

# How to Conduct Mock Crash Events and Give Them Greater Impact

A Guide for  
Minnesota Communities



Website: [ots.dps.mn.gov](https://ots.dps.mn.gov)

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## **How to Conduct a Mock Crash Event with Impact**

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## **How to Conduct a Mock Crash Event with Impact**

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### **Introduction to a Mock Crash Event**

Traffic crashes are the second leading cause of death for Minnesota teenagers (behind suicide), primarily due to inexperience behind the wheel, poor seat belt use and risk-taking behaviors such as speeding and distracted driving. Alcohol can also be a factor in teen crashes, especially during prom and graduation seasons.

The objective of a mock crash event is to educate teens, young adults, parents and community members about the tragedy of traffic crashes — and to reinforce the importance of using seat belts, paying attention behind the wheel, and to show the consequences of driving after consuming alcohol and/or distracted driving. The goal of a mock crash event is to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths involving younger drivers and their passengers by using visuals to demonstrate real-life consequences.

It's important for mock crash coordinators to invite parents to the event. Parental participation and awareness facilitates and encourages important traffic safety related dialogue between parents and teens.

Conducting a mock crash event requires an extensive availability of local resources from several entities such as schools, law enforcement, emergency medical services and the fire department.

Alone, a mock crash event may have only short-term impacts. To be effective, mock crash events need to coincide with popular high school events, and a high-visibility enforcement effort focusing on seat belt use, distracted driving or alcohol. Enforcement agencies are encouraged to plan at least some of their high visibility efforts in areas and during times that will impact younger drivers and passengers. Use the mock crash as an event to promote the enforcement campaign.

Additionally, to be effective, mock crash events need to coincide with other youth-based educational traffic safety initiatives. Victim impact presentations, classroom discussions, demonstrations and other activities can have a greater impact on changing teen driver behaviors.

For updated data for teen traffic crashes, injuries and deaths, visit [www.ots.dps.mn.gov](http://www.ots.dps.mn.gov). Click on the "Reports / Statistics" tab to find county-specific crash facts.

### **Mock Crash Event Committee Members**

- Event chairperson
- Event coordinator
- Paramedics/emergency medical technicians and fire department representative
- Law enforcement representative
- School administration representative
- Student representative
- Media representative
- Business/parent representative

Contact high-level officials from each entity to ensure upper-level support. These individuals can delegate to others within their organization to assist with the planning process.

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### **Committee Members: The Groups They Represent and Their Role**

#### **Event Chairperson / Coordinator:**

##### Group:

- Chairperson
- Coordinator

##### Roles:

- Create Mock Crash Event Committee
- Recommended Qualifications:
  - Connected to community resources
  - Close ties to Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
  - Familiar with local radio communications system
  - Able to direct EMS personnel
- Select location of mock crash event. Site should:
  - Be easily accessible for students, parents, media and EMS personnel.
  - Have an unobstructed view for all attendees.
  - Have an adequate landing site for helicopter (if used).
- Select tentative date:
  - Start project at least 90 days prior to the event
- Establish and maintain contact with all committee members
- Make sure all groups are able to participate and support the project
- Organize meetings and agendas
- Coordinate communication among participating agencies
- Coordinate media and public outreach
- Acquire wrecked vehicles and arrange for transportation before and after the event (Vehicle should be appropriately damaged to fit the crash scenario.)
- Arrange refreshments for active participants: Actors, EMS, Enforcement, etc.
- Arrange for an audio system at the scene that will be used to:
  - Direct bystanders
  - Broadcast emergency response communications
  - Drama components (sound effects, etc.)
- Develop an adverse weather contingency plan:
  - Conduct event later in the day, if possible. This may help increase parental participation.
  - Conduct post-event assembly (impact speaker) inside
  - Cancel event only if necessary
- Coordinate post-event logistics; recognition of volunteers, supporting agencies and businesses

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### **First Responders:**

Paramedics/EMS, Fire Department, Medical Examiner, Funeral Home

Group:

