

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Dangerous Summer Months For Teens Starts With High Death Rate

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

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed thus far in June revealed that at least 70 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 68 reported fatal crashes reported thus far this month:

- 43 teen drivers were killed.
- 27 teen passengers were killed.
- 20 of the teen drivers were injured.
- 37 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 5 occupants of other vehicles were killed.
- 25 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 53% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts were not used in 26% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 16% of the crashes.
- 71% 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 6% of the crashes.
- In 14 of the crashes (21%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 39 of the deaths (56%) occurred on weekends.
- 5 of the deaths were on All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- 3 of the deaths were on motorcycles.

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.

Police Warn Parents Against Teen "Hill Hopping"

"JEFFERSON, Ore. -- Police were urging parents to talk to their teens about the dangers of "hill-hopping" after a teenager died over the weekend.

Nicolas Jolly, 19, was killed after going on a high-speed joyride when his car flew into a power pole and was sheared in half. "

Source: <http://www.kgw.com> ♦

"A 16-year-old Salem high school student was impaled by a top rail of a chain link fence when he crashed his car off Ballantyne Road just south of Kuebler Boulevard on Thursday."

Source: <http://www.kptv.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

Law enforcement authorities across the nation are warning against an incredibly dangerous practice known as "hill hopping" that is growing in popularity among young drivers. As the name implies, the practice consists of teen drivers driving over hills at a high rate of speed and going airborne as the vehicle crests the hilltop.

While this practice isn't really new, videos posted on YouTube are helping to spread the word and encouraging more young drivers to give it a try. The practice is dangerous for a number of reasons:

- Most of these hill hopping attempts occur on rural two-lane roads. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) lists two-lane country roads as the most dangerous and deadly type of road. Two-lane country roads are normally narrow and give no room for escape from an emergency situation. Intersections with other roads or driveways can be hidden by hills or trees and drivers entering the road may, at first, consider the roadway to be clear only to pull out and encounter a vehicle traveling over the crest of a hill at a high rate of speed.
- While it is obvious that crashing to the ground after going airborne can't be good for the car, the damage done to the vehicle occurs in those parts of the car that are most critical to vehicle control.

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The suspension system can be damaged leading to less control in curves or turns. The steering mechanism can also be damaged or broken, leading to total loss of control.

- Most people don't realize that the tires are the most important control device on the vehicle. The steering wheel and brakes don't do much good if the tires aren't in contact with the road. One hill hopping YouTube video shows an older model Buick cresting a hill at a high rate of speed and remaining airborne for more than two seconds and traveling more than 50 feet before crashing down on its rear wheels. Once the tires lose contact with the road surface, there is no way to control where and when the vehicle will land or at what angle.
- Hard landings can throw the driver around allowing him or her to lose their grip on the wheel or to lose contact with the foot pedals at a time when control is most critical. If the driver and passengers aren't wearing seat belts, they can be violently thrown into the dashboard, against the windows, or ejected from the vehicle.

Parents need to drive home the idea that thrill rides need to be limited to amusement parks and have no place on the roadway.

Tips For Parents: It's Not Just Drugs And Alcohol That Are Dangerous For Teens!

We have written a lot in the past warning about the dangers of alcohol, drugs and about new types of dangerous drugs that appear on the scene. However there are some innocent sounding pranks with common household food items that can be dangerous and parents need to be aware of them.

One innocent sounding prank involves teens challenging each other to eat a tablespoon full of powdered cinnamon. The spice is so pungent that it usually results in the teen automatically spitting it all out in what is

known as an orange cloud.

While it looks innocent and comical, the gagging reflex causes the user to cough and, in the process of coughing, users can inhale some of the cinnamon powder into their lungs. If a large amount of cinnamon is inhaled, it can lead to collapsed lungs; if only a small amount is inhaled, it can cause scarring to the lung tissues and lead to long term pulmonary issues later in life.

Another recent dare led to a teen consuming a large amount of soy sauce. Shortly afterwards, he collapsed and went into convulsive seizures.

Soy sauce contains a lot of salt and when too much salt is introduced into the body, blood leaves the brain and moves to other organs in an attempt to flush out the salt. When that much blood leaves the brain, it can lead to shrinking of brain tissue and bleeding in the brain.

In spite of very aggressive treatment in the emergency room, the patient went into a coma that lasted for three days. Fortunately, there doesn't appear to be any permanent brain damage and he has returned to school. He is a very lucky young man.

Young people need to be taught that dares normally involve something that is risky or even downright dangerous. That is why it is a dare! Even something as innocent sounding as cinnamon or soy sauce can have major health implications.

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