

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

Volume 62, Issue 24

July 2006

Teen Killed in Single-Car Accident

Investigators in Clark County, Ohio said 18-year-old Jacob Beam of Fairborn was killed in an accident on the morning of Sunday, June 11. Investigators said it appears the driver may have lost control, went off the road and struck a utility pole; neither teen was wearing a seat belt.

Source: WHIOTV.com♦

Lessons Learned

Wear lap belts around your hips, not your stomach. Fasten them snugly. Wear a shoulder belt only with a lap belt. Don't just use your safety belt for long trips or high-speed highways. More than half of the collisions that cause injury or death happen at speeds less than 40 mph, and within 5 miles of home.

Some people think that because their car is equipped with an airbag they don't have to wear their safety belt.

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Published by the National Safety Commission
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Airbags will save your life, sometimes in a head-on collision. But you still have to wear your safety belt with an airbag. Excuses some people make for not wearing a safety belt:

- **It wrinkles my clothes.** All you need to do is take a handkerchief or a small hand towel and keep it in your car. If you're wearing nice clothes, put the handkerchief or towel between the seat belt and your clothes. It smoothes out that area and keeps it wrinkle free.
- **They're uncomfortable.** If your safety belt touches your neck and it's uncomfortable, purchase a sheepskin or cloth covering. You put the covering over the spot on the seat belt that irritates you. This makes wearing the seatbelt more comfortable. You could also have a mechanic lower the belt an inch or two for a few dollars.
- **I forgot.** If you make fastening your safety belt a habit, you will never forget.
- **They're broken.** Get them fixed – it could save your life!
- **I can brace myself in a crash.** You cannot brace yourself. A 30-mph crash is the same force of impact as falling off a four-story building. Imagine that you are on the fourth floor of a building where there's a balcony. Could you dive off the balcony and land on the sidewalk in the pushup position? You couldn't - it is impossible.

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Car Accident Claims Life of One Teen, Seriously Injures Another

Samantha Lyons-Dauck, 19, of Oglesby, IL was killed and the driver, 19-year-old Jared Goskusky of Tonica, was life-flighted to OSF St. Francis Medical Center where he is in serious condition after a one car rollover accident in the early morning hours of Friday, June 16.

It's still unclear why the car left the roadway just before 5 a.m., and friends fear it could be alcohol related.

Source: hoinews.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 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. 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. You have a hard time judging how close you are to other vehicles, road signs or traffic signals. Your pupils take longer to adjust to changes in light, so you're more vulnerable to being blinded by the glare of headlights. Your eye muscles may

even relax to the point that you can't focus and your vision becomes fuzzy and you see a double image.

Alcohol also affects peripheral vision or the area around your eyes but not directly in front of you. This is how we perceive lights, shadows, and motion. Peripheral vision area is needed when driving; as you travel down the road the guy on the bike might be beside the road prior to pulling in front of you, but with a diminished field of vision, combined with a lack of reaction time, the result could be tragic. Either of the two affected areas alone could have been a problem, but when combined, the potential is deadly.

When you drink, your bad driving habits become more pronounced. Imagine yourself on the road after having one drink. If a person runs out in front of your car, can you stop in time? After one drink, your motor skills have been affected. Your ability to think and see has clearly diminished. After two or three drinks, your decision-making skills are seriously hampered, your attention span decreases and you take longer to think and longer to react. What if a child chases a ball out into the street? Will you be able to react and stop in time?

Alcohol:

- Dulls judgment and concentration
- Slows reflexes and reaction time
- Leads to multiple, blurred and restricted side and night vision
- Hinders muscle control and coordination
- Exaggerates emotions
- Increases drowsiness

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Teen Gains New Perspective a Year after Car Accident

Alex Hickey, 19, faces surgery to begin reconstructing scarred thighs, the last outward signs of a year-old wreck that occurred when the driver she was riding with lost control on a wet road. She suffered a broken disk in her neck, a broken right femur, a broken left hand and a few broken teeth, four contusions, short-term memory loss and a gash in her head that still sloughs off bits of glass; a knee has nerve damage and a foot dropped.

SourceAJC.com♦

Lessons Learned

You should always drive with caution whenever there is a chance that your traction will be reduced, whether the roads are slick with rainwater or with spilled oil or fuel. If you find yourself driving on slick roads, here are some safety tips to follow:

- Gradually reduce your speed.
- Do not brake hard or suddenly on wet or slippery pavement.
- Avoid sudden acceleration.
- When you change your speed or direction, do so smoothly and gradually rather than sharply.
- Increase your following distance to allow more time to stop.
- If you approach a sharp curve or a hill, grip the steering wheel firmly and give yourself time to slow down.
- If you start to hydroplane, stay calm. Don't brake suddenly. Take your foot off the accelerator until the tires gain traction with the road, then brake gently.