- Response Units / 911 Operator
- Training Officers
- Helicopter Services (if used)
- Hospital Emergency Room Staff
- Medical Examiner
- Funeral Home Manager

Roles:

- Coordinate involvement of each group member
- Provide realistic response to event scene
- Use the event as a training opportunity
- Arrange for back-up transport units if helicopter cannot be used
- Advanced survey of crash vehicles for extrication
- Coordinate arrival of each responding vehicle after audience is in place
- Place fatalities in view of observers
- Coordinate arrival of medical examiner
- Coordinate transportation of injured participants away from the scene and back to the post-event assembly
- Provide spokesperson and victim impact speaker (and/or past offender) for post-event assembly
- Coordinate involvement with participating hospital

### **Law Enforcement:**

Group:

- Local Police
- County Sheriff
- State Patrol Trooper
- Public Information Officer
- Crash Investigation Officer
- Training Officers

Roles:

- Narrate scene
- Control perimeter of event scene
- Communicate and coordinate events with other responding units
- Provide input on crash scene
- Provide realistic response to scene
- Provide spokesperson and impact speaker for post-event assembly
- Use the event as a training opportunity

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### **School Administration:**

#### Group:

- School Administrator/Principal
- Counselors
- Drama Teachers
- Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) or Other Student Group Advisors

#### Roles:

- Identify student participants
- Create parent invitations, notices and permission slips
- Develop policies and criteria for those attending
- Distribute informational flyers days before the event to surrounding businesses and residences to alert them of the simulated activity
- Promote to students and parents via school communication channels such as school newsletter, website, social media and flyers
- Coordinate the movement/transportation of students to the event site
- Provide on-site crowd control
- Arrange location for post-event assembly
- Make counselors available for students following the event

### **Student Representatives:**

#### Group:

- SADD
- Student leaders
- Drama students

#### Roles:

- Assist in drafting scenario script
- Provide victims for the mock crash scene and appropriate clothing
- Publicize event in the school
- Dress the scene with debris such as vehicle contents, student belongings, etc.
- Assist in identifying an impact speaker for post-event assembly
- Plan other school activities
- Assist in writing and distributing press releases, invite local media

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### **Media Opportunities:**

- Local newspapers
- Television stations
- Radio stations
- School journalists

### **Coordinating Media Relations:**

- Email local media a news advisory a day before the event and follow up with a phone call. See template advisory at the end of this document, which is also available for download on the OTS website.
- Email/hand out a news release to the media day of the event. See template release at the end of this document, which is also available for download on the OTS website.
- Call and remind the media the day prior to the event
- Encourage media to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the student audience arrives
- Create a section specifically for attending media
- Grant media access to the crash scene as in a real-life crash

### **Planning a Mock Crash**

- Hold an initial meeting with all committee members
- Make sure all members understand their roles and agree to participate
- Maintain on-going communication with all committee members

### **Scenario Script Draft and Approval**

- Outline the scenario to ensure adequate time is allowed for all parties to review and approve the scene
- Make sure the script portrays the agreed-upon messages. Students, school staff and committee members should assist in the development of the messages.
- Encourage school staff to choose high-profile students to participate
- Involve students throughout the planning process

### **On-Site Visit (one week before event)**

- Plan an on-site meeting to ensure all groups are familiar with the location
- Assign committee members to over-see each area:
  - Vehicle positions
  - Police, fire and EMS route
  - Audience viewing area
  - Media area
  - Refreshment site
  - Event perimeter
  - PA needs
  - Make sure there is a power supply and all sound systems work properly

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- Create an outline for concerns and specific logistics
- Practice the scene with students
- Have back-ups available in case people cancel
- Create a checklist that can be used the day of the crash
- Make sure that all participants know their role

### **The Day of the Mock Crash Event**

- Begin setting up approximately two hours prior to the scheduled start time
- Event should not run over 30 minutes
- Post-event assembly should last 30 to 45 minutes

