

MOCK CRASH /END OF SCHOOL YEAR SAFETY NEWS RELEASE

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

CONTACT:
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[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.”

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, 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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