



COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown District

Vol. 63 November 2009, Scottsdale Police Department District 2, 3700 N. 75th St. Scottsdale, AZ 85257 (480) 312-2417



Traffic Accidents: Number 1 Killer of Teens

Thinking back, it is not too difficult to remember the excitement and liberation that came with obtaining a driver's license. As exciting as this new freedom may be for a teen, studies have shown that the first six months after getting a license is the most dangerous period of time for any driver. Sadly, automobile accidents are more common among young drivers, than any other age group.

- Every year over 5,000 teens between the ages of 16 and 20 are fatally injured in a car accident.
- About 400,000 drivers in this same age group will be seriously injured.
- The risk of being involved in a car accident is higher for drivers 16 to 19 years old than it is for any other age group as teen drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 are about four times more likely than older more experienced drivers, to crash.

According to a study conducted by the American Automobile Association (AAA) approximately 31,000 fatalities over the past 10 years resulted from accidents that involved teen drivers between 15 and 17 years of age. For comparison purposes, that number is a little more than half of the total number of U.S. soldiers who lost their lives during the entire Vietnam War.

One third of those [31,000] killed were the teenage drivers themselves, another third were passengers riding with them and the last third were occupants of other cars or pedestrians.

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From The Desk Of Commander Johnny Cervantes

Hello Community Members,

Some of you may be aware of the incident that occurred earlier this week on Nov. 9th. The incident occurred, as most do, with a call to our call center. The caller reported a missing child. Missing children calls are top priority and receive the utmost attention from the police department. As with all calls of this nature, an investigation including an area search was conducted with negative results. The decision was made to utilize the City's reverse 911 system to alert the adjacent neighborhoods of the in-progress search. Shortly thereafter is when something truly amazing happened.

People came out of their homes to help with the search. Community members began coordinating efforts to find this lost child. Despite our busy lives, I am proud that our community comes together during difficult times. Our effectiveness in policing our neighborhoods is clearly better with the support and caring from the community. Thank you to the community members who took time out to help with the search for this young child. He was found unharmed.

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AAA reports that teen drivers are the most dangerous group of motorists on the road - not only to themselves but to others as well.

The most deadly combination when it comes to teens behind the wheel is the addition of teenage friends in the vehicle. According to AAA, the risk of a fatal accident involving a teen driver more than doubles when there is a teenage passenger in the car and quintuples with the presence of two or more teen passengers.

Here are some quick tips to keep our young drivers safe.

- **Set the example:** Practice what you preach. Don't eat, text or talk on the cell phone while you are driving and always wear your seatbelt. Never speed or tailgate, and don't drive while tired or angry. Your teens have been watching you drive for their entire life. If you have had bad habits in the past, use them as teaching points and start using good ones.
- **Practice:** Allow as much supervised driving as possible.
- **NO passengers for at least 6 months:** Until you are certain that your teen can handle passengers and other distractions safely, provide adult supervision when passengers are present and your teen is driving.
- **Daytime driving for at least 6 months:** Studies have shown that the risk of a teen being in an accident increases at night.
- **Wait on buying teens their own car:** Share the family car for the first year or so, so you can control access to it. This way you can determine the conditions of use.
- **Teach how to "Scan" for hazards:** During practice with your teen driver, remind them to look at traffic - not only several cars ahead - but side to side as well. Have them look for brake lights, traffic signals, debris in the roadway, pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- **Education about Speed vs. Stopping Distance:** Quite simply, the faster you are going the longer it is going to take for your vehicle to come to a stop. Teach them to leave the appropriate amount of space between their vehicle and a vehicle stopped in front of them to avoid a second collision in the event they are struck from behind.

In conclusion, wearing a seat belt is still the most effective thing we can *all* do to save lives and reduce injuries should one be involved in an accident.

(Teen driving continued)

Failure to wear a seat belt contributes to more fatalities than any other safety-related behavior, and studies suggest that males ages 16 to 25 are the age group least likely to buckle up. Help them make using a seatbelt a habit during supervised practice time.

Speeding greatly increases every driver's chance of being involved in an accident as driver reaction time is considerably reduced. In addition, the law of physics dictates that the higher the speed at the time of impact, the more severe the damage and the more severe the resulting injury.

Distractions such as cell phones and radios can create risky driving conditions, especially for new drivers. Know who your teen is riding with when you are not providing their transportation. Be sure to practice what you preach, and be the driving role model the teen driver in your life deserves - it may save a life.

For more information on crime prevention or additional opportunities to get involved in YOUR community contact Crime Prevention Officer Craig Abernethy at 480-312-2594, email cabernethy@scottsdaleaz.gov, or District 1 Police Aide Randee Short at 480-312-2074, email: rshort@scottsdaleaz.gov

HELP EVERY SECOND COUNT IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS

HELP FIRST RESPONDERS HELP YOU

The First Responder **Smart Card** Program is a FREE valuable resource in providing emergency services to individuals with special needs including: developmental disabilities, physical challenges, communication, health, emotional, behavioral health disabilities or those with conditions that might be misinterpreted if not know to the First Responder.

The Scottsdale Community Partnership (SCP) in partnership with the Scottsdale Police Department is offering First Responder **Smart Card** Program orientation classes and the opportunity to sign up with the program. The class will provide training for parents and providers on when to call first responders and what happens when they call.

Orientation classes for 2010 are scheduled at 10am for one hour on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in January (9th and 23rd) and February (13th and 27th) at Police and Fire Headquarters located at 8401 E Indian School Road; Scottsdale, AZ.

For more information, go to the website - www.scottsdaleaz.gov/safety/smartcard; or contact Natalie Summit at 480-312-CARD (2273) or by email at smartcard@scottsdaleAZ.gov.