



*Virginia Beach, Va.*—He wasn't stumbling, and his speech wasn't slurred, so shipmates let a 21-year-old PO2 who had been partying with them get behind the wheel of his car. The party was a farewell for the PO2—he was going on vacation and transferring to a new command.

During the evening, the PO2 had consumed about seven beers and one mixed drink while playing cards and video games with his shipmates at a local residence. At 2200, he left the house for a club but returned 45 minutes later because he didn't meet the club's age restriction (25 years old). He talked about 15 minutes, then left again. The shipmates followed him a short distance before heading in a different direction.

At 4 o'clock the next morning, police found the PO2. He had run off the road, over-corrected, and lost control of the car. It spun across the road and hit a large tree on the passenger-side door. The police called an ambulance, which took the victim to a local hospital. He was removed from life support and died the next day from a head injury.

Although several people could have prevented this tragedy, they didn't because the victim didn't show any of the obvious signs of intoxication. ❏

*Winnebago County, Wis.*—An 18-year-old female lost control of her car, and it slid across two lanes of traffic before colliding with a Ford Bronco. Her passenger, a young fireman recruit, died at the scene, and she was hospitalized in critical condition. Both people were wearing seat belts. No rain, snow or ice was on the highway, and the police didn't suspect alcohol use. ❏

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*Toledo, Ohio*—He attended a pre-holidays safety stand-down and training on all aspects of safe driving, but that didn't stop a young E-2 from throwing caution to the wind. He was returning from holiday leave when he had a single-car wreck and died from a severe head wound after being ejected from the vehicle. His wife survived with only minor injuries. ❏

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*Norfolk, Va.*—Bad weather creates enough hazards for drivers who are sober. Add booze to the formula, and you have all the ingredients for disaster. A couple of Sailors who had been drinking were headed down a slick interstate at more than 90 mph—in a 55-mph zone—when their uninsured car plowed through a

snow bank on an overpass, slammed into a barrier wall, went airborne, and landed upright on another road 30 feet below. The car then flipped twice, ejecting the driver (who wasn't wearing a seat belt) through the windshield and onto the road.

Medical crews on the scene revived the driver, but he died later at a local hospital from extreme head and abdominal injuries. The passenger, meanwhile, survived his injuries because he was wearing a seat belt. Both the driver and the underage passenger had been drinking alcohol.

Just two days earlier, these Sailors and their shipmates had been briefed on winter-driving habits. Three weeks earlier, they had attended a safety stand-down that emphasized safe-driving practices. ❏

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*Estonia*—An ensign and her fiance, an Estonian naval officer, were en route to a local airport to pick up her parents. He was driving a Honda Civic when he tried to pass a bus and collided head-on with a BMW traveling in the opposite direction.

The ensign and two passengers in the BMW, a young woman and a small child, died. All three were wearing proper restraints. The cause of this mishap was poor judgment by the Honda's driver, who tried to pass the bus without making sure the lane was clear. ❏