

HOW FAST CAN YOU DIE?

Have you ever wondered what happens when a car, traveling at 55 miles per hour, crashes into a solid immovable object, such as a tree?

1/10th of a Second

- The front bumper and chrome frosting of the grillwork collapse.
- Slivers of steel penetrate the tree to a depth of 1 ½ inches.

2/10ths of a Second

- The hood raises, crumples, and smashes the windshield.
- Spinning rear wheels leave the ground.
- The fenders come into contact with the tree, forcing the rear portions out over the front doors.
- The driver's body continues to move forward at the vehicle's original speed (20 times the normal force of gravity) – his body weight 3,200 pounds.
- Ramrod-straight legs snap at the knee joints.

3/10ths of a Second

- The driver's body is now off the seat, torso upright, broken knees pressed against the dashboard.
- The plastic and steel frame of the steering wheel begins to bend under his terrible death grip.
- His head is now near the sun-visor, his chest above the steering column.

4/10ths of a Second

- The car's front 24 inches have been demolished, but the rear end is still traveling at about 33 miles per hour.
- The half-ton block crunches into the tree.
- The driver's body is still traveling at 33 miles per hour.

5/10ths of a Second

- The driver's fear-frozen hands bend the steering column into an almost vertical position.
- The force of gravity impales him on the steering shaft.
- Jagged steel punctures lungs and intercostal arteries.
- Blood spurts into his lungs.

6/10ths of a Second

- The driver's feet are ripped from his tightly laced shoes.
- The brake pedal shears off at the floor boards.
- The chassis bends in the middle, shearing off at the body bolts.
- The driver's head smashes into the windshield.
- The rear of the car begins its downward fall spinning wheels digging into the ground.

7/10ths of a Second

- The entire writhing body of the car is forced out of shape.
- Hinges tear, doors spring open.
- In one last convulsion, the seat rams forward, pinning the driver against the cruel steel of the steering shaft.
- Blood leaps from his mouth, shock has frozen his heart.
- He is now dead.

TOTAL ELAPSED TIME...SEVEN TENTHS OF A SECOND