After a storm, be aware of standing water. Do not drive through large bodies of standing water as it can affect brake performance and the vehicle's electrical system and can cause engine failure, which could result in costly repairs. If the standing water is concentrated on one portion of the road and only one side of the vehicle goes through the water, the vehicle will tend to pull in that direction. The force of the pull is dependent on the depth of the water and the speed of the vehicle.

As you approach standing water, lift your foot off the gas pedal and check your rearview mirror for vehicles that may be following you too closely.

Remember:

- Slow down before hitting the water.
- Turn wipers on before hitting the water.
- Tap brakes as you exit.
- Use caution in checking outside mirrors. Rain can distort or obliterate images.

Do not drive through standing water if you do not know how deep it is.

When roads are wet, stopping distance increases. When braking, friction between your tires and the surface of the roadway affect your stopping distance. Wet roads have less friction and increase the distance it takes you to stop.

Heavy rain reduces your ability to see and be seen. In the daytime, turn on your windshield wipers, low beam headlights and if needed, your windshield defroster.

Heavy rain at night can almost blind you. Driving the speed limit under these conditions is too fast. It is always best to reduce your speed limit in this scenario.

In rainy weather, the hazard of reduced visibility is compounded by reduced traction. Traction is the grip between your tires and the road. As the moisture reduces friction, tires lose their grip. The distance needed to stop a car increases and the driver has less control of the vehicle. The danger of reduced traction is greatest within the first half hour of rainfall. At that time, the pavement becomes especially slippery, when the rain mixes with the oil and the dust on the surface of the road.

Driving through water may cause hydroplaning. Hydroplaning occurs when your tires ride on a thin layer of water and do not touch the road. When the car is riding on a film of water, there is no friction between your tires and the road. Hydroplaning also affects your ability to steer and brake. As little as 1/16 of an inch of water can cause hydroplaning.



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The advertisement features a woman sitting at a desk with a laptop, smiling. The text is overlaid on a dark background.

Teen Critical after Car Crash

A teenager is in extremely critical condition after crashing his car just before midnight on Saturday, June 24 on Oahu's north shore in Hawaii.

Police said the 16-year-old victim was speeding when he lost control of his car, crashing into a wall and slamming into four parked cars.

Source: *TheHawaiiChannel.com* ♦

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.

The most common traffic violation is speeding. And it's no coincidence that many of the collisions on the road today are caused by excessive speed.

The main reason people speed is they perceive they are saving time. They think they're going to get to their destination quicker if they go faster than everybody else on the road.

How much time do you think you save by speeding? What you should realize is you don't actually lose that much time by slowing down, and you might even save your life or save the life of someone else.

The following is a chart illustrating the time saved over a 10 mile trip on the highway.

M.P.H	ACTUAL TIME	TIME SAVED
55	10 MIN. 55 SEC	
60	10 MIN. 00 SEC	55 SEC.
65	09 MIN. 4 SEC.	1 MIN. 41 SEC.
70	08 MIN 34 SEC.	2 MIN. 21 SEC.

It really doesn't do you any good to speed, so slow

down and leave a little bit earlier. You'll be much more relaxed and you'll get there at the same time anyway.

The Basic Speed Rule simply states, "Do not go faster than is safe for conditions."

This is the safest way to drive. What does it mean? When you're driving on a road with a posted limit of 40 mph, that's the safest maximum speed you're allowed to drive during normal road conditions.

What if conditions are not normal? For example, if it begins to rain, it may not be safe to drive 40 mph, because the road may be slippery from the mixture of oil, dust and dirt accumulation with the rainwater. The conditions dictate the speed that you should drive, regardless of what the speed limit may be.

When you drive fast, you limit your chances of escaping a collision. Your reaction time is put to the test when you drive and the faster you go, the less reaction time you have to stop, swerve, or avoid oncoming cars.

Before a speed limit sign is posted, research is done by traffic safety engineers as to the safest maximum speed on that road under normal conditions. Any time you exceed that speed, you are not being safe.

You must identify and obey all posted speeds, and at the same time, identify any potential hazards and reduce your speed appropriately to avoid any hazards on the road, even if it means driving below the posted speed limit.

When you're approaching an intersection, where many collisions can occur, you should reduce your speed, observe the area and then proceed with caution. The same is true when approaching a railroad crossing, crest of a hill, bridge or an incline. Just because the speed limit sign says 55 mph or 65 mph doesn't mean you have to drive at that speed.

The Basic Speed Rule also applies on the highway. What if you just left a football stadium and there are 10,000 vehicles on the road in front of you? Is it okay to drive 55 mph? Of course not! You have all those vehicles in front of you and it wouldn't be safe.

Remember, it's important to be aware of all of your surroundings, both inside and outside the car. If you're not paying attention to the speed limit and not checking your speedometer, you could get a speeding ticket or be involved in a crash.