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Memorial Day Marks the Start of the 100 Deadliest Days on the Road

*Idaho Falls Community Hospital is Encouraging Teen Drivers to Use Extra Caution*

**IDAHO FALLS, ID** – The days between Memorial Day and Labor Day are some of the most dangerous on the roads. Fatal car crashes spike during this time of year, especially among teen drivers. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash during this time.

“Sadly, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in our country,” said Idaho Falls Community Hospital emergency department medical director, Dr. Douglas Cook. “Slowing down, removing distractions, and staying vigilant makes a huge difference on our roadways and can save lives.”

Roadways become more dangerous during the summer, in part, because kids are out of school and have more time to be on the road. Summer is also a time for vacations and celebrations, like graduation, which can lead to a spike in risky driving behaviors, such as speeding, distracted or impaired driving.

Here are ten tips drivers can use to keep Idaho’s roadways safer for everyone this summer:

**Stay Focused.** When you are behind the wheel, stay alert and limit distractions. Talking on the phone, drinking, eating or visiting with others in the car takes your mind off the task at hand and increases your chance of being in an accident. Warm months also bring more people outside, so keep a close eye out for runners and cyclists.

## Give Space. Accidents are most likely to happen in front of you, so make sure you leave plenty of room between you and other cars on the road.

## Drive Defensively. Do not rely on other drivers to keep you safe. Be prepared for someone to cut you off, slam on their breaks or run a red light. Have a plan for how you will react in these situations.

## Follow the Rules of the Road. Traffic laws are not arbitrarily created – especially speed limits. Speeding is risky and it typically saves less than five minutes for shorter trips.

## Adjust for Weather. Different weather conditions require different approaches to driving. If it’s raining, slow down. The same is true when you are driving directly into the sun and have limited visibility.

## Drive Sober. If you are drinking, arrange for someone else to drive you home safely. After drinking, your reaction time is slowed and you are less likely to make good judgement while driving.

**Put the Phone Down.** It is easy to be distracted by an incoming call or text but resist the temptation of picking up your phone. If you are on the freeway, even glancing at your cell phone could be the same as driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. It simply isn’t worth the risk.

## Buckle Up. According to the National Institute of Highway Safety, seatbelts saved nearly 15,000 lives in 2017, the most recent data year available. Wearing a seatbelt can make a huge difference when it comes to your safety.

## Take Breaks on Road Trips. On long trips, plan short breaks along the way. Getting out of your car and stretching will help improve your focus while driving.

## Stop on Red. Drivers trying to beat red lights cause many crashes. If you see a light turn yellow, slow down and come to a complete stop. If you have a green light, double check the intersection before pulling forward. Just because the light is green, never assume it is safe to go – verify the intersection is clear before pulling forward.

If Idahoans find themselves involved in a car accident, their first step should be to prioritize safety. Drivers should check themselves and those involved in the crash for injuries and call 911 right away if someone if seriously hurt.

Idaho Falls Community Hospital treats upwards of 100 people involved in car crashes each summer. The hospital hopes drivers will do their part to help reduce that number over the next three months.

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*Idaho Falls Community Hospital is a full-service hospital with a state-of-the-art emergency room. The team at Idaho Falls Community Hospital is dedicated to providing patients with compassionate, high-quality care in times of sickness and in health. The hospital was built in response to the community’s request for more healthcare choices in eastern Idaho. To learn more, visit* [*www.IdahoFallsCommunityHospital.com*](http://www.IdahoFallsCommunityHospital.com)*.*