

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

Volume 148, Issue 119

January 2015

## Parents Are Aware of Alcohol Use At Teen Parties



A new study shows that most parents are aware of alcohol use at teen parties hosted in their homes. This disturbing fact came to light in a study printed in *The Journal of Primary Prevention*. The researchers gathered their data through phone interviews of 1,121 teens in 50 mid-size California cities over a two-year period.

The good news from the study is that most of the teens

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	Parents Are Aware of Alcohol Use At Teen Parties
2	Teen Drowsy Driving
3	Braking Distance vs. Stopping Distance



**\$2 Off!**  
**Special Offer!**

Enter coupon code  
NL8165

Valid until February 28, 2015  
Go to [www.LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com](http://www.LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com)  
and save today!

TM

Sponsored by

**LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com**

1-800-Pay-1495

Published by the National Safety Commission  
For Teens and their Parents



interviewed hadn't hosted a party where alcohol was used. However, among those that had hosted a party during the previous twelve months, thirty-nine percent reported that there was alcohol at their last party. The alcohol was supplied by multiple sources.

From those reporting alcohol use at a party they hosted:

- 72% percent of those having a party stated that at least one of their parents knew about their last party.
- 64% reported that a parent was home at least part of the time.
- 70% said that their parent(s) definitely knew that there was alcohol at the party.
- 24% replied that their parent(s) probably knew.
- Only 5% said that their parent(s) did not know that there was alcohol at the party.

Apparently many parents are either turning a blind eye to the dangers involved with teen drinking or they are operating under the belief that "Teens are going to drink anyway so it's better to have them drink at home."

All states have laws that make it illegal to serve alcohol to a minor and, even if the parent didn't supply the alcohol, they can still be held liable if they were aware of the alcohol use and did nothing to stop it.

More than half of the states have enacted Social Host Liability laws that hold the homeowner liable for injuries that occur due to alcohol served in their home. Homeowners can be charged with a criminal offense if a third party, outside the home, is injured or killed due to use of alcohol at a party hosted by them.

To prevent drunk driving by teens, parents need to be vigilant in preventing alcohol use by their teens. The first place to start is within the home. If a party is to be held at another teen's home,

parents need to communicate with those parents to ensure that no alcohol will be permitted.

To learn more, read: [To Stop Teen Drinking Parties, Fine The Parents](#)

## Teen Drowsy Driving



Drowsy driving among teens is an issue that doesn't get much notice when compared with all the other issues teen drivers face on the road, but it's a critical problem in the US. The following story is a typical example of the problem.

A 16-year-old driver with less than 6 months solo experience behind-the-wheel set out, after school and cross country practice, with his 14-year-old brother as a passenger to pick up their mother.

The driver reported that his younger brother had fallen asleep on the passenger side and, suffering from highway hypnosis, and no one to talk to, he started feeling drowsy himself. He planned to stop at the next gas station and get some coffee to help him stay awake but he didn't make it! He fell asleep long enough for the car to drift off the road.

The car hit a guardrail at approximately 55 mph and went

airborne. When the car finally stopped, it was facing in the opposite direction of traffic (see the photo above). Fortunately, both brothers escaped with minor injuries; lots of bruises and, for the younger brother, a concussion.

This crash wasn't reported in the newspapers and the driver, instead of being ticketed for careless driving, received only a warning. The reason this crash came to light was that the two boys involved are my only grandchildren, and we came very close to losing them on that day.

### **Drowsy driving is a major problem on America's roads.**

- According to the National Sleep Foundation, 60% of Americans have driven while feeling sleepy and 37% admit to actually having fallen asleep at the wheel in the past year.
- A study by the Eastern Virginia Medical School showed that teens with early school start times don't get enough sleep and the crash rate for teens is higher in districts where schools start earlier than 8:30 AM.

The problem with drowsy driving is that once a driver starts to feel drowsy, it's impossible to tell when that driver will actually fall asleep. Many drivers will try to push on through with disastrous results. Even though the next gas station was less than 2 miles away, my grandson was unable to stay awake long enough to make it.

Instead of waiting until he reached the next gas station, the best thing to do would have been to pull the car as far as possible off the road. Then he could have gotten out and let the cool air refresh him or even put the seat back to take a short nap.

Even if you make it to a gas station where you can get a cup of coffee, it will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes for the caffeine to reach your system and start waking you up. Experts advise that, after drinking the coffee, the driver should take a short "caffeine nap." Taking a short nap while waiting for the caffeine to kick in will ensure that you are doubly refreshed and ready to resume driving. It's better to be late than to never arrive at all!

The most important thing that saved their lives was the fact that both were wearing their seat belts. There were two separate impacts in this crash; the first when the car hit the guardrail and the second when the car crashed again after going airborne.

If no other lesson is learned from this crash, always remember that seat belts save lives!

### **SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES!**

*Written by David Herron, driving school instructor and course work author since 2007.*

**Ready to get your Learners Permit?**



**Take the Drug & Alcohol Course at  
LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com**

# Braking Distance vs. Stopping Distance



**Question: I'm studying for my driving exam and I'm confused about the difference between stopping distance and braking distance.**

**Answer:** It can be a little confusing so we'll sort it out for you.

If you encounter an emergency on the road requiring you to stop suddenly, there are two parts that make up the total stopping distance.

- Reaction distance
- Braking distance

When you're in an emergency situation, it takes time to react to the emergency, to brake, and to finally bring your vehicle to a complete stop. Remember that your vehicle is traveling a surprisingly long distance every second. At 40 mph, your vehicle will travel approximately 60 feet per second and a lot can happen in that short amount of time.

## Reaction time

The time it takes you to react and respond to an emergency can be broken down into three parts:

- Perception or awareness time
- Decision time
- Action time

Let's look at each part by imagining a scenario that requires you to make a sudden stop. Let's say that you are traveling at 40 mph when the driver of the car ahead of you suddenly applies his brakes.

## Perception time

The perception or awareness time is how long it takes before you are even aware that the driver ahead is suddenly stopping. If you aren't expecting an emergency, it will take time before you realize that the car ahead is suddenly braking.

## Decision time

Now that you're aware of the emergency ahead, you have to decide what to do. Will you hit the brakes or swerve into another lane to go around? If you try to change lanes, is the lane clear or are there other vehicles that may be in the way? It takes time to decide what to do. In our emergency, let's say that you decide to hit the brakes but that decision took time.

## Action time

Now that you've decided you're going to brake, you have to move your foot from the gas pedal to the brake pedal and push it all the way down. That also ate up precious time.

For the average person, the total reaction time can take from three-quarters to a full second. At 40 mph, if your reaction time is one full second, you'll have traveled almost 60 feet before applying the brakes.

## Braking Distance

Now that you've applied the brakes, it still takes time to come to a complete stop. For an average car that weighs almost 3,000 pounds, that can take up to 60 feet.

## Total stopping distance

So, the total stopping distance is made up of both the reaction distance plus the braking distance. Adding the two together means that, at 40 mph, it can take up to 120 feet before your vehicle will come to a complete stop. That's why maintaining a safe following distance between you and the vehicle ahead is so important.

**Read more:** <http://www.lowestpricetrafficschool.com> ♦