

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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December Deaths Down Somewhat From Previous Months

Source: <http://www.google.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teen fatal collisions in December revealed that at least 62 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's safe to assume that 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 62 reported fatal crashes reported in December:

- 36 teen drivers were killed.
- 26 teen passengers were killed.
- 24 teen drivers were injured.
- 28 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 6 occupants of other vehicles or pedestrians were killed.
- 28 people in other vehicles or pedestrians were injured.
- 66% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts weren't used in 32% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 8% of the crashes.
- 90% 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

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and fails to negotiate a curve or turn, or a combination of high speed and a driver distraction.)

- Alcohol use was suspected to be the contributing factor in 6% of the crashes.
- In 18 of the crashes (29%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- 37 of the deaths (54%) occurred on weekends.
- One of the deaths was on an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV).
- One of the deaths was on a motorcycle.
- At least 5 teens were charged with serious crimes including manslaughter or vehicular homicide.
- New York and Washington led the nation with 5 deaths each.
- At least two teens were killed with their sibling at the wheel.
- In one crash, a teen who wasn't wearing a seat belt was ejected from the vehicle and killed while the other two occupants who were wearing seat belts received only minor injuries and refused treatment at the scene.
- Nine crashes were blamed on the weather. (See next article.)

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.

December Teen Deaths Attributed To Speed/Weather Are Misleading

A teenager from Texas County died in a crash on U.S. Highway 63 south of Rolla Friday morning after the vehicle she was in slid off the ice-covered road and overturned.

Source: <http://www.therolladailynews.com> ♦

Lessons Learned

In the figures compiled for these monthly reports, speeding is only determined to be a cause if the news article cites investigating officers on the scene as saying speed was a factor. In most news articles, law enforcement officials are quoted only as saying the cause of the crash remains under investigation. In December, only five crashes were attributed to speeding but the horrendous nature of the crashes indicate that speeding is a factor in many more of the crashes. The figures are most misleading in the crashes attributed to weather conditions.

This winter looks to be an especially cold one compared to recent years with freezing temperatures regularly reaching as far as Florida. For young teen drivers unaccustomed to driving in snow and ice conditions, this can be especially treacherous.

In the nine fatal teen crashes attributed to icing on the roads, speed, even if it was below the posted speed limit, was most certainly a contributing cause for the crash.

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All state driving manuals advise that drivers adjust their speed for the weather. Most advise that drivers should adjust their speed in the following manner:

Rain – Reduce speed.

Snow – Reduce speed to half.

Ice – Reduce speed to a crawl.

There is no doubt that icy road conditions can cause even an experienced driver to lose traction and skid off the road. However, had the teen drivers correctly adjusted their speed for conditions as shown above, the crashes might not have been as horrendous as they were and lives could have been saved.

Teen drivers need to be aware that icing conditions aren't always obvious. Because the ground is normally warmer than the air, ice takes longer to form on most roadways. However, because the air is freezing both above and below bridge surfaces, bridges tend to ice faster than the rest of the roadway.

Ice can remain longer in low-lying spots and in areas where there is a lot of shade. In these areas, ice and snow can remain long after the remainder of the roadway has thawed. "Black ice" (ice that remains invisible) is especially treacherous in these areas.

Teens need to be taught that snow and ice conditions are especially dangerous, even in northern states where the roads are regularly cleared and salted.

In southern states, where icing is rare, conditions can be even more dangerous. Southern states normally don't have the equipment to remove the snow and ice and residents don't normally have snow tires as standard equipment on their vehicles. In these conditions, it's better for the teen to remain at home.

If the teen is caught out on the road when the snow or sleet begins to fall, they need to understand that they should drastically reduce their speed and be on the lookout for icing on bridges, in low-lying and shady areas.

In icy conditions, drivers should increase their following distance to give themselves more time to brake in an emergency. If a driver needs to slow down, they shouldn't press hard on the brakes. They should pump the brake gently and be alert for skidding.

If they feel their vehicle starting to skid, they should fight the instinctive urge to hit the brakes. They should take their foot off the gas and concentrate on steering their vehicle in the direction they want it to go by steering in the direction of the skid. That means if the rear of the car should skid to the left, then they should steer to the left and vice versa. As the vehicle slows, keep steering until control of the vehicle is maintained.

Teen drivers should also fight the urge to "go with the flow of traffic." If the traffic is traveling too fast for conditions, the inexperienced teen should get off the road and wait for better conditions or call home for a ride.

Tips For Parents: Esurance Introduces Free Device to Limit Cell Phone and Texting

Esurance, an online insurance company that is a subsidiary of Allstate Insurance has announced a new program that allows parents of teen drivers to install a device that prevents texting and limits the numbers that a teen driver can call.



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The program, known as Esurance Drive Safe, provides the device to customers free of charge; it does not, however, reduce the insurance rate.

According to the [Esurance website](http://www.esurance.com), the program works like this:

“Once you've signed up, we'll send you a telematics device free of charge with step-by-step instructions on how to get started.

Simply install the device into the onboard diagnostics port (OBD-II), which is standard on all non-electric and non-hybrid vehicles made after 1996, of the car your teen drives most and download the Esurance DriveSafe app onto their smartphone.** Using Bluetooth technology, the telematics device and smartphone app work together to track your teen's driving habits and limit cell phone use when the car is in motion.

Once you've activated the device, you can set up alerts so you know when your teenager's engaging in risky driving behaviors like speeding or hard braking.

You'll also be able to view a full summary of how often they're driving, where they're headed, and if they're doing anything unsafe like speeding. You can even see how they compare with other teen drivers. Knowing your teen's strengths and weaknesses behind the wheel can help you focus on specific areas for improvement.”

For those that aren't customers of Esurance, there are several similar products available on the market. We have reviewed some of them before.

<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 in a vehicle as a passenger, or in a bus or train and needs 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.

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

TXTBlocker 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 TXTBlocker phone can also designate which areas are no-phone zones, and deactivate 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 can check where the owner of the phone is, 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.



"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!"