### **Sample Schedule**

#### Night before event:

- Students distribute informational flyers to school neighborhoods

#### 8:00 A.M.

- Vehicles placed on site
- Have refreshments available for cast
- EMS/fire prepare vehicles for students (clear off glass and dangerous objects)
- Establish radio contact with all rescue personnel

#### 8:30 A.M.

- Students and assistants arrive for make-up
- Dress scene (scatter student belongings, vehicle debris, ground/pavement markings, alcohol cans.)
- Confirm crew and students understand their roles

#### 9:00 A.M.

- Local police arrive and secure perimeter

#### 9:30 A.M.

- Verify all response units are standing by
- Watch for arriving media
- Place students in wrecked vehicles and cover with tarps

#### 9:45 A.M.

- Position crews.
- Brief media informally, distribute press kits as reporters arrive
- Position volunteers around the perimeter to direct students when they arrive

#### 9:50 A.M.

- Observers arrive
- Confirm response units are ready for dispatch

#### 10:00 A.M.

- Event Begins



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### 10:30 A.M.

- Audience is moved to assembly area for presentations and victim impact speaker.
- Media Interviews with officials and designated students.
- Begin clean up after audience departs.

### 11:00 A.M.

- Assembly (about three minutes each):
  - Coordinator explains the purpose of the event. (Cite recent related crashes in your area).
  - Police officer explains the Not-a-Drop, DWI, Texting, Distracted, Seat Belt and other laws.
  - Paramedics explain their roles.
  - Fire crew explains their roles.
  - Parent of the events fatal victim speaks. (optional)
  - Student participants speak.
  - Questions and answers.
  - Make sure there is a good PA system and all questions are repeated for the entire audience to hear.

### 11:30 A.M.

- Victim impact speaker (and/or past offender) shares personal story.

### 11:45 A.M.

- Principal closes assembly, thanking coalition members, and with a final message about safe driving.

## **Mock Crash Scene**

This is one possible scenario. Your committee may create a scene that best suits the needs of their community.

Play music to indicate the beginning of the scene. Play pre-recorded student conversations, crash sound and 911 call with dispatch.

### Car #1 — Four Students

- Driver
  - Drinking and/or distracted
  - Wearing a seat belt
  - Injured slightly and dazed
- Front Seat Passenger
  - Not wearing a seat belt
  - Thrown through the windshield, lying dead on car hood
- Two Passengers in Back Seat
  - No seat belt, seriously injured, trapped in vehicle

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### Car #2 — Two Adults and Two Children

- Mom — Front Passenger
  - Wearing seat belt, uninjured
- Dad — Driver
  - Slightly injured, but able to leave vehicle on his own
- Child #1- Back Seat
  - Thrown from vehicle, lying on road, no pulse or respiration
- Child #2- Back Seat
  - Wearing seat belt, injured, but not trapped

### Mock Crash Scenario

- A passing vehicle pulls up, driver gets out to see if he/she can help.
- The student driver leaves car #1 dazed.
- An adult male leaves car #2 and approaches the child laying on the street.
- The bystander, now by the child, yells: “Does anyone know CPR?”
- One of the students in the audience answers: “Yes, I know CPR!” This student leaves the bleachers to assist.
- First police squad car arrives on scene. The officer surveys the scene and radios fire, ambulance and additional police.
- Tones are heard (audio) as fire equipment is dispatched. First officer confronts the student driver as second squad arrives. Officer from second squad assists with CPR on the injured child.
- Sirens are heard as the first ambulance and fire truck arrive. Firefighters and paramedics exit their vehicles and approach the vehicles.
- Paramedics begin to survey all injuries, and fire crew deploys a booster line (hose) as a standby.
- Paramedics report to firefighter or law enforcement that they need additional ambulances and extrication equipment. Officer calls for additional help.
- Paramedics begin patient treatment, one specifically taking over CPR with child, while other tends to injuries in car #1.
- Father from car #2 confronts student driver of car #1: “You killed my child!”
- Police officer intercedes to separate them. Second ambulance and fire truck arrive.
- Second fire crew begins extrication process.
- First ambulance crew attends to father and extrication victims’ needs.
- Second ambulance crew transports injured child.

