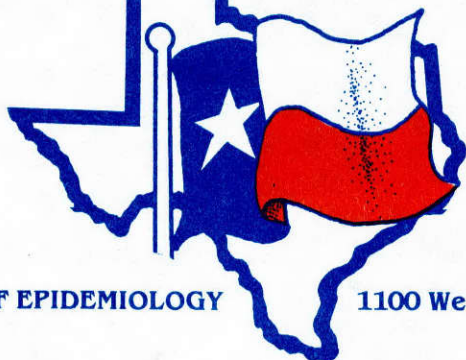


Texas Preventable Disease NEWS



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Accidents During the Holidays
Janex Toy Train Engine Presents Hazards
To Infants and Small Children

BUREAU OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

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ACCIDENTS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

For most Texans, the Christmas and New Year holidays are times of joy and festivity. Yet for some of us, these are times of needless and senseless tragedy. During the 12 day period from December 22, 1982, through January 2, 1983, 134 Texans were killed and 6,486 were injured as a result of motor vehicle accidents. A similar, or perhaps even greater, number are expected to be killed or injured in motor vehicle accidents during the same period this year. In spite of an overall reduction in motor vehicle fatalities throughout the state in 1982, more Texans were killed in motor vehicle accidents during the 1983 Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays than during any other Fourth of July or Labor Day holiday periods since 1975 -- an alarming trend. All of these deaths and injuries are preventable, and many share a common factor: the intoxicated driver.

December is the worst month for fatal DWI (driving while intoxicated) accidents. During the four Decembers from 1978 through 1981, 391 people lost their lives in DWI-related accidents. From 1978 through 1981, 107 children under ten years of age were killed in DWI-related accidents. Many social gatherings and festivities during the Christmas and New Year holidays center around the use and abuse of alcohol. Many books have been filled with reasons why the line between responsible and irresponsible drinking is crossed. While debate continues as to why people drink and behave the way they do, one result is clear: half of all fatal motor vehicle crashes involve drivers whose blood alcohol level is 0.1% or higher. These drivers are legally defined as being drunk. From a physiological standpoint most drivers are impaired when their blood alcohol level is 0.05%, or half of the legally drunk limit.

The victims of the intoxicated driver may be passengers in the same car or, in fact, the intoxicated driver. Often the victims are occupants of other cars, whose only error is being in the wrong place at the wrong time. These drunken persons consider themselves to be good drivers. Some consider themselves to be such good drivers that they feel they will never be involved in an accident, and thus, can dispense with the use of seat belts and child safety seats. For some, this will prove to be a fatal error.

Just who are these intoxicated drivers? Studies carried out by the Texas Department of Public Safety Administration document that many of the intoxicated drivers are young. Nationwide, 44% of all nighttime fatal accidents are caused by drivers who are 16 through 24 years of age, even though this group represents only 22% of all licensed drivers. In Texas during the years 1978 to 1981, 37% of DWI drivers in-

volved in an accident were under 25 years of age. Studies made by the New York State Health Department show that younger drivers who do not drink are involved in crashes 2 1/2 times more often than other drivers. When they do drink, they are involved in crashes 4 1/2 times more often than other drivers. Not only are young drivers trying to learn how to drive responsibly, they are also trying to learn how to drink responsibly. It appears they have problems when they try to do one and more problems when they try to do both.

The remainder of the group of intoxicated drivers is less easily defined. As amply documented by news media, many intoxicated drivers involved in crashes are problem drinkers with a long history of repeated arrests for DWI. However, many, perhaps the majority of, intoxicated drivers are "average" persons with no prior history of arrests for DWI. This has been a major obstacle in the enforcement of DWI laws. Many of us attempt to drive after we have had too much to drink; most of us arrive at our destinations without reported or remembered incident. When faced with a fellow human who stands before us arrested for DWI, we as jurors feel that "there but for the grace of God go I," and we are loathe to pass judgment.

Driving while intoxicated is an old problem. Recently, however, DWI has been given considerable attention by legislative and law enforcement groups, governors' task forces, public health officials, and special interest groups such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers), DETER (Texans for Deterrence and Enforcement, Education, Rehabilitation), safety associations, and the insurance industry; all feel that the problem with DWI is simply too important to be ignored. They are right. Motor vehicle accidents are the **fourth** leading cause of death in Texas; **half** of these deaths involve drivers who are intoxicated. Since motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for Texans from 15 through 44 years of age, the problem affects Texans in the prime of their lives when they are most productive.

