

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Rural Crash Leaves Teen Dead

A two-car collision on a county road left one teen dead and two others injured. According to the Iowa State Patrol, a 15 year old teen, was pronounced dead upon arrival at Mercy North Iowa Medical Center in Mason City after a car driven by a 16 year old teen struck the passenger side of a vehicle driven by another 16 year old driver.

The crash occurred at an uncontrolled gravel road intersection. The impact sent both vehicles into a ditch. Two occupants were wearing their seat belts and one wasn't. A spokeswoman for the Highway Patrol said the teen may not have survived even he had worn his seatbelt given the point of impact on the passenger side.

The cause of the collision is still under investigation. Although the intersection was uncontrolled, there were "no line-of-sight problems." All three teens were currently high school sophomores.

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For Teens and their Parents



Source: <http://www.messengernews.net/> ♦

Lessons Learned

Everyone worries about driving on the interstate, but rural roads present their own set of challenges and dangers as well. Although traffic volumes are considerably less on rural roads, it does not decrease the need to practice defensive driving skills.

One obvious hazard of rural driving is the road itself. Depending on the local topography, line of sight may be an issue to contend with especially in hilly or mountainous areas. Because of this, it is important to be prepared for slow moving vehicles or vehicles that are entering the flow of traffic from unmarked or poorly marked side roads or streets. Exercise extra caution when approaching a blind curve. Always reduce your speed as you approach the curve and cover the brake in the event you encounter a stalled vehicle or debris on the road.

Many times rural or country roads do not receive the attention to maintenance that a comparable road in an urban setting would get. Consequently, you may encounter pot holes, debris or other hazards that may cause damage to your vehicle or possibly cause you to lose control. In addition, some roads will have minimal markings denoting lanes of travels which will be made more difficult at night as some of these roads also lack reflective lane markers as well.

One safety feature that we take for granted is the road shoulder. If we need to pull over, it allows us plenty of room to safely clear the lane of traffic or if we swerve for whatever reason, it provides us a stable surface to maintain control of the vehicle. On country roads, shoulders may be non-existent leading to increased risks should you encounter a disabled vehicle that has been unable to clear the road or if your own vehicle becomes disabled. If your vehicle experiences mechanical trouble in an area where there is no shoulder on which to pull over, if you are able consider continuing until you are safely clear the roadway.

Another hazard of rural driving that we may take for granted but could prove to be dangerous are railroad crossings. Most of us that live in cities are accustomed to crossings that are well marked by lights and gate crossing arms. These crossings have also been designed so that where the railroad's right-of-way crosses the road the surface provides a seamless and smooth transition to keep traffic flowing near the speed limit along busy city streets. That may not be the case on a rural road where these crossings are only marked by the familiar X. The crossing itself may be rough and bumpy and care should be exercised so as to avoid damage to your car. Most important of all, stop, look, and listen!

Woman Dies in Motorcycle Crash

A 49-year-old woman died Saturday as the result of a motorcycle collision.

The motorcyclist died when a car pulled into her lane of travel. The 17-year-old driver of the car was charged with misdemeanor death by motor vehicle.

According to a report from the N.C. Highway Patrol, the motorcyclist was traveling west on a highway when the 17-year-old pulled from a stop sign on a side road into her path.

The woman was thrown from her motorcycle by the force of the collision. Her motorcycle crashed on its left side and

caught fire. The car also caught fire as a result of the collision.

The crash happened about 5:50 p.m.

Source: www.The-Dispatch.com ♦

Lessons Learned

Motorcycles are popular modes of transportation especially during the nice weather spring and summer brings. They are less expensive to purchase, offer a higher fuel economy, lower maintenance cost and take up less storage space than a car. However, motorcycles offer little protection to their occupants, are limited on stability and are very vulnerable to crashing when they have to respond quickly to an emergency. It is important to practice defensive driving techniques when sharing the road with motorcycles.

Determining how fast a motorcycle is traveling can be difficult. They are smaller, difficult to see, and appear farther away than they really are as compared to a car or truck. Extra precautions to take when sharing the road include:

- **Maintain your scan** of the roadway to ensure you are aware of their location and continually check your blind spots. Complete a visual scan every three to five seconds.
- **Increase your following distance** behind a motorcycle to a minimum of four seconds in ideal weather conditions and 5 seconds in inclement weather and at night.



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- **Dim your high beams** at night when approaching a motorcycle, as they are more susceptible to their blinding affect.
- **Watch out for road hazards** and defects and be prepared to maneuver safely around them. Signal well in advance, and check your mirrors and blind spots before making a turn.
- **Check your mirrors** before and after you use your brake.
- **Be extra cautious** when approaching driveways, parking lots, and intersections. Reduce your speed for lower visibility conditions such as dawn, dusk, nighttime and poor weather.
- **Always expect the unexpected** and prepare to react by always keeping plenty of space around your vehicle. If you have to react quickly, a space cushion can help to avoid a collision.

Tips for Parents: Avoiding the Fatal Attraction

Buzz, buzz...it will just take a second to check. Ring, ringit could be important. Yeah, I should go ahead and make that call. It will save me the time and hassle later on. The temptation to reach out and/or respond to someone through a cell phone is great. You have heard the news stories and safe driving campaigns and you know that you shouldn't, but ...do you resist the urge to use the cell phone or let temptation get the best of you?

In order to completely eliminate the urge to use your phone you could turn it off before turning your key in the ignition, lock it up (in the glove box, console, or trunk), or install some of the new technology for cell phones. There are several companies offering services that will restrict the phone's ability to send and receive text and email messages. Some companies offer services that will restrict calls too. A sampling include:

Textecution - <http://www.textecution.com/>

Textecution is an application designed for parents to install on their children's phones. It utilizes the GPS features of several handsets to determine if the owner of the phone is moving at more than 10mph. It disables the texting function of the phone. If the person with Textecution on their phone is riding a vehicle as a passenger, or in a bus or train need to use the text feature, there is an "override" option --- requesting for text access from

the administrator. The parent who installed the phone is designated as the administrator, and can allow, temporarily for the phone to allow texting features. www.safefloridadriver.com

iZUP – <http://www.getizup.com/>

iZUP disables your phone entirely, removing any distraction from the road. It automatically forwards calls to voicemail and holds text messages while the phone is in motion. It is also time-delayed, to prevent reactivation of the phone's features in natural stopping areas, like stop lights. The phone will only allow the user to make calls to 911 and 3 pre-approved numbers.

TXBBlocker – <http://www.txtblocker.com/>

TXBBlocker utilizes GPS locations to detect if the phone is traveling at a car's moving rate and disables features of the phone accordingly. The installer of the TXBBlocker phone can also designate which areas are no-phone zones, and deactivates texting, calling, email and browsing. There's also a feature that auto sends a text message to the parent, should the phone be moving at speeds greater than 65mph. Another safety feature for parents is they could check where the owner of the phone is in, based on GPS location. The phone will still be able to dial 911, in case of emergency. It only checks in with GPS every few minutes, so it doesn't constantly use the phone's battery.

DriveSafe.ly – <http://www.drivesafe.ly/>

DriveSafe.ly is a hands-free application that reads out text messages and emails as the phone receives it. There is an optional auto-responder that sends out a customized text message while the application is active.

Committing to be distraction free when you are driving is not easy. But the statistics remind us each day that we are more likely to have a collision when we are distracted, many drivers are making an effort. Regardless of whether it is hand held or hands free, the cell phone is a distraction for every driver.

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