Seniors vs. Teens: Who Are the Safer Drivers?

Incident Responders often debate who causes the majority of automobile crashes. A recent article from the Tampa Bay Times compared accidents between the youth and the elderly.

Florida has 455 licensed drivers age 100 and older. Stories of dangerous elderly drivers are common; the stereotypes rampant. They react late. They mistake the gas pedal for the brakes and slam into buildings. However, drivers 90 years and older actually have the lowest rate of crashes in the state, according to the most recent data from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

There are about 79 crashes for every 10,000 licensed drivers, roughly 3.75 times lower than the 15 to 19 year old demographic, which has the highest crash rate. That demographic sees about 364 crashes for every 10,000 licensed drivers. But seniors fare worse when you consider miles driven. Judged that way, statistics have shown, the rate of crashes jumps markedly after age 80.

There's no age when drivers are required to put away the keys. Driving is a personal freedom. It's convenient, fun, a symbol of one's independence. State officials want to ensure that older drivers "maintain their driving independence as long as they continue to drive safely and confidently," said Florida Highway Patrol spokesman Steve Gaskins. Elderly drivers have few additional requirements in order to renew a license. Drivers 80 and older must renew their license every six years instead of every eight, and take a vision exam every renewal instead of every other one. "You're getting your vision tested every six years instead of every 16," said Courtney Heidelberg, a spokeswoman with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, explaining the difference.

Is there an age when drivers should retire the keys for good? "There's a certain age when people probably shouldn't be driving anymore," said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Ananth Prasad. "I'll get there, you'll get there, we'll all get there."

The number of licensed drivers between 91 and 100 is much larger. According to the HSVM here's a breakdown in our county of drivers aged 91 to 100 years as of January 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>1,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatee</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>1,504</td>
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<td>Sarasota</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>2,882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collier</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1,473</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Redacted in part by permission; Tampa Bay Times staff writer Marissa Lang and researcher John Martin contributed to this report. Danny Valentine can be reached at dvalentine@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3386. Article submitted by Bill Fuller, ITS Traffic Incident Management Project Manager, FDOT District 1.

Lee County Emergency Management Hurricane Preparedness Seminars

Lee County Emergency Management provides educational seminars on Emergency Preparedness and Hurricane Preparedness. Seminars are conducted year round and are free of charge. To learn more visit the following website: http://www.leeeoc.com/Preparedness/Pages/Schedule_Seminar.aspx

Free Training Modules

Respondersafety.com from the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI) is now releasing free training modules on The Responder Safety Learning Network which is provided in part of the FEMA Fire Grant Program. To access The Responder Safety please visit the following site: http://learning.respondersafety.com/

New and Enhanced TIMs Network Responder

The first edition of the new and enhanced TIM Network Responder. With this new format for The Responder you will have access to a document library, membership directory, social networking and more!

http://timnetwork.org/category/the-Responder/

30th Annual Lifesavers Conference

There still may be time to register for the National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities, held in Orlando, FL, June 14-16, 2012. Each year, the Lifesavers Conference provides a forum that delivers relevant and timely common-sense solutions to today's critical highway safety problems.

For more information on the conference, accommodations, and registration please visit the following site: www.lifesaversconference.org

2012 Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Self-Assessment (SA)

Please plan to join us at the next regularly scheduled TIM Team meeting for the 2012 Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Self-Assessment (SA). We will also be reviewing the Local Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
In conclusion, having a well thought out plan will enable residents to gather their family, friends, and pets together in a quick and effective manner. Make sure to conduct hurricane drills with small children and the elderly to ensure they understand which steps are needed to be safe while weathering the storm. By having all of the necessary supplies and a family disaster plan will make sure you and your family are one step ahead of the game. 

Unfortunately, too many times Florida residents do not perform their due diligence of informing their families, friends, and other individuals about the dangers of hurricanes and how to prepare for catastrophic events. This is why the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Center has developed this campaign to inform the nation about the dangers of the hurricane and what is needed in preparation for unpredictable natural disasters. Starting on May 27th, the National Weather Service will assign each day a theme of what course of action residents should take in order to reduce the effects of hurricane disasters.

The theme days are designated as follows: May 27th - Hurricane Basics, May 28th - Storm Surge, May 29th - Winds, May 30th - Inland Flooding May 31st - Forecast Process, June 1st - Get a Plan!, and June 2nd - Taking Action.

The Collier-Lee-Charlotte County TIM Team is committed to implementing the "3 Cs" of TIM: Communication, Cooperation and Coordination, and providing the public with the best real-time Motorist Information available. Team membership draws from state, regional, and local transportation agencies, public safety providers, and other organizations and companies that service the traveling public. The Teams, sponsored by the FDOT, provide the public with the best real-time information to motorists, resulting in a safer highway environment for both incident responders and motorists.