

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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## March Is Especially Deadly For Teen Drivers And Their Passengers

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

### Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed thus far in March revealed that at least 59 teens died in motor vehicle collisions during the month. This Google search of news reports is not a scientific survey and it doesn't turn up all of the news articles nor does it reflect the official statistics by state safety agencies. It is safe to assume that many more teens were killed than were reported in this search. This search didn't include teen passengers killed while an adult was at the wheel or teens that were killed in multiple car crashes where an adult was deemed to be at fault for causing the collision. It only included fatal

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For Teens and their Parents



crashes in which the teen driver was alleged to have been at fault.

In the 43 reported fatal crashes reported thus far this month:

- 38 teen drivers were killed.
- 20 teen passengers were killed.
- 7 of the teen drivers were injured.
- 18 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 2 occupants of other vehicles were killed.
- 20 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 67% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts were not used in 33% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 28% of the crashes.
- 79% of the crashes involved loss of control of the vehicle by the teen driver. (Loss of control is generally caused by a driver distraction in which the driver leaves the road and tries to over-correct, or when the driver is driving too fast for conditions and fails to negotiate a curve or turn, or a

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combination of high speed and a driver distraction.)

- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 7% of the crashes.
- In 7 of the crashes (16%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- Ohio led the nation with 10 teen deaths followed by Texas with 9.
- March 10 was the deadliest single day with 10 teen deaths in 3 crashes.
- 40 of the deaths (69%) occurred on weekends.
- 49% of the deaths occurred at night.

This unscientific article search shows that the statistics on teen driving hold up. Most teen driving crashes are single vehicle crashes and the main causes for teen driving deaths are speeding, driver distraction, lack of seat belt use, and use of alcohol or other drugs. Graduated Licensing Laws (GDL) are designed to limit the number of passengers a teen driver can carry and to try to limit distractions by prohibiting use of cell phones. Violating GDL laws can result in suspension of a teen driver's license. Both parents and teens should know and understand their state's Graduated Licensing Laws and parents should enforce them.

## A Deadly Month For Teen Passengers

"A sport utility vehicle carrying eight teenagers crashed into a guardrail Sunday morning and landed in a swampy pond in northeast Ohio, killing six of them and injuring the others, the state highway patrol said."

Source: <http://www.cleveland.com> ♦

## Lessons Learned

The article above was one of several articles describing multiple deaths of teens and their

passengers in single crashes. In fact, just four crashes during a one week period, were responsible for the deaths of eighteen teens in March.

In one crash, eight Ohio teens piled into a van driven by an unlicensed teen and six of them, including the driver, were killed when she lost control of the vehicle and crashed into a pond. One of the two survivors described the driver as driving erratically at a high rate of speed as they approached a spot known as "dead man's curve."

In another crash on the same day in Texas, a teen driver carrying three other teen passengers ran a stop sign and crashed into a fuel tanker truck igniting a fire that killed all the teens and left the truck driver with burns over 65 percent of his body.

In yet another Ohio crash, a teen driver lost control and the car wound up upside down in a pond killing the driver and three other teen passengers. The crash wasn't discovered until the next morning when a passing bus driver noticed the vehicle's wheels sticking out of the water.

In Indiana, two pickup trucks carrying a total of six teens left the same event when, according to reports, both teen drivers ran a stop sign and collided in the intersection killing both the drivers and one other teen. Three other teens were severely injured.

We wrote last month about teaching your teen to be a "Smart Passenger." When a teen driver carries more than one teen passenger, the probabilities of a crash increase significantly. In March, 39 percent of the deadly crashes involved vehicles in which there

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were three or more teen occupants.

Parents need to be aware, as much as possible, about whom their teen is riding with and how many passengers there may be. If there are going to be more than two teens in the vehicle, parents need to be aware of the increased risk to their child and refuse, if necessary, to allow them to go.

## Tips For Parents: Teen Highway Death Rates Increase

A study released in February by the Governor's Highway Safety Administration (GHSA) revealed that, during the first half of 2012, teen highway death rates for 16 and 17 year old drivers increased dramatically, especially in certain regions of the country.

Figures show that, during the first six months of 2012, the death rate for teens increased by nineteen percent. According to the GHSA, the study follows a report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showing that the death rates for drivers of all ages had increased by eight percent.

The author of the study suggested that one reason for the increase is that the initial benefits of the Graduated Driver License (GDL) laws passed in most states may be leveling off. Another reason for the increase may be the improving economy which gives teens more opportunity to drive.

According to the report, "states with the highest numbers of deaths for the first six months were Indiana and Tennessee (16), Louisiana (15), Texas (14), and Alabama, Illinois, and Kentucky (12 each)."

Even though it has the highest teen population, California, with some of the toughest GDL laws in the country experienced a reduction in the rate of teen deaths for the period.

The study's author suggests that states with weak or less than optimum GDL laws have failed to update or

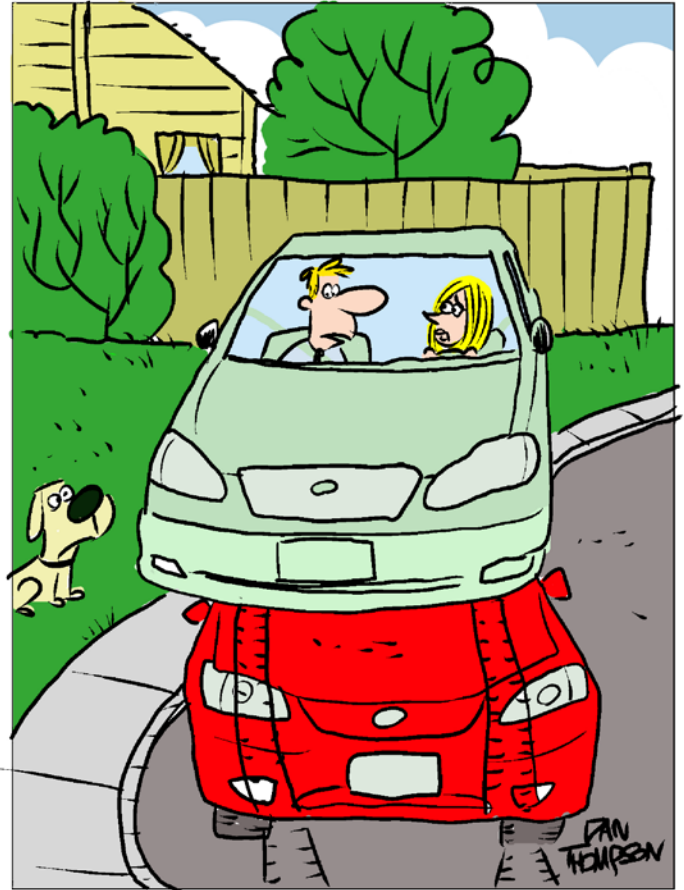
strengthen the GDL laws in order to protect teen drivers.

You can read the full report and see how your state stacks up at:

[http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/pdf/spotlights/spotlight\\_teens12.pdf](http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/pdf/spotlights/spotlight_teens12.pdf)

For a full list of each state's GDL laws, visit:

[http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/license\\_laws.html](http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/license_laws.html)



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