



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

Volume 15, Issue 3

West Valley Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630
Sergeant Frank Avila - Sergeant Chris Rowland

March 2011

Each day, more than 16 people are killed and more than 1,300 people are injured in crashes involving a distracted driver. Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes your attention away from driving; these activities can increase the chance of a motor vehicle crash.

Distracted Driving

There are three main types of distraction:

- **Visual** - taking your eyes off the road
- **Manual** - taking your hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive** - taking your mind off what you are doing

Distracted driving activities include things like using a cell phone, texting, eating, drinking and talking with passengers. Using in-vehicle technologies (such as navigation systems) and portable communication devices can also be sources of distraction. While any one of these distractions can endanger the driver and others, texting while driving is especially dangerous because it combines all three types of distraction.

How big is the problem?

- In 2008, nearly 6,000 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver and more than 500,000 people were injured.
- The proportion of drivers reportedly distracted at the time of a fatal crash has increased from 8 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2008.
- When asked whether driving feels safer, less safe, or about the same as it did five years ago, more than 1 in 3 drivers say driving feels less safe today. Distracted driving—cited by 3 out of 10 of these drivers—was the single most common reason given for feeling less safe today.

What are the risk factors?

- Some activities—such as texting—take the driver's attention away from driving more frequently and for longer periods of time.
- Younger, inexperienced drivers under the age of 20 may be at highest risk because they have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

How can distracted driving be prevented?

- Many states are enacting laws—such as banning texting while driving—or using graduated driver licensing systems for teen drivers to help raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and to keep it from occurring.
- On October 1, 2009, President Obama issued an executive order prohibiting federal employees from texting while driving on government business or with government equipment.
- In January 2010, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration enacted an interim ban that prohibits commercial vehicle drivers from texting while behind the wheel. In March 2010, a proposed rule was announced that would make that ban stronger and more durable.
- The Department of Transportation recently launched a national campaign to encourage the public to get involved in ending distracted driving. This campaign focuses on the key messages that drivers can't do two things at once, and everyone has a personal responsibility to pay attention while behind the wheel.

ENCINO:

Senior Lead Officer Robert Trulik
32325@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7637
Cell (818) 731-2572

Contact Officer Trulik for information on the next Encino Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Eight Danger Zones

Eight teens a day are killed in car crashes. Make sure young drivers are aware of the leading causes of teen crashes, and put rules in place to help your teen stay safe.

1. Driver inexperience. Most crashes happen during the first year a teen has a license; provide at least 30 to 50 hours of supervised driving practice over at least six months. Make sure to practice on a variety of roads at different times of day, and in varied weather and traffic conditions. This will help your teen gain the skills he or she needs to be safe.

2. Driving with teen passengers. Crash risk goes up when teens drive with other teens in the car. Limit the number of teen passengers your child can have from zero or one. Keep this rule for at least the first six months.

3. Nighttime driving. For all ages, fatal crashes are more likely to occur at night; but the risk is highest for teens. Make sure your teen is off the road by 9 or 10 p.m. for at least the first six months of licensed driving.

4. Not using seat belts. The simplest way to prevent car crash deaths is to buckle up. Require your teen to wear a seat belt on every trip; this simple step can reduce your teen's risk of dying or being badly injured in a crash by almost half.

5. Distracted driving. Distractions increase your teen's risk of being in a crash. Don't allow activities that may take your teen's attention away from driving, such as talking on a cell phone, texting, eating, or playing with the radio.

6. Drowsy driving. Young drivers are at highest risk for drowsy driving which causes thousands of crashes every year. Teens are most tired and at risk when driving in the early morning or late at night. Be sure your teen is fully rested before he or she gets behind the wheel.

7. Reckless driving. Research shows that teens lack the experience, judgment, and maturity to assess risky situations. Help your teen avoid the following unsafe behaviors.

- **Speeding:** Make sure your teen knows to follow the speed limit and adjust speed to road conditions.
- **Tailgating:** Remind your teen to maintain enough space behind the vehicle ahead to avoid a crash in case of a sudden stop.
- **Insufficient scanning:** Stress the importance of always knowing the location of other vehicles on the road.

8. Impaired driving. Even one drink will impair your teen's driving ability and increase the risk of a crash. Be a good role model: don't drink and drive, and reinforce this message with your teen.