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- Third ambulance arrives and takes over extrication victims' needs, while first ambulance crew transports father, mother and other child to hospital.
- Complete extrication procedures and victim extraction, treatment and loading of victims.
- Officer notifies dispatch of fatalities and requests calling coroner to the scene.
- Officer administers field sobriety test and pre-arrest breath test to driver of car #1.
- Officer informs driver he/she is being placed under arrest for DWI, handcuffs driver and places him/her in back seat of squad.
- Officer and fire crew assist placing bodies into body bags and load into hearse and/or ambulance.
- Ambulance and/or hearse door is shut. This denotes the scenario has ended.

### **Follow-Up Work**

#### **Thank You Notes:**

Send notes to all participants and a copy to their respective superiors. Include post-event survey or student comments.

#### **Post-Event Evaluation Meeting:**

Evaluation requires gathering feedback to continually adjust activities and programs to maintain their effectiveness. Hold a post-event meeting with all Mock Crash parties involved.

#### **Questions the Group Should Ask Itself:**

- How did the event turn out?
- How does each participant rate their organization's performance?
- What were the specific shortfalls and how could they be prevented in the future?
- Will a similar event be conducted in the future?

#### **Save Relative Program Materials**

Save all material from planning memos to news releases. In addition, save any props or materials that were purchased. Monitor media coverage and collect news clips and newscasts.

#### **Evaluate Audience Knowledge and Behavior**

The event should increase the audiences' awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving, not wearing seat belts, and distracted driving. Consider evaluating behavioral and knowledge changes of the audience by conducting pre- and post-tests and surveys.

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### MOCK CRASH /END OF SCHOOL YEAR SAFETY NEWS ADVISORY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[MONTH] [DATE], [YEAR]

**CONTACT:****PHONE:****[YOUR AGENCY] TO CONDUCT MOCK CRASH EVENT AT [HIGH SCHOOL]**

*Goal to Develop Safer Teen Drivers as [Prom Season Approaches or Extra Enforcement Begins on Minnesota Roads]*

**WHAT:** [YOUR AGENCY] doesn't want the class of [YEAR] going out in a crash. [Officers/Deputies/Troopers] are conducting a mock crash event to send a hard-hitting reminder to students and parents of the dangers and consequences of unsafe driving behaviors — such as drinking and driving, driving while distracted, driving at unsafe speeds, and not buckling up — prior to [prom and] the end of the school year].

[YOUR AGENCY] is using the event to remind parents/guardians about the importance of on-going conversation with their children to reinforce teen driving laws, and to set their own family driving rules to protect them from being injured or killed in a crash.

The mock crash uses real crashed vehicles set up on school grounds and student participants to act out roles as crash victims. The school's [entire] student body will watch the demonstration and learn how emergency responders conduct rescue efforts in real-time. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to attend.

**WHEN:** [Insert Day, Date and Time; could note that news conference or interview availability will be held after the crash event]

**WHERE:** [Insert High School name and address]

**WHO:** [Insert names/titles of who will speak at news conference or be available for interviews and list participating organizations in the mock crash event]

**WHY:** Traffic crashes are the second leading cause of death behind suicide for Minnesota teens due to inexperience, risk-taking, distractions and poor seat belt compliance. Each year, an average of 25 teens are killed, and nearly 3,000 are injured in crashes.

[YOUR AGENCY] is urging parents to set a good example when driving, reinforce teen driving laws, and talk to their teens about the dangers and serious consequences of underage drinking, not wearing a seat belt, speeding and distracted driving.

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### MOCK CRASH /END OF SCHOOL YEAR SAFETY NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
[MONTH] [DATE], [YEAR]

CONTACT:  
PHONE:

#### **[YOUR AGENCY] CONDUCTS MOCK CRASH EVENT AT [HIGH SCHOOL]** *Agency Provides Important Tips for Parents to Develop Safer Teen Drivers*

[YOUR CITY/COUNTY] — [Officers/Deputies/Troopers] conducted a mock crash event at [HIGH SCHOOL] to remind students and parents about how making the right choice behind the wheel can protect themselves and others from dangerous driving behaviors

[YOUR AGENCY] is using the event to remind parents/guardians about the importance of talking with their teens to reinforce teen driving laws, and to set their own family driving rules to protect them from being injured or killed in a crash.