In spite of efforts to increase DWI enforcement and legislate more severe penalties, it is doubtful that these measures alone will greatly reduce deaths caused by intoxicated drivers. Such pessimism stems from the historical failure of law enforcement and legislative activities to meet DWI objectives. Often there are temporary reductions in DWI-related deaths as people are initially frightened into thinking that there is a substantial risk of being caught driving while intoxicated. When people realize that the risk of arrest for DWI remains low, they subsequently return to former behaviors. The probability of arrest for DWI is about one arrest for ever 2,000 intoxicated drivers on the roadways at a given time. Once apprehended, a driver's chances for conviction are about one in five, making the overall probability of punishment for each DWI event about one in 10,000. Even the doubling of DWI law enforcement efforts will only raise the probability of arrest to one in 5,000. Another problem with controlling the intoxicated driver through law enforcement and legislative efforts is that the problem is addressed only after it has occurred, and thus, driving while intoxicated is not prevented.

The final answer to the problem of DWI clearly falls back on all of us. We all are directly or indirectly affected by the DWI problem. It is also clear that the problem will go away only when we learn to drink responsibly. The use of alcohol is deeply ingrained in our society. It is not reasonable to expect that we can eliminate it. Rather, on both societal and personal levels, we must learn to use alcohol so that it does not destroy our lives and the lives of others. It is a responsibility which cannot be legislated.

While different people metabolize alcohol at different rates, a reasonable guideline for responsible drinking is one mixed drink containing 1 oz of alcohol, or 12 oz of beer, or 6 oz of wine per hour.

The problem of the intoxicated driver will not go away overnight. However, there are several practical ways by which Texans can minimize their chances of being on the receiving end of a crash caused by an intoxicated driver:

1. **Avoid driving during high-risk periods whenever practical.** Most drunk drivers are on the roadways at night, on weekends, and during holidays. During 1978-1981, 50% of all fatal alcohol-related crashes in Texas occurred between 10 PM and 3 AM.
2. **Use seat belts/shoulder harnesses.** In the event of a crash, seat belts do save lives when they are used. In Texas, the risk of being killed in a crash is four times greater for people who are not using seat belts. Of the 3,046 occupants of motor vehicles who were killed on Texas roadways in 1982, only 54 were using seat belts; 2,872 were not (120 deaths did not have this information reported).
3. **Use child restraints.** Seat belts are not designed to adequately protect children under 40 pounds of weight. Federally-approved, crash-tested child safety seats should be used instead. Child safety seats can reduce childhood injury and death from motor vehicle crashes by as much as 80%, which is about the same level of protection provided by childhood immunizations against polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, and pertussis. There is one important difference however: in 1982, no Texas child died as a result of these diseases, but 90 children under 5 years of age were killed while riding in cars.
4. **Drive friendly and watch out for the other guy.** These statements have been used to the extent that they now sound trite. Yet they are words of wisdom and should be remembered. It is becoming more difficult to be courteous in these days of increasing traffic congestion and inconsiderate drivers, yet anger has no place on our roadways, nor is being in the right worth the price of a death or serious injury. In addition, none of us expect to be involved in a motor vehicle accident, especially near our home where we are drinking in familiar surroundings; nevertheless, the majority of fatal accidents occur within 25 miles of our homes. In spite of our confidence in our driving habits, half of us will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in our lives.

Safe driving (which does not preclude having fun) is an activity by which Texans can have the greatest impact on prolonging the life and health of themselves and their loved ones. So take that extra moment to buckle seat belts, secure children in car safety seats, resist the temptation to lower yourself to the level of the inconsiderate driver, and be alert to situations which might involve you in a crash. We at the Texas Department of Health wish everyone a joyous and safe holiday season.

Our thanks go to Mary Lauderdale and the staff of the Statistical Services Division of the Texas Department of Public Safety for supplying the Texas data used in this report. Additional information of this type is included in the Texas Department of Public Safety Publications: 1) Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents 1982, and 2) A Look at DWI ... Accidents, Victims, Arrests.

This report was prepared by Thomas G. Betz, M.D., Director, Investigations and Studies Division, Bureau of Epidemiology, Texas Department of Health.

JANEX TOY TRAIN ENGINE PRESENTS HAZARDS TO INFANTS AND SMALL CHILDREN

This is a Consumer Product Safety Alert from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Janex Corporation, 19 Wardell Circle, Oceanport, New Jersey, recently announced that a musical-action crib and pull toy, the Musical Rock-A-Bye Railroad®, No. 2010, distributed by the firm may present choking, aspiration, and ingestion hazards because of small parts which can break off. Janex has agreed to provide redesigned toys to consumers as replacements for the No. 2010, to provide a credit to retailers and wholesalers who destroy the product, and to give notice of the hazards. The agreement settles an administrative complaint filed against the firm on August 31, 1983.