LAKE BALBOA:

Senior Lead Officer David Ham
25717@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7634
Cell (818) 731-2551

Senior Lead Officer Saul Paredes
35275@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7635
Cell (818) 731-2554

Contact Officer Ham or Paredes for information on the next Lake Balboa Neighborhood Watch Meetings.

Parents Are the Key to Safe Teen Drivers

Car crashes—the #1 killer of teens—take about 3,000 young lives every year. That's 8 teen deaths each day that can be prevented. As a parent, you should know that the main cause of teen crashes is driver inexperience. All new drivers—even straight-A students and "good kids"—are likelier than experienced drivers to be involved in a fatal crash. It's a fact.

The good news is that you can make a difference by getting involved with your teen's driving. Take advantage of the "Parents Are the Key" tools and resources. Learn about the most dangerous driving situations for your young driver—and how to avoid them. You can get further information at www.cdc.gov/ParentsAreTheKey.

Steer Your Teen in the Right Direction

As a parent, you have the greatest influence over your teen's behavior. In fact, leading experts believe parents play a key role in preventing teen car crashes and deaths. Take the first step: Talk with your teen about staying safe behind the wheel. Then, keep the conversation going. You can steer your teen in the right direction, and "Parents Are the Key" has proven steps that can help.

Crash Facts

- Teen drivers are four times likelier to crash than older drivers.
- Crash risk goes up when teens drive with other teens in the car. Nearly two out of three teen crash deaths that involve 16-year-old drivers happen when a new driver has one or more teen passengers.
- Night-time fatal crash rates for 16-year-olds are nearly twice as high as daytime rates.

Did You Know?

Motor vehicle crashes can happen to anyone—even "good" teens. ALL new drivers lack experience and are, therefore, likelier to crash. Take these proven steps to reduce serious injury and death:

- Extend your teen's supervised driving period.
- Set the rules of the road.
- Enforce the rules with a parent-teen agreement.



RESEDA:

Senior Lead Officer Isela Parra

34488@lapd.lacity.org

Senior Lead Officer Royal Barber

33970@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7631

Cell (818) 731-2574

Office (818) 374-7629

Cell (818) 731-2580

Next Neighborhood Watch Meetings – Thursday, March 10 and Thursday, April 14 – 7:00 p.m.

Ann Kinzle Community Room located in the L.A.P.D. West Valley Area Station

Child Booster Seats

What Is a Booster Seat?

Belt-positioning booster seats are designed to raise children up on the car seat so that the lap/shoulder belts fit correctly. This is the preferred type of booster seat and requires a lap/shoulder belt in the back seat of the vehicle. Shield booster seats have a plastic shield in front of the child. These seats offer less protection, however, and the report recommends they only be used with the shields removed so that they function as belt-positioning booster seats.

Why Use a Booster Seat?

In the United States, 1,791 children younger than 15 years were killed and 282,000 were injured as passengers in motor vehicle crashes in 1997. Among 5 to 9-year-old passengers, 46% of those involved in fatal crashes were unrestrained.

Who Should Use a Booster Seat?

Children should start using a booster seat when they grow out of their convertible child safety seats — when their ears are level with the top of the back of the safety seat and their shoulders are above the top strap slots, or when they reach the upper weight limit for the seat. Children should use a booster seat until the lap/shoulder belts in the car fit properly -- when they are at least 57 inches tall, have a sitting height of 29 inches and weigh 80 pounds (with clothing on). To ride comfortably and safely, children must be able to bend their knees over the edge of the seat while sitting with their backs firmly against the seat back. In most cases, this means that children 10 years old and younger should be using a booster seat after they have outgrown the child safety seat. All children 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat whenever possible, regardless of whether they require a booster seat.

TARZANA:

Senior Lead Officer Daryl Scoggins

35828@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7632

Cell (818) 731-2573

Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Pedestrian Safety

How can pedestrians help prevent injuries and death from motor vehicle crashes?

- Pedestrians should be especially careful at intersections; drivers may fail to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians while turning onto another street.
- Pedestrians should increase their visibility at night by carrying a flashlight when walking and by wearing retro-reflective clothing.
- Whenever possible, pedestrians should cross the street at a designated crosswalk. It is much safer to walk on a sidewalk, but if pedestrians must walk in the street, they should walk facing traffic.