



CITY OF MENIFEE

SUBJECT: Teen Drivers Safety Education Programs

MEETING DATE: August 16, 2023

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Paul Barbieri, Police Lieutenant

REVIEWED BY: Chris Karrer, Interim Police Chief

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Discuss and provide direction to staff on teen drivers safety education programs within the community.

DISCUSSION

At the October 19, 2022, City Council meeting, former Councilmember Matt Liesemeyer, and seconded by Councilmember Dean Deines, requested a future agenda item regarding information on programs available to the City to address safety issues associated with teenage drivers on the roadway.

In 2022, approximately 4,000 teenage lives were lost nationwide due to vehicle collisions. Studies show that inexperience and poor decision making were the primary causes of these collisions. It is the goal of the Meniffee Police Department (MPD) to reduce the number of fatal and major injury traffic collisions caused by teenage drivers. This goal can be accomplished through vigilant traffic enforcement efforts and education.

In the past three years, MPD has addressed the topic of drivers' safety in several ways.

1. Each year the MPD traffic unit holds specific enforcement campaigns regarding driving under the influence (DUI) and distracted driving. The Department's social media pages report on these campaigns as they occur to provide an education component about the negative impacts these behaviors can have on the community.
2. With the development of our School Resource Officer Program, the increased presence of our officers in the high schools has allowed for a more frequent interaction with the teen population so we can continue to have a positive influence, and so teenagers learn to accept law enforcement as a resource.

3. The local Temecula California Highway Patrol (CHP) office provides a 2-hour class called Start Smart annually. This program focuses on providing comprehensive traffic safety education classes for teenagers and their parents. The Temecula CHP office has held classes in the City of Menifee (as recently as 2022) and has courses available that can be found on their website or through the CHP-Smart Start app.

Beyond the educational resources already provided to the community, there are two other programs the City could consider incorporating. These include the Every Fifteen Minute Program and the Impact Teen Drivers Program.

Of the 4,000 teenage vehicular deaths in 2022, 25% can be directly attributed to someone who was driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. The Every Fifteen Minutes Program has been utilized in high schools for several decades. It brings together a coalition of local agencies, hospitals, schools, businesses, service clubs and emergency responders to put on a two-day program with the goal of reducing alcohol-related collision among the youth. This Program utilizes a dramatic approach to elicit an emotional response to remind the youth that their choices have consequences and affect people other than themselves. The Every Fifteen Minutes Program requires a significant amount of cooperation and coordination from multiple entities within the community and requires funding that would need to be sought out through the City budgetary process and donations.

The remaining 75% of teenage traffic collision related deaths are directly related to the inexperience of teenage drivers and the distractions which are available to them when they drive. The Impact Teen Drivers Program is provided by a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop, promote, and facilitate evidence-based education and strategies to save lives and reduce injuries and fatalities caused by reckless and distracted driving. This Program was created by members of the California Teachers Association and the California Association of Highway Patrolmen.

Impact Teen Drivers has partnered with the CHP and the Office of Traffic Safety to provide the curriculum and the resources to present a program to high school and middle school aged youth as well as their parents with the goal of reducing teen fatalities. These short 45-minute presentations are designed to engage teens, parents and educators in an evidence-based curriculum which outlines the dangers of reckless and distracted driving, and the importance of good decision making behind the wheel. This Program utilizes curated video presentations, interactive activities, and statistical information to engage with teenagers to help them understand the importance of current driving laws and why they were implemented with the safety of the motoring public in mind. All training and materials are provided free of charge to participating agencies through a grant obtained by the Impact Teen Driving Program from the Office of Traffic Safety. With numerous MPD staff already certified to provide this training, the only additional cost associated with Program implementation is the dedication of staff time for program administration and conducting presentations.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

Safe and Vibrant Community

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of any additional teen driver education programs would involve the dedication of staff resources. The cost impact of adding these types of programs would require a cost impact analysis.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Overview of Every Fifteen Minutes Program
2. Impact Teen Driving Facilitator Guide
3. Impact Teen Driving GDL Brochure
4. Impact Teen Driving – Train the Trainers Synopsis