This toy is a plastic train engine which can be clamped on the rail of the crib or used as a pull toy outside the crib. When the "smokestack" is wound up, the toy plays music and the rear wheels turn. The train engine is made of blue plastic with pink and white wheels, a red and white smokestack, and a yellow bell. Yellow decals with red printing on each side of the train engine say "Musical ROCK-A-BYE RAILROAD." The toy train engine is approximately 7-1/2" high by 7-1/2" long and 3-3/4" wide.

When the Commission tested this toy according to safety requirements for toys, several components, including the bell, broke off. The Commission staff believes this is a violation of the CPSC Small Parts Requirement which bans small parts in toys intended for children under 3 years of age. The staff believes the components are small enough to be choking, aspiration, and ingestion hazards to infants and young children. However, these particular toys have not been involved in any incidents known to the CPSC.

The Janex Corporation distributed 50,000 of these toys from April through October 1982. The Rock-A-Bye Railroad sold for approximately \$9.97. Consumers should remove these toys from use immediately and contact the company or the retail store where they purchased the toy to obtain a replacement. Retailers and distributors should contact the company as soon as possible to arrange for the destruction of and a credit for products on hand and returned. Only model 2010 with the yellow bell is involved in this action. Model 2010-A, without the bell, has been redesigned and should not be returned.

For further information, consumers may call Janex Corporation at 201/229-8482 or the toll-free hotline on 800/638-CPSC. A teletypewriter number for the hearing impaired is 800/638-8270 (Maryland only, 800/492-8104).

ASEPTIC MENINGITIS	MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	HEPATITIS:			IMMUNIZABLE:		RICKETTSIAL:		VENEREAL:		MISC.:		TUBERCULOSIS
		A	B	SERUM UNSPEC	MEASLES	RUBELLA	ENDEM TYPH	RMSF	GC	P&S SYPH	FLU & FLU-LIKE		

CUMULATIVE FOR THE STATE POPULATION = 15,345,761

CASES RPTD THIS WEEK	19	0	*	58	26	47	*	1	1	*	1	5	*	931	58	*	1,513	37
5-YR MEDIAN 1978-1982	14	2	*	64	17	40	*	3	2	*	1	1	*	1,258	70	*	1,139	36
CUMULATIVE 1983	932	161	*	2,683	1,072	2,133	*	37	107	*	29	100	*	73,188	5,908	*	83,614	1,688
CUM. SAME WEEK 1982	725	217	*	2,982	961	1,904	*	127	111	*	36	61	*	78,291	6,001	*	85,971	1,789

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 1 CANYON, TX PHONE: 806/655-7151 POPULATION = 385,411

COUNTIES

BRISCOE		*		*		*		*		*		*					5	
DEAF SMITH		*		*		*		*		*		*					12	2
PARMER		*		*		*		*		*		*					22	
POTTER		*	2	*		*		*		*		*					109	1
RANDALL		*	1	*		*		*		*		*					5	
WHEELER		*		*		*		*		*		*					5	
CASES THIS WEEK		*	3	*		*		*		*		*					153	3
CUMULATIVE 1983	12	2	*	44	20	6	*	2	*	*		1,342		31	*		5,419	18

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 2 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 2 NOT REPORTING: 15

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 2 LUBBOCK, TX PHONE: 806/797-4331 POPULATION = 379,488

COUNTIES

GARZA		*		*		*		*		*		*					10	
LUBBOCK		*	5	*	3	*		*		*		1						
CASES THIS WEEK		*	5	*	3	*		*		*		1					10	
CUMULATIVE 1983	14	2	*	199	11	47	*	3	*	*		1,124		53	*		4,838	19

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 4 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 0 NOT REPORTING: 9

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 3 EL PASO, TX PHONE: 915/779-3531 POPULATION = 553,858

COUNTIES

EL PASO		*	3	*	2	*		*		*		27						1
CASES THIS WEEK		*	3	*	2	*		*		*		27						1
CUMULATIVE 1983	14	4	*	92	39	72	*	1	4	*		2,641		176	*		34	64

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 1 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 0 NOT REPORTING: 4

ASEPTIC MENINGITIS	MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	HEPATITIS:		IMMUNIZABLE:		RICKETTSIAL:		VENEREAL:		MISC.:		TUBERCULOSIS
		A	B	MEASLES	RUBELLA	ENDEM	TYPH	GC	P&S SYPH	FLU & FLU-LIKE		

