

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Survives Hydroplaning Crash

An 18 year-old woman who was involved in a crash is determined to attend graduation, despite numerous injuries including a broken back, arm, shattered ankles and having both feet broken. The collision occurred the day after her senior prom, as the driver and a passenger were headed out for a fun-filled day. Her vehicle hydroplaned as she attempted to turn during a storm and she lost control of the vehicle. Her vehicle flipped, landing on top of a van carrying nine people. There were no other serious injuries reported.

Source: nbc15.com; abclocal.go.com ♦

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For Teens and their Parents



Lessons Learned

The outside weather has warmed up and as the temperature increases, so does the frequency of summer showers. It is important to be aware of the dangers that hydroplaning and skidding cause. Here are some useful tips for how they can be avoided.

- 1. Check your tires for wear and proper inflation.**
As a rule of thumb, when you place a penny upside-down facing you between the treads of a tire, the top of Abraham Lincoln's head should not be visible. If it is, your tread is worn down and your tires need to be replaced. Measure your tires inflation each month and keep tires inflated at the correct vehicle specified amount. Not only will the proper tire inflation provide greater stability and traction, it improves gas mileage. Properly maintained tires are the first line of defense in avoiding hydroplaning or a skid.
- 2. Slow down.** The beginning of rain can often become one of the most dangerous times to travel. The roadway collects dirt, oil and other particles. When rain first begins, these particles rise and float on the roadway surface, reducing tire traction. To help you tires gain traction and prevent sliding on the road, slow down. Hydroplaning can occur in as little as 35 miles-per-hour.

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3. **Avoid standing water and drive in the tracks on the road made by other vehicles.** Standing water can cause your vehicle to hydroplane and lose control. Avoid the edges of the road where standing water collects. Also, be on the look-out for areas of standing water in the road that may be disguising pot holes or other dangers you can't see. Never drive through a flooded road, as your vehicle can become flooded, cause mechanical issues or be swept away.
4. **Check your brakes and make sure they are dry.** Because of the wet pavement and loss of friction, your stopping distance will increase. Increase your following distance and tap your brakes gently when in a safe to check them, making sure that they are working properly.
5. **Turn off cruise control.** In poor weather and even light rain, cruise control can cause your vehicle to increase the speed traveled, thereby increasing the possibility of hydroplaning or a skid.

Take these steps if you find yourself hydroplaning or in a skid:

- Take your foot off the gas.
- If you have standard brakes- don't hit the brakes. If you were in the process of braking, take your foot off the brakes.
- If you have Anti-lock brakes (ABS), apply firm pressure on the brakes.
- Steer the vehicle in the direction of the skid, by turning your steering wheel in the direction the vehicle is traveling. Look for where you want your vehicle to be and steer towards that place or spot.
- Once you have gained control of your steering and the vehicle has slowed down on its own, you can apply brakes to come to a full stop.
- Move the vehicle to a safe place if able, and give yourself time to calm down, before starting back out on the road.

Carbon Monoxide Blamed For Parking Lot Incident

Witnesses found a vehicle in a grocery store parking lot with a woman and two children unconscious inside. The vehicle was running, in reverse gear with the unconscious driver's foot on the brake. A passerby opened the vehicle, shifted it into park and immediately started to pull out the occupants to lie on the ground. Paramedics arrived and began rescue efforts.

The woman and girls were taken to the hospital in serious condition.

Source: *Nbc-2.com; heraldtribune.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Be on alert for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs when poisonous gases are inhaled and are picked up quickly by the red blood cells at a higher rate than oxygen, blocking oxygen from getting into the body.

Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, tasteless, and difficult to detect. CO can damage body tissues and cause death. Symptoms include: headache, dizziness, confusion, flu-like effects, chest pain, nausea and loss of consciousness.

As a part of your annual vehicle maintenance have your mechanic check for any defects in your exhaust system. Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur due to defects in the muffler and leaks in the exhaust pipe, tail-pipe,

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manifold pipe gasket and manifold engine connection. A small leak can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide inside the vehicle.

The Florida Department of Health offers these tips to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning from your vehicle:

- Never leave an automobile running in a closed garage or in a garage attached to the house - even with the garage door open.
- While driving, keep the rear window or tailgate of a vehicle closed, as carbon monoxide can enter your vehicle through a faulty exhaust system.
- If you suspect you are experiencing any symptoms of CO poisoning, open doors and windows, turn off the gas and get outside.

If sitting in a parked vehicle, crack your front windows to allow for air to escape.

If you have a keyless ignition system, beware to concerns that have been raised over their lack of an automatic shut-off system, increasing opportunities for carbon monoxide poisoning instances.

Tips for Parents: Teaching Your Teen to Drive

Most parents want to be supportive when teaching their teens to drive. But often learning can be rushed, too early, born out of guilt or boredom. Take time to properly plan for this important time.

Recently, there have been several mishaps while teens are learning to drive with their parents. Many of these mishaps have occurred due to lack of preplanning as to what and where your teen will be taught and introducing too much information and too many skills before they are ready. Take time to carefully plan their driving education.

Once you have a plan established to teach them, have a plan for yourself as well. Consider the following:

- ✓ How is your state of mind? If you are not up to doing it, don't. If you are feeling edgy, irritable or nervous, it will rub off on your teen. Put it off for another day or find someone else to teach them.

They won't get the type of learning they need and it will only create problems between the two of you.

- ✓ Keep it to just the two of you in the vehicle. While you may trade off who is taking the role of the Driving Instructor, don't bring spectators. They detract from learning and cause driver distraction. Remember that per passenger the risk for a teen driver to have a collision increases exponentially. Leave the other passengers behind.
- ✓ Make sure you are not rushed. Give your teen this time to focus on them and their learning experience. Reschedule any important calls, delay any errands and put off any heart to heart conversations with your teen. Focus on the task at hand.
- ✓ "Driver Education is Continuing Education", so don't give out too much information, or push things along too soon. Driving is the number one cause of death for teens, so take your time. This is a life-long skill and shouldn't be rushed.

Our experts have created a great guide "Teaching your Teen to Drive Safely", full of tips, exercises and checklist to guide you through the process.



"MOM, I LIKE LOVE YOU AND STUFF BUT I THINK DAD BETTER TEACH ME HOW TO DRIVE...HE DOESN'T BULLDOZE HIS NAILS INTO MY THIGH WHEN I MERGE INTO TRAFFIC!"