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## NEWS RELEASE

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### THE TUCSON POLICE DEPARTMENT AND TUCSON POLICE FOUNDATION OFFER LIFESAVING INSTRUCTION TO TEEN DRIVERS



Car accidents are the leading killer of American teens and experts say that inadequate training is one of the leading contributing factors in these crashes. It is heartbreaking when a family loses their teen in a driving accident. The Tucson Police Department and Tucson Police Foundation wish to remind Tucson and surrounding communities that the SAFE TEEN ACCIDENT REDUCTION TRAINING (START) Program is here to help save lives.

Teens are the most dangerous when they first begin driving on their own. One study found that teen drivers were 50 percent more likely to be involved in a car accident during their first **month** of driving *alone* than in their first **year** of driving alone. This indicates that many teens are hitting local roads without the skills they need to drive safely. In addition to being generally less experienced on the road, many teens are susceptible to the temptations of their smartphones and other distractions. Distracted driving collisions are increasingly common in Arizona and it appears part of the reason so many teens are involved in crashes.

The Tucson Police Department and the Tucson Police Foundation wish to inform parents, teens and high school administrators about the START Program and implore teens to take advantage of this lifesaving program. START classes are offered at no charge\* to licensed/insured teens, between the ages of 16-19. You can learn more and register for upcoming classes at [www.tucsonpolicefoundation.org](http://www.tucsonpolicefoundation.org).

Teens have an opportunity to attend a fun and informative, 5-hour class at the Tucson Police Academy where the hands-on, behind-the-wheel training takes place on a state of the art closed driving course. Classes are scheduled throughout the school year, between September and May. The classes are taught by professional Tucson Police driving instructors and vehicles are provided by the Tucson Police Department and Jim Click.

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For accommodations; materials in accessible formats; foreign language interpreters; and/or materials in a language other than English, please contact the Tucson Police Department Public Information Office at (520) 791-4852 or (520) 791-2639 for TDD at least five (5) business days in advance. Para arreglos; materiales en formatos accesibles; interpretes de idioma extranjero; y/o materiales en otro idioma que no sea inglés, por favor comunicarse al Departamento de la Policía de Tucson a la sección de Información Pública al (520) 791-4852 o (520) 791-2639 para TDD por lo menos con cinco (5) días hábiles de anticipación.

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The START program provides teen drivers with critical information on decision-making, judgment, and basic motor vehicle driving skills related to commonly encountered collision factors. The hands-on skills portion consists of six exercises:

- ✓ Evasive Steering
- ✓ Controlled Braking
- ✓ Basic Skid Control
- ✓ Off-Road/Pavement Recovery
- ✓ Anti-lock Brake System Familiarization
- ✓ Distracted Driving

Parents should contact their insurance provider to see if the successful completion of the START program by their teen provides them with an insurance discount.

Jim Click and State Farm are major contributors and supporters of the START Program and State Farm provides a teen driver insurance discount with the successful completion of the START Program.

### ***About Tucson Police Foundation:***

*The Tucson Police Foundation was founded in 2003 and is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to fostering public safety through community partnerships to support the Tucson Police Department. The Foundation continues to provide lifesaving equipment and training for Tucson Police officers as well as community based safety programs which benefit the Tucson community.*

*To learn more about the Tucson Police Foundation, please visit [www.tucsonpolicefoundation.org](http://www.tucsonpolicefoundation.org).*

### **Statistics:**

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. In 2013, 2,163 teens in the United States ages 16-19 were killed and 243,243 were treated in emergency departments for injuries suffered in motor vehicle crashes. That means six teens ages 16-19 died every day as a result of motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1</sup>
- The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16-19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash.<sup>2</sup>
- The overwhelming majority (75 percent) of serious teen driver crashes are due to "critical errors," with the three common errors accounting for nearly half of these crashes:<sup>3</sup>
  - Lack of scanning that is needed to detect and respond to hazards
  - Going too fast for road conditions (e.g., driving too fast to respond to others or to successfully navigate a curve)
  - Being distracted by something inside or outside of the vehicle

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- The majority of newly licensed teen drivers exit the learner period with significant skill deficits, leading to a much higher risk of crashing compared with more experienced drivers. The most common types of crashes involve left turns, rear-end events, and running off the road.<sup>4</sup>
- Distraction was a key factor in 58 percent of crashes involving drivers ages 16 to 19, according to an analysis of video footage of 1,691 moderate-to-severe crashes 6 seconds before they occurred.<sup>5</sup>
- Head trauma affects millions of American each year and has significant morbidity and economic costs to society. In 2011, traffic-related head trauma accounted for an estimated 1.82 million visits to Emergency Departments.<sup>6</sup>

\*START classes are offered at no charge however a \$50 donation is suggested. Similar classes are offered through local and Phoenix area organizations who charge over \$700 to receive the same training and experience that the START program provides.

Although the program cannot save every teen from being in a collision, the extra training and hands-on experience can reduce the number of crashes and save lives.

### Resources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Online]. (2013). National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
2. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). Fatality Facts: Teenagers 2013. Arlington (VA): The Institute; 2013.
3. Curry AE, Hafetz J, Kallan MJ, Winston FK, Durbin DR. Prevalence of Teen Driver Errors Leading to Serious Motor Vehicle Crashes. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. April 2011.
4. McDonald CC, Kandadai V, Sommers MS, Winston FK. Comparison of Teen and Adult Driver Crash Scenarios in a Nationally Representative Sample of Serious Crashes. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. 2014; Volume 72, November 2014:302-308.
5. Carney C, McGehee D, Harland H, Weiss M, and Raby M. Using Naturalistic Driving Data to Assess the Prevalence of Environment Factors and Driver Behaviors in Teen Driver Crashes. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. March 2015.
6. Gaw CE, Zonfrillo MR. Emergency Department Visits for Head Trauma in the United States. *BMC Emerg Med*. 2016;16(1).

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