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 4 ABILENE, TX PHONE: 915/673-5231 POPULATION = 678,887

COUNTIES

COTLE		*		*		*		*		*			
IRION	1	*		*		*		*	2	*			
SHACKELFORD		*		*		*		*		*		2	
STERLING		*		*		*		*		*		4	
TAYLOR		*	1	*		*		*		*		9	
TOM GREEN		*	3	1	*	*		*		*		1	
WICHITA		*	1	2	*	*		*		*		176	
WILBARGER		*			*	*		*		*		8	
YOUNG		*			*	*		*		*		1	
CASES THIS WEEK	1	*	5	3	*	*		*	2	*		201	
CUMULATIVE 1983	44	1	177	56	86	1	13	1	1	1,315	34	9,473	29

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 3 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 3 NOT REPORTING: 29

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 5 ARLINGTON, TX PHONE: 817/460-3032 POPULATION = 3,481,003

COUNTIES

COOKE		*		*		*		*		*			
DALLAS	1	*	8	6	3	*		1	35	12	*	10	8
DENTON		*	2		1	*		*		*		24	1
ERATH		*			*	*		*		*		1	
JOHNSON		*			*	*		*		*		2	
KAUFMAN		*			*	*		*		*		6	
NAVARRO		*			*	*		1	*	*			
PARKER		*	1		*	*		*		*			
TARRANT	1	*	6	2	11	*		1	1	*			3
CASES THIS WEEK	2	*	17	8	15	*		3	36	12	*	44	12
CUMULATIVE 1983	234	53	1,109	352	587	1	10	1	66	21,552	1,684	6,924	328

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 2 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 0 NOT REPORTING: 8

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 6 TEMPLE, TX PHONE: 817/778-6744 POPULATION = 1,451,983

COUNTIES

BASTROP		*		*		*		*		*			
BELL		*	1	*		*		*		*			
BRAZOS		*		*		1	*	*	10	*			1
BURLESON		*		*		*		*	15	*		48	
CORYELL		*		*		*		*	1	*			
FAYETTE		*		1	*	*		*	1	*		3	
		*		*		*		*		*	1	*	

ASEPTIC MENINGO- MENIN- COCCAL GITIS INFEC	HEPATITIS:			IMMUNIZABLE: MEASLES RUBELLA	RICKETTSIAL: ENDEM TYPH RMSF	VENEREAL: GC	MISC.: FLU & FLU-LIKE	TUBER- CULOSIS
	A	B	UNSPEC					

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 8 HARLINGEN, TX PHONE: 512/423-0130 POPULATION = 1,413,993 (CONTINUED FROM PRIOR PAGE)

LAVACA	*			*	*	*	*	1					
NUECES	*	3	1	*	*	27	4	51					
VICTORIA	*			*	*	12							
WILLACY	*			*	*	1							
CASES THIS WEEK	*	4	1	2	*	47	4	119					
CUMULATIVE 1983	60	10	216	110	568	1	27	23	1	2,246	208	20,271	200

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 4 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 3 NOT REPORTING: 10

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 9 UVALDE, TX PHONE: 512/278-7173 POPULATION = 1,443,279

COUNTIES

BEXAR	8	*	5	2	2	*	*	46	1	*	343	1
COMAL		*				*	*			*	9	
DIMIT		*				*	*			*	16	
FRIO		*			1	*	*	2		*		
KARNES		*				*	*			*	5	
KENDALL	1	*				*	*			*		
KERR		*				*	*	1		*		
WILSON		*				*	*		1	*		
CASES THIS WEEK	9	*	5	2	3	*	*	49	2	*	373	1
CUMULATIVE 1983	178	7	307	47	69	2	3	3,686	307	5,965	168	

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 1 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 2 NOT REPORTING: 10

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 10 TYLER, TX PHONE: 214/595-3585 POPULATION = 683,950

COUNTIES

ANGELINA		*	3			*	*			*		
JEFFERSON		*	1			*	*			*	23	1
SAN AUGUSTINE		*				*	*	1		*		
SHELBY		*				*	*	1		*		
CASES THIS WEEK		*	4			*	*	2		*	23	1
CUMULATIVE 1983	20	13	64	39	37	13	1	1	2,701	193	2,096	58

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 1 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 2 NOT REPORTING: 8

