

Suffolk County Child Fatality Review Team Summer 2009



Office of Suffolk County
District Attorney
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Fast Facts

This newsletter examines two issues: the risks associated with teen driving and the dangers of an infant co-sleeping with an adult. It is the goal of the Suffolk County CFRT to share information regarding preventable child deaths. We hope that by increasing awareness of child deaths, we can work together to prevent child fatalities in Massachusetts. Please share this information with others.

Knowledge is Power!

Learn about why kids die and what we can do to prevent it.

Case Example 1

Cause of Death: Blunt Trauma, Motor Vehicle Accident - Passenger

Age at Death: Teenager

The child fatality review revealed the following:

- Teenager was a passenger in a two-door sports car;
- Driver of the vehicle was a teenage male;
- Driver was weaving between cars at a high rate of speed;
- Accident occurred at night;
- Passenger was not wearing a seatbelt;
- Passenger was ejected from the car;
- Car was an unregistered motor vehicle;
- Driver was discharged from the hospital with minor injuries; and
- Driver had turned 16 five months prior to the accident, therefore driving with a learner's permit.

This case presented several risk factors which are commonly seen in teenage motor vehicle fatalities; high rate of speed, male driver, reckless driving, and lack of seatbelt use. In addition, the driver of this vehicle was in violation of Massachusetts' Junior Operator's License law which prohibits a passenger under the age of 18 being present in the vehicle within the first six months of licensure. (The exceptions are the passenger is an immediate family member or there is a passenger over the age of 21, with at least one year of valid driving experience, riding in the front passenger seat.) Research shows that a 16 year old driver is twice as likely to be involved in a fatal car accident when a teenage passenger is present ([more info](#)) and that the number of teenagers present in a vehicle is related to the likelihood of a fatal crash. Suffolk County recommends service providers to talk to adolescents about passenger safety and responsibilities. [Teenage Passenger Survival Tips](#)

In 2007, 54% of MA adolescents age 16-20 who were killed in motor vehicle accidents did not use restraints.

Teen-to-Teen Safe Driving Movement
[Keep the Drive](#)
[Brutal Truths](#)

MA Junior Operator's License Information
[Click Here](#)

Teaching Your Teen How to be a Smart Passenger
[Top 10 Tips](#)

Consumer Product Safety Commission recalls

[Inflatable Baby Floats](#)

[Simplicity Cribs](#)

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is most common among infants that are 2-4 months of age. SIDS is the leading cause of death among infants 1-12 months of age.

A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep

[AAP Policy](#)

Case Example 2

Cause of Death: Sudden Infant Death while Co-Sleeping with an Adult

Age at Death: 2 months

The child fatality review revealed the following:

- Infant was born at term and healthy;
- Infant had crib located in parent's bed room;
- Infant was found unresponsive in adult bed with father;
- Mother was at work when incident occurred;
- Clinic had discussed safe sleep with mother at routine visits; and
- Mother reported that child liked to sleep on stomach.

Each year, the majority of cases which the Suffolk County CFRT reviews are cases of Sudden Infant Death and many of these cases occur when infants and adults are sharing a sleep space. Adult beds are **not** designed for infant safety. Adult bed pillows, sheets, and comforters can impair a baby's ability to breathe and may also overheat the baby. The safest place for a baby to sleep is alone in a crib. The crib should be free of comforters, pillows, decorations and toys. A tight fitted sheet may be used to provide warmth. The sheet should be tucked tightly into the sides and bottom of the crib and positioned below the infant's armpits.

The Suffolk CFRT continues to recommend that providers talk to parents about safe sleep at every visit. In addition to talking to the caretaker at an appointment, encourage caretaker to pass safe sleep information on to others who may watch the child.

National News

Consumer Alert: Children's Deaths Linked to Pet Doors

[Read More](#)

Suicide of Foster Child, age 7, Prompts Review of DCF Drug Policy (FL) [Full Story](#)

Shaken Baby Cases on the Increase

[Click Here](#)

One Mother's Story: Shaken Baby Syndrome (Boston) [Read](#)

15% of U.S. Teens Think They'll Die Young

[Read Article](#)

Toyota Steers Course for Teen Safety (CA) [Full Article](#)

Texting While Driving Illegal in 13 States [More Here](#)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 2008 Motor

**"Protecting Families
at Home: Best
Practices, New
Products, and
Resources"**

[Webcast](#)

**Summer Safety
Tips**

**Pool Safety
[AAP Safety Tips](#)**

**Window Falls
[Prevention](#)**

**Home Playground
[Checklist](#)**

**Child Care Safety
[CPSC Checklist](#)**

**"Strike Out Teen
Suicide" Join Kevin
Youkilis and the
Riverside Trauma
Center July 25**

[More Information](#)

Vehicle Fatalities [State by State Info](#)

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