatively short and narrow path ahead. Headlights do not bend around corners.

Usually, adequate highway lighting is limited. Reduce speed so that you can stop within the visible distance.

Glare from roadside lighting and the headlights of oncoming vehicles may impair your visibility. Keep your panel lights dim for better vision, but always keep the panel lights bright enough so you can read your speedometer and other gauges.

Increase seeing distance by keeping the headlights clean and properly aimed and the windshield clean.

Slow down after sunset.

Don't overdrive your headlights. You should always be able to stop within the distance that you can see ahead in your headlights.

Some drivers do not realize that they have their bright lights on. If the oncoming driver does this, do not put on your bright lights. Slow down and glance down at the right edge of the road as a guide for your lane position. Do not stare directly into the oncoming lights.

Allow yourself enough time to reach your destination. Leave earlier when traveling at night. Statistically, your chances of being involved in a fatal crash are almost double between 6 pm and 3 am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.



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## Laughter Dies as Coroner, Grim Reaper Arrive at School

The assembly at La Cañada High School in California began like most, students lined up to watch a demonstration geared to make an impression. They laughed and joked as they watched fellow classmates portray being in a car accident with a drunk driver.

At first, students shouted and yelled at their friends and cheered as more sheriffs' cars pulled up, but as the demonstration progressed the laughter and jeers died down. As the teen passenger from one car was placed into an ambulance and the coroner arrived for another the students became almost silent

That was the effect officials from the City of La Cañada, Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station, the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the California Highway Patrol hoped would happen. The assembly was called, "Every 15 Minutes." It was the second time LCHS used the program.

The goal of "Every 15 Minutes" is to get students to understand that every 15 minutes a person dies in an alcohol-related traffic accident and to face the fact that although teens think they are immortal and it will never happen to them, driving drunk kills.

"We are hoping it increases the awareness of the issue that alcohol consumption is not a risk free behavior and getting behind the wheel of vehicle is not a risk free behavior," David Stegner, public safety coordinator for the City of La Cañada, said.

The program, which used real students, began with a fictitious 911 call to the Sheriff's Station reported an accident that involved two cars in front of the high school. School Resource Officer Deputy Chris Deacon, narrated as officials did their job of determining who was hurt and interviewing the driver. A deputy conducted a field sobriety test on the teen driver, Colleen Boyd. He determined she was driving under the influence. She was handcuffed and led to a sheriff's vehicle.

"Look at her," Deacon said. "Her whole life is gone. She will have to tell her parents that she will not be coming home for a long time."

In addition to the crash demonstration, pre-selected

students were taken out of class by the "Grim Reaper" portrayed by Gil Meyer, senior analyst for the city of La Cañada. The student stood with the Grim Reaper as a deputy read his obituary that had been written by his, or her, parents.

Seventeen-year-old Cory Green, an LA County Sheriff's Explorer, was also part of the event. He was dressed in uniform and helped conduct the investigation.

"I have been there [at real accidents] and arrested drunk drivers before," Green said.

When asked if he thought this demonstration would actually make a difference he said, "I think it does." He added that having students participate makes it real.

*Source: LaCanadaOnline.com* ♦

## Lessons Learned

The first thing to be affected by alcohol is your judgment. When you drink, both your thinking and your reasoning become impaired. You can tell just by the fact that once you have one drink, you're more likely to have another and then another. You become less likely to consider the consequences of your actions. You underestimate the risks of being on the road, and overestimate your ability to tolerate alcohol.

When your judgment is affected, you're less likely to compensate for your other losses, vision and reaction time, by driving more carefully than usual. So the fact that you are judging the situation from an impaired mindset leads one to make a decision that could be dangerous, as you then make the "impaired decision" to get behind the wheel. The choice to get behind the wheel in this case was affected by alcohol, and the consequences were not considered.

After your judgment, the next thing alcohol affects is your reaction time. You become physically slower and less alert. It takes you longer to hit the brake but, because your judgment is impaired, you're not likely to increase your following distance in order to compensate. You process information slower, which affects your perception of traffic situations.

Finally, alcohol affects your vision. It relaxes the muscles that focus and move the eyes, causing your vision to become distorted. Your perception of distance is affected.