#### **Mock Crashes — Dramatic Reality Check**

The mock crash uses real crashed vehicles set up on school grounds and student participants to act out roles as crash victims. The school's [entire] student body watched the demonstration and learned how emergency responders conduct rescue efforts in real-time. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to attend.

“Mock crashes are a dramatic presentation to educate teens and parents about the true consequences of making poor driving decisions,” says [SPOKESPERSON]. “When students see their friends and peers carried out in body bags, and another being handcuffed and taken to jail, it hits home. It’s a strong message that aims to influence their driving choices, especially at such a potentially dangerous time on the road.”

#### **Traffic Crashes — One of the Leading Cause of Teen Deaths**

Traffic crashes are the second leading cause of death for Minnesota teens, behind suicide, due to inexperience, risk-taking, distractions and poor seat belt compliance. Each year, around 25 teens are killed, and nearly 3,000 are injured in crashes.

#### **Important Role of Parents and Safe Teen Driving**

[YOUR AGENCY] is urging parents to talk to their teen about the dangers and serious consequences of underage drinking, speeding, distracted driving and not wearing a seat belt. It’s important that parents set a good example for their children by driving safely, never texting while driving, and insist that everyone is always buckled up to keep them safe.

[SPOKESPERSON] says parents should also reinforce teen driving laws such as belt use, passenger limitations, nighttime driving, no cell phone use and no texting (including when stopped in traffic).

“It is so important that parents talk to their teen drivers and establish rules for the road,” says [SPOKESPERSON]. “Just because a teen has their license does not mean they are experienced, safe drivers. Parents must stay involved with a teen’s driving just as they do with their grades, athletics and other activities.”

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### Guide for Parents to Establish Safer Teen Drivers

- Attend a Point of Impact teen driver safety parent awareness class offered by driver education providers.
- Provide many hours of supervised practice and continue to do so even after licensure.
- Train your teen on a variety of road types (urban, rural) and in different conditions (night, rain, snow).
- Talk with your teens to reinforce laws and set limits (such as passenger limitations, nighttime driving) — and use a parent/teen driving contract to set clear rules and consequences.
- Encourage your teen to speak up when they feel unsafe in a vehicle driven by another teen to stop unsafe driving behaviors.
- A “teen license parent withdrawal form” is available for parents to cancel the driving privileges of their teen's driver's license (under age 18)

Find resources including a supervised practice log, parent-teen contract, teen driver laws and the parent withdrawal form online at [ots.dps.mn.gov](http://ots.dps.mn.gov), click on “Teen Driving,” under “Topics.”

Parents, grandparents and other caregivers should also know: where their teen is going; who they'll be with; and when they are expected to be home. Parents should also make themselves available to pick up their children at any time or location.

### Underage Drinking

The state's “Not a Drop” law says drivers under age 21 cited for consuming any amount of alcohol will lose their license from 30 to 180 days, and face up to a \$1000 fine and up to 90 days in jail. A citation of this nature will also stay on the driver's record for 10 years. There are more than 1,300 drivers under age 21 arrested for DWI annually in Minnesota.

If a minor's blood alcohol concentration level is 0.08 or more, regular DWI laws apply instead of the underage consumption while driving offense. A DWI offense can result in loss of license for up to one year, thousands of dollars in costs, possible jail time and increased insurance rates. A DWI stays on a person's record for life.

[SPOKESMAN] says adults need to understand the consequences of providing alcohol to minors, even if they are not driving. Adult providers can be held responsible and suffer serious criminal, legal and financial consequences including: felony charges and prison time in the case of death; civil liability charges in the case of injury, property damage or death; and increased insurance rates.

Teen driver safety is a component of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (*TZD*) program. A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response.

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