

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## Teens injured in crash near High School

A collision turning into a school area sent three students to the hospital. According to witnesses, there was a long line of cars waiting to turn. It appears that the 17-year-old teen driver simply misjudged how much time she had to make the turn.

It is unknown at this time whether speed may have been a factor. The high school does not have the school zone speed restrictions that would be seen around an elementary or middle school.

Source: [www.Ksl.com.com](http://www.Ksl.com.com) ♦

## Fatal crash prompts changes at School

A 17-year-old teen died due to injuries received from a traffic crash during the first week of school. The crash was blamed in part on traffic conditions near the school and in its parking lot.

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For Teens and their Parents



The crash occurred after the day's dismissal, exiting the parking lot, where left turns are prohibited. The teen was attempting a turnaround that resulted in a four-vehicle traffic crash that involved all student drivers. The driver was not wearing a seat belt when the crash occurred.

Source: [www.thetelegraph.com](http://www.thetelegraph.com) ♦

## Lessons Learned

Where can you find 30 minutes worth of chaos 30 minutes twice a day Monday through Friday, ten months out of the year? Just check out your local high school parking lot, 30 minutes before school starts and 5 minutes before dismissal through the 25 minutes of mass exodus. It is a crazed driving environment, which can frazzle the most cautious driver. And while most elementary and middle schools set up school zones, to slow drivers down and alert them to increased pedestrian traffic, many high schools lack school zones. Yet, the highest numbers of newest and least experienced drivers are all converging to one location. Add the passengers that they are carrying, the fact that many of them are running late or are anxious to get to their next activity, that the start time and end time of school tends to run against their internal body clock and you have a recipe for disaster.

So the lesson learned is to be prepared before you start out the day.

- **Get plenty of rest.** Most teens need at least 9 hours of sleep to function competently,

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emotionally, academically, and behind the wheel. Several studies have highlighted the danger of drowsy driving and the National Sleep Foundation identifies teens as a high risk group.

- **Make sure your vehicle is ready to go.** Gas up, store your stuff in the trunk, make sure the windows are clean and your lights are working, before you head out.
- **Avoid the rush.** Eat, organize, take your time and get to school early and make sure anyone you travel with does the same. Bypass the traffic and leave school after everyone else has cleared out.
- **Put your safety belt on.** Before starting the vehicle make it a habit and be sure anyone else with you has their safety belt on. Unrestrained passengers are not only a danger to themselves, but can collide into you or others in the vehicle and cause injury or death.
- **Increase your following distance.** Give yourself three seconds behind the vehicle ahead. When stopped, be sure you can see the pavement behind the tires of the vehicle in front of you.
- **Distraction is two letters away from destruction.** Give driving your full attention, and ask anyone travelling with you to also be an extra set of eyes on the look out.
- **Heed the signs.** Watch for the changes in speed limits and travel below the posted speed. Be alert for increased pedestrian traffic, school crossings and other hazards.
- **Check twice.** Look left, then right and left again. If you can make the turn safely as a pedestrian, you can make it safely as a driver. When in doubt, don't.
- **Watch for the stale green.** If the light has been green a while, chances are it will soon change. With around a thousand people killed a year due to red light runners, ask yourself if it is really worth the risk?

The areas around schools are high risk for crashes and fender benders. If your school does not have a school zone at the entrance and exit areas, ask school and local governmental agencies and officials to set one up. But most importantly, take the initiative to be a defensive driver.

## Teen dies after fatal crash

An 18-year-old died at a hospital after he was involved in a one-car crash. The teen was driving a vehicle that left the road and struck a tree around 8:30 p.m. during snowy weather.

According to the Sherriff's Office weather appears to be a contributing factor to the cause of the crash.

Source: [www.troyrecord.com](http://www.troyrecord.com) ♦

## Lessons Learned

When driving on wet or icy roads:

- Drive slowly and increase your following distance, staying further behind the vehicle ahead.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections. Avoid fast turns.
- Shift to low gear before going down a steep hill.
- If your brakes get wet, dry them by pressing the gas pedal and brake pedal at the same time so that the vehicle drives against the pressure of the brakes.
- Stay away from slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, and deep puddles.

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If your vehicle begins to skid and you have Antilock Brakes, apply firm pressure and hold. If your vehicle has rear-wheel drive and goes into a skid, stop braking and turn the steering wheel into the direction of the skid. If it has front-wheel drive, steer where you want to go and carefully accelerate to keep the vehicle moving.

If you don't have ABS, pump your brakes. As the vehicle begins to skid, quickly let up on the brake. Push it down again quickly until coming to a complete stop.

## Resolutions to be a Safer Driver

Many people will make a commitment to losing weight, to do better in school, get out of debt, or join a fitness club. The sad part of making these resolutions is they are often very hard to keep and people often fail within the first few weeks or months of trying.

There is one New Year's Resolution that can be achieved by teens and that is to become a safer driver. It's easy to achieve because licensed teenage drivers are in their vehicles every day giving them the opportunity to stick to their resolution.

In today's world of driving, drivers are multitasking when behind the wheel. According to the Safe Driving Institute:

- 77% of drivers admit to talking or [texting while driving](#)
- 60% admit to eating while driving
- 50% admit to making obscene or rude gestures or comments to other drivers, particularly those who cut in front of them
- 50% admit to almost falling asleep while behind the wheel
- Countless teens are getting behind the wheel of their vehicle drunk, high or buzzed.

Making a New Year's resolution to eliminate the above while driving isn't difficult to incorporate into your daily driving habits. Let's look at a few:

- Ditch the cell phone because using a cell phone or texting while driving can be as dangerous or deadly as drunk driving. One way of doing this is to keep your cell phone far enough away that you will not be tempted to use it. Keep it turned off and let all messages go to voicemail to be listened to later. You can also purchase a cell phone blocker to block calls and/or texts while the vehicle is in motion, only use a cell phone when driving for emergencies.

- Drive within the posted speed limit. When you speed you are increasing the chances of you getting into a crash, injuring or killing yourself or others. Don't be a follower and speed alongside everyone else. Be a leader and show others you obey the law.
- Fast food is often a teens lifeline but not while you are driving. If you need a snack, go through the drive-through, get your food, park, eat and then continue your journey.
- Always look when entering a lane of traffic or passing another car. Get into the habit of using your turn signals and side-view mirrors and don't forget those inexpensive "*blind-spot mirrors*" can make the difference of getting into a crash or not.
- When someone cuts you off, take a deep breath, count to ten and let it go. Road rage accomplishes nothing except putting you in danger of a crash while you try to catch up to the other driver.
- Wear your seatbelt. Not because it's the law, but because it will save your life.
- Study for your school tests at home, not while driving to school. Reading while driving is the second most common distraction while driving after the cell phone.
- Always remember drinking, drugging and driving don't mix. One beer or a hit from one blunt can negatively impact your driving skills. If you plan on partying with alcohol or other substances, make sure you use a designated driver. Also remember that in all 50 states in the United States the legal age to consume alcohol is 21 and using illegal drugs such as marijuana is illegal.
- Finally, take a [defensive driving course](#) every couple of years. It's always good to have a little refresher course and find out what changes have been made in the traffic laws and road conditions.

Make sure your New Year's resolutions include becoming a smarter and safer driver. It is easy to incorporate into your daily living and will help you survive on the road.

**Happy New Year and Safe Driving!**



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The advertisement features a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting at a desk and smiling. She is looking at a laptop. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.