

Distracted Driving

Civil Air Patrol
New York Wing

Distracted Driving

Many times in this monthly safety briefing we provide meaningful statistics on anything from Civil Air Patrol safety goals to nation wide injury trends.

Instead of statistics this week, we want to review a few cases of distracted driving and then provide an opportunity for you to discuss the effect this can have on the families involved.

We are doing this because we continue to see Road Traffic Collisions and some of the cases are distracted driving.

The driver, the victims and their families are changed forever when a road traffic collision occurs from distracted driving.

Incident

◆ Jurors are expected to decide Monday on the punishment for a woman who was convicted in the death of a 25-year-old man after prosecutors argued that she was distracted by her cell phone at the time of the three-car crash.

Jeri Dawn Montgomery, 24, was convicted Friday of criminally negligent homicide for causing a March, 2008 collision that killed Chance Wilcox. “The jury found Montgomery's vehicle was a deadly weapon, bumping the charge to a third-degree felony from a state jail felony,” said Donna Hawkins, Public Information Attorney for the District Attorney's Office.

Montgomery, who was taken to the Harris County jail after the jury's verdict, faces probation or up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Incident

◆ It was June 26, 2007 and Bailey Goodman, Meredith McClure, Hannah Congdon, Sara Monnat and Katie Shirley were on their way to a cottage in East Bloomfield, N.Y. to celebrate. The best friends, many of them cheerleaders, had graduated from Fairport High School just five days earlier. Pamela Ciranni, Fairport's Principal, said that a seminar educating teens on driver's safety is required for all student drivers. Yet despite the educational program, distractions were heavily in play that summer night.

Bailey, 17 years old, had just received a text message on her cell phone. Four seconds later, her sports utility vehicle swerved, hitting an oncoming tractor-trailer at 60 miles per hour. All five teens died on impact.

Incident

◆ Thirteen-year old Frances Schee didn't know what hit her. The eighth-grade student, who played the clarinet in the school band and was popular with teachers and students alike, died instantly when the school bus she was riding in was struck from behind by a tractor trailer in late September, 2008.

According to the police, there were no skid marks, indicating that the driver did not even use his brakes before impact. The reason for his lack of attention: he admitted to being on his cell phone.

Discussion

Please take this time to discuss these cases and then talk about the mitigating steps we are all committed to take to reduce our distracted driving.

- Can you commit to never talking and texting on a cell phone while driving?
- Can you commit to not changing the CD, radio station or cleaning your seats while driving?
- Why should you commit?
- What are the consequences of distracted driving?
- Is it worth it?
- Do you talk to your children about distracted driving?

Thank you.