

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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(202) 426-8787

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Forwarded to:

The National Committee on Uniform  
Traffic Laws and Ordinances  
Suite 430  
1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-76-6

About 1:45 a.m. on March 9, 1975, near Tracy, California, three teenagers were killed when their auto struck the side of the leading car of a slow-moving freight train at a crossing used irregularly by trains. The presence of the crossing was indicated by warning signs 500 feet and 380 feet in advance of the crossing and by crossbucks at the crossing; a train flagman present at the crossing was unsuccessful in his attempts to stop the automobile. The driver's blood alcohol level was 0.14 percent and the passengers' blood alcohol levels were 0.10 and 0.09 percent. According to California State and to Federal criteria, a person with a blood alcohol level of 0.10 percent is presumed to be under the influence of alcohol.

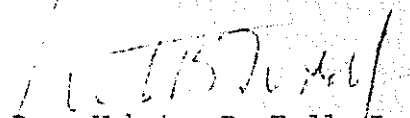
In an effort to find ways to prevent or to reduce the severity of this type accident, existing legislative and administrative authorities were examined to determine their potential for detecting, retarding, and controlling aberrant driver behavior, especially with respect to alcohol. It was determined that the Uniform Vehicle Code of the National Committee is the current source of information for specific guidance regarding driver licensing. However, whereas several States have provisions in their codes that would have permitted detection and improvement of this driver's behavior through provisional licensing, the National Committee's Uniform Vehicle Code does not contain these additional provisions.

The Safety Board in 1971 pointed out the need for these provisions to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as part of an overall effort to improve young driver performance. It is our understanding that NHTSA, in its Highway Safety Program Standard on Driver Licensing, currently refers the States to the Uniform Vehicle Code for more specific guidance regarding driver

licensing, and that revision of the current NHTSA standard could be delayed for several years. In view of the scope and magnitude of the young driver safety problem, there is a need now for improved legislative and administrative authorities. One of the best methods to gain awareness and consideration of these authorities by the States would be through the inclusion of these authorities in the Uniform Vehicle Code of the National Committee. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances:

Study the effectiveness of various probationary licenses already in effect for young drivers, devise model guidelines, and insure their early availability in its Uniform Vehicle Code.  
(Recommendation H-76-6) (Class II, Priority Followup)

TODD, Chairman, McADAMS, THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in this recommendation.

  
By: Webster B. Todd, Jr.  
Chairman

THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL BE ISSUED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE THAT DATE.