

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Miraculously Survives After Crashing into Bus

A 16 year old driver, on her way to school, smashed into a stopped school bus as she was reaching for her dropped cell phone. The force of the crash sent the car under the bus, peeling the top half of car from the hood to the back seat, accounting for three quarters of the car.

Inflatable bags were used to lift the bus off the car. Firefighters then used a hydraulic extrication tool to get to the driver.

None of the 29 students on the bus were injured and the teen escaped with only minor injuries. The driver has been cited in the crash.

Source: mlive.com ♦

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For Teens and their Parents



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Lessons Learned

1. Avoid reaching for things in your vehicle

Driving requires your full attention. When you take your eyes off the road for even a second, you endanger yourself and others, especially if your vehicle is in motion. Avoid reaching for things, cell phone use, and eating, drinking, adjusting music, personal grooming and day dreaming while you are driving. Pull over to a safe place to take care of distractions so that you can give driving your full attention.

2. Keep a visual scan

Your eyes should be scanning the driving environment every three to five seconds. As a defensive driver, you want to be looking ahead the equivalent of a city block, searching for potential problems and anticipating the worst and how to respond.

3. Be prepared to respond quickly

Be ready to brake, steer or accelerate to avoid a crash. Always search for the softest way out of danger. Keep your hands positioned on the steering wheel so that you can adjust your vehicles position quickly. Have your heel positioned between the brake and accelerator to pivot your movements quickly from one to the other.

4. Maintain a safe following distance

In normal ideal conditions, you want to maintain a two second following distance behind the vehicle in front of you. To do so, when the vehicle ahead passes a sign, object or shadow near the road way, begin by counting, one thousand one, and one thousand two. If you have reached that same point before counting one thousand two, you are too close.



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When traveling behind a motorcycle truck or bus increase your following distance an extra one to two seconds. Also increase your following distance by one second for poor visibility, including nighttime, fog, rain and ice.

5. Use extra caution during school rush hour

The travel times before and after school are especially busy. Bicyclists on the road, parents driving to kids to school, skateboarders on the move, extra pedestrians walking to school and children loading and unloading at bus stops, school zones, school buses and inexperienced teen drivers all create a hectic driving environment. During these times, give yourself an extra few minutes to get to your destination. In the afternoon, take an extra few minutes to let traffic die down before hitting the road.

Weather Conditions Contribute to Fatal Teen Crash

A 17 year old teen died as a result of injuries received during a three vehicle crash. The teen was the driver and sole occupant of a vehicle that lost control on a curve and hit a pickup truck head on. The third vehicle slid into the back of the pickup truck and sustained minor injuries. The occupants of the pickup were taken to the hospital. The occupants of the third vehicles were not seriously hurt.

Although continuing to investigate, Troopers cite the crash as weather related.

Source: nbc4i.com ♦

Lessons Learned

Winter conditions can be tough and can make driving frightful. Small amounts of snow can make the roads very slippery and can quickly turn to ice. When traveling in winter conditions drive slowly and avoid hitting the brakes suddenly or braking hard, as you can easily lose control of the vehicle. A good rule of thumb is to reduce your speed by 50 percent of the posted limit and increase the time you begin to apply your brakes by 200 percent.

Keep a large space cushion around your vehicle and increase your following distance to four seconds. Use your headlights to make yourself more visible. Avoid using cruise control and overdrive, so that you are in control of the vehicle. Be aware bridges and overpasses will be the first areas of the roadway to freeze.

When making turns or on a curve, your vehicle is especially vulnerable to ice. Travel at the slowest possible pace, so if you lose traction, you will not slide far. Steer and stare where you want your vehicle to travel.

If your car begins to skid, turn your wheel into the direction of the skid. Take your foot off the gas and off the brakes. Once the motion has settled and you can regain control, it is safe to apply your brakes. See where you want your car to go and steer gently back and forth until the car is centered in the lane.

In snowy conditions, the edges of the roadway can become obscured by blowing and drifting snow. Look for snow markers on the edge of the road.

Watch the weather forecast and be prepared for whiteout conditions by making sure you have a full tank of gas, extra blankets, cat litter or sand (*for traction*), shovel, cell phone, snacks and water should you need to pull over and wait the storm out.

If whiteout conditions exist, avoid using your high beams. High beams will reflect off the snow and make it more difficult to see. In these conditions, pull over to a safe place. Keep your noise levels low, so that you will be able to listen for traffic and emergency vehicles. Run your vehicles engine, just long enough to heat it up and the shut it off.

To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, make sure your tail pipe is not obstructed by snow and keep your window slightly cracked.

Do not leave your car and attempt to walk. You are safer in your car until the weather improves or help arrives.

If you become stranded, call authorities and tie a piece of bright cloth to the top of your closed window to help identify your location.

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Tips for Parents: Emotions and Driving

Upset? Angry? Emotional? We all get that way. It is a natural part of life and sometimes a natural part of the day. Life and events are out of our control and so we all are thrown hurdles to get through, many times unexpectedly. Dealing with what comes along can be complicated. But what you want to avoid is getting behind the wheel when you are emotional, angry or upset.

Many times people let their emotions get the best of them. When you are driving, you have to be able to give it your full attention. The attitude you have is your state of mind at any given moment, whether that be happy or sad, excited or full of anxiety.

Your state of mind controls how you behave and react to situations. The actions and reactions are a normal part of everyday living and interaction with others. When you are emotional behind the wheel, it can interfere with your ability to think clearly and inadvertently create a mental distraction.

For instance, if you are worried or upset or thinking through a complicated issue while driving, you may not notice your upcoming exit or turn, causing you to miss it or react suddenly. You become an inattentive driver. You may fail to scan the environment ahead or notice debris in the roadway. When you are angry or upset, you may increase your risk taking and pull out in front of another vehicle, cut someone off, or tailgate.

Positive emotions are dangerous too. Even when you've received the best of news there can be a lack of concentration when you get behind the wheel leading to increased reaction times. You can lose your ability to notice what other drivers are doing, anticipate their next moves and determine how you will respond.

Driving when emotions are high can interrupt your ability to process information in the driving environment and incite you to act out your emotions. You can lose your ability to perform skills that require precise timing to complete. Physically, your body can react in many ways including increases in heart beat and respiration rates and spikes adrenaline levels.

Teens' brains are still developing and are very vulnerable to their emotions and the emotions of others. They usually have less means and independence than they would like, which can increase their frustrations and intensify their emotions.

So what do you do?

- Set a good example and choose not to drive when upset.
- Recognize the role emotions play when driving. Look at examples of other drivers on the roadway who maybe mental distracted and discuss the danger they pose together.
- Examine your and your teenager's emotional make up and discuss coping strategies.
- Identify and predict situations that could cause both positive and negative emotions.
- Ask for a commitment from your teen to delay driving when they are emotional or upset. Get a verbal agreement and include it in your **Parent Teen Contract**.

What are some coping strategies?

- If you are excited or upset, ask someone else to drive you.
- Give yourself a few minutes and quiet your mind. Close your eyes and take a several deep breaths.
- Remember that you can't control what happens to you, you can only control how you respond to it and many times that determines your ultimate success.
- Separate the actions, reactions and emotions from the people and the situations: John's immature vs. John's acting immature.
- If you can, take a short walk or do some quick exercises to settle your body down.
- Leave a few minutes early to give yourself extra time to get to your destination, so you won't be hurried.

If you become upset while you are driving, pull over to a safe place. Take a few minutes, walk around, and breathe deeply.

Avoid the risk and avoid the consequences...**Drive with a safe attitude.**



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The advertisement features a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting on the floor and smiling while working on a laptop. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.