ASEPTIC MENINGITIS	MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	HEPATITIS:			IMMUNIZABLE:		RICKETTSIAL:		VENEREAL:		MISC.:		TUBERCULOSIS
		A	B	INFECTION	SERUM UNSPEC	MEASLES	RUBELLA	ENDEMIC TYPH	RMSF	GC	P&S SYPH	FLU & FLU-LIKE	

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 11 ROSENBERG, TX PHONE: 713/342-8685 POPULATION = 3,642,976

COUNTIES

BRAZORIA	*	*				*	*	*	*			*			
COLORADO	*	*				*	*	*	1			*			
FORT BEND	*		1	1	1	*	*	*	1			*			
GALVESTON	*					*	*	*	3		2	*	1		
HARRIS	5	*	5	8	4	*	1	*	404		19	*	86		
LIBERTY	*	*				*		*	1			*			
MATAGORDA	*	*				*		*	1		2	*			
MONTGOMERY	*	*				1	*	*	1		2	*			
WALKER	*	*				*		*	1		2	*			
WALLER	*	*				*		*	3		1	*			
WHARTON	*	*				*		*	23			*			
CASES THIS WEEK	5	*	6	9	5	1	*	1	3			*	21		
CUMULATIVE 1983	193	44	232	254	361	33	2	1	5	25,052	2,165	*	108	10	622

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 2 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 0 NOT REPORTING: 0

PUBLIC HEALTH REGION 12 LUBBOCK, TX PHONE: 806/797-4331 POPULATION = 364,329

COUNTIES

ANDREWS	*	*				*	*	*	*			*			
ECTOR	1	*			3	*	*	*	2			*			
HOWARD	*	*				*	*	*	3			*	22	1	
MARTIN	*	*				*	*	*				*	7		
MIDLAND	*	*				*	*	*				*	6		
PECOS	*	*				*	*	*	15			*	28		
REEVES	*	*				*	*	*	1			*			
WINKLER	*	*				*	*	*	2			*			
CASES THIS WEEK	1	*			3	*	*	*				*	13		
CUMULATIVE 1983	8	1	57	17	85	7	1	*	23	814	105	*	76	1	21

OTHER COUNTIES: NO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 0 OTHER DISEASES ONLY: 1 NOT REPORTING: 8

OTHER REPORTING SOURCES

ARMED FORCES	*	*				*	*	*	23			*	258		
V.A. HOSPITALS	*	1	*	*	*	*	*	*				*			
CASES THIS WEEK	*	1	*	*	*	*	*	*				*			
CUMULATIVE 1983	6	2	23	26	25	1	*	*	23	2,428	124	*	258		6,310

OTHER REPORTABLE DISEASES

	REPORTED THIS WEEK		CUMULATIVE	
	1982	1983	1982	1983
ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)		2		63
AMEBIASIS	0	1	448	359
ANTHRAX	0	0	0	0
BOTULISM	0	0	0	2
BRUCELLOSIS	3	4	27	71
CHICKENPOX	78	136	10267	14242
CHOLERA	0	0	0	0
DIPHThERIA	0	0	1	0
ENCEPHALITIS, ST. LOUIS	0	0	18	1
ENCEPHALITIS, WESTERN EQUINE	0	0	4	1
ENCEPHALITIS, VENEZUELAN EQUINE	0	0	0	0
ENCEPHALITIS, ALL OTHER	4	2	145	103
LEPROSY (HANSENS DISEASE)	0	1	27	33
LEPTOSPIROSIS	0	0	13	0
MALARIA	0	0	0	0
MALARIA ACQUIRED OUTSIDE USA	1	0	50	44
MUMPS	2	1	216	205
PERTUSSIS	1	0	72	87
PLAGUE	0	0	1	0
POLIOMYELITIS, PARALYTIC	0	0	0	0
PSITTACOSIS	0	0	7	5
Q FEVER	0	0	1	0
RABIES IN MAN	0	0	0	0
RELAPSING FEVER	1	0	4	0
RHEUMATIC FEVER	1	0	11	12
RUBELLA CONGENITAL SYNDROME	0	0	0	0
SALMONELLOSIS	26	98	2299	2230
SHIGELLOSIS	27	55	2053	1796
STREP THROAT & SCARLET FEVER	952	737	43580	34431
REYE SYNDROME		0		18
TETANUS	0	0	6	6
TRICHINOSIS	0	0	2	1
TULAREMIA	0	0	10	9
TYPHOID FEVER	0	2	32	48
TYPHUS, EPIDEMIC	0	0	0	0
YELLOW FEVER	0	0	0	0
RABIES IN ANIMALS	16	5	744	685