

Mock Crash

Objective

Very few people actually see a major car crash involving people they know, so it never seems like it could happen to them. This activity gives high school students the chance to witness the fatal results of driving distractions or other risks taken while driving.

How the Activity Works

A mock crash simulates a car crash in which student volunteers are the crash victims. This activity requires the following:

- A significant amount of advance planning
- The permission and support of the school district and school principal (see “Sample Request Letter to Principal”)
- A previously-wrecked vehicle that is brought to your location, set up to simulate a crash, for example, placed beside the school building.
- Student volunteers transformed into the victims and placed in and near the crashed car.

Things to Consider

You will have some very upset people. You have played with their emotions and they will be shaken. The sick feeling in their stomachs will help them remember that it could happen to their friends who were victims of distracted drivers.

This type of dramatic project can trigger sad memories of friends or family who have died.

Have someone in your group talk with the counsellors to make sure they will be at the crash scene, at the assembly in the school and available afterwards. At the end of the assembly have your emcee announce if anyone wants to talk, that the counsellors will be available.

** Do not undertake this activity if your school or community has lost someone in a crash resulting from distracted driving.*

The Event

Once the crash scene is set and the crash victims are in place, the following take place:

- The police arrive with lights flashing and sirens blaring
- The principal makes an announcement that there was a serious crash outside and everyone is to stay well back
- On cue, the fire truck and ambulance crews arrive and go through an authentic-looking rescue: jaws of life, emergency treatment of the injured, and the driver is pulled out of the wreckage clutching a cell phone and, as she is being dragged out, a cosmetic bag falls out of the door spilling all the contents (lipstick, combs, etc.)

Debriefing: The Assembly

All the students are called to an assembly. The crash victims return to the school, remove their make-up and participate in the assembly. The following participate in the debriefing:

- The student volunteers
- The local police
- The ambulance attendants
- The firefighters
- A speaker

(Adapted from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, www.icbc.com)

Mock Crash

Planning a Mock Crash

The Vehicle

- Contact a local auto wrecker to arrange for a vehicle donation and towing. Ensure the previous owner(s) of the vehicle agrees to the display and make sure the vehicle poses no safety hazards such as leaking gas tank, jagged edges or broken glass.
- Provide the vehicle's registration number to your local insurance claim centre manager and ensure the occupants were wearing seat belts and there was no breach in insurance coverage at the time of the crash. No criminal charges or motor vehicle breaches should have stemmed from the crash and there should be no question of liability. A vehicle from a single vehicle crash is best.
- Do not use a vehicle in which someone has been seriously injured or killed. You have a social responsibility not to exploit or compound the grief of the victim and/or family members. It is best if the vehicle occupants received only minor injuries or none at all.
- The vehicle should be one that would be attractive and appropriate to the audience (i.e. a newer model car).
- There must be no evidence of occupant impact damage from not wearing a seat belt (i.e. head marks or dashboard marks).
- The vehicle must have operational seat belts and be transportable by truck.
- Arrange to have the vehicle arrive just before the event and be towed away right afterwards.

The Event

- Arrange for drama students or others to act as drivers and passengers. Create a story, using makeup to indicate the severity of injuries.
- Contact police, fire, and ambulance services and ask them to participate as if they were responding to a "real" crash.
- Create a detailed schedule for the crash. You need to have everyone know where they fit into the plan and at which time.
- The location should be close to the school. Involve your local police in picking a good location.
- Book the gym for the assembly to be held after the mock crash. Contact a teacher or the student council President to be the emcee for the assembly.
- Avoid doing the mock crash at a time or location where young children might witness it (for example, if your high school is beside an Elementary feeder school).
- Having one of the emergency response representatives narrate how and why rescue crews are responding as they are, can be helpful.
- Have a nurse or first aid representative on hand to deal with possible fainting.
- Contact local media and encourage them to attend.