

# Boy, 9, dies in accident

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A 9-year-old boy died yesterday evening from multiple trauma injuries after he allegedly fell from the back of a pickup and was hit by a following vehicle near Tanguisson Beach.

According to Guam Fire Department's spokesman Specialist Joey

San Nicolas, the fire department received the emergency call at 5:26 p.m., and medic units arrived at the Tanguisson Beach access road at 5:33 p.m. The medics were told the boy was riding in the back of a pickup when he fell.

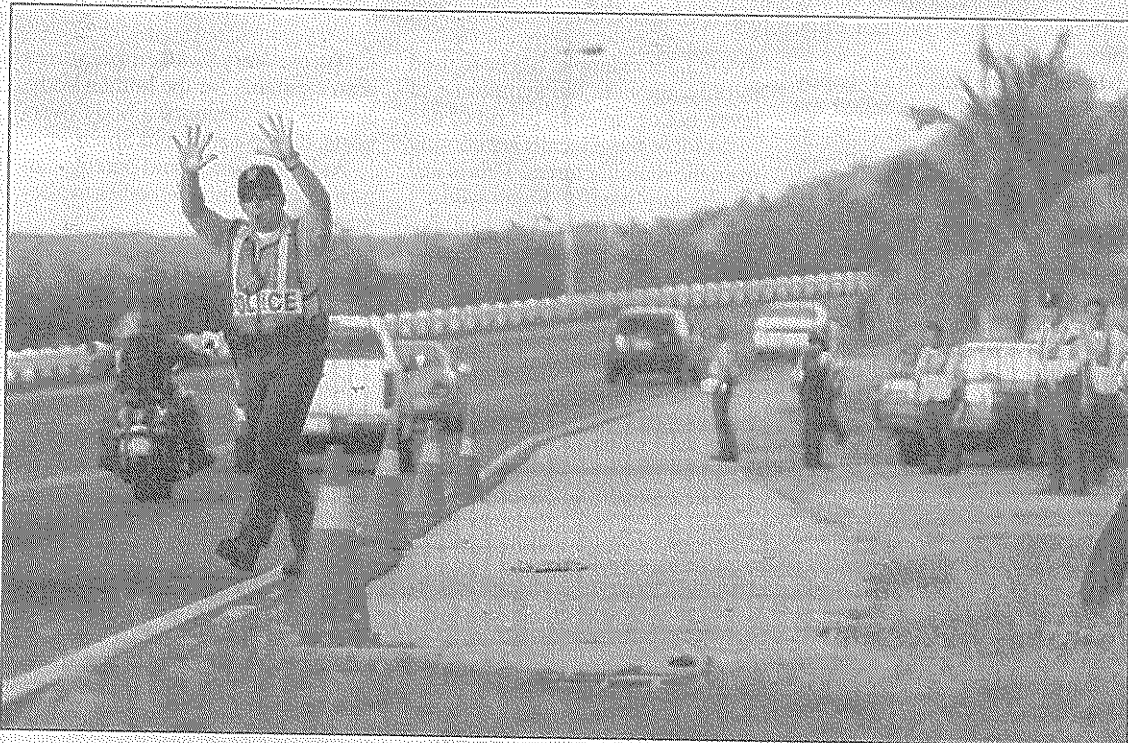
San Nicolas said the boy was still breathing and had a pulse when the Barrigada station's Advanced Life Support unit transported him to Guam Memorial Hospital.

At 7:15 p.m., the boy, who had sustained multiple trauma injuries, was pronounced dead, according to GMH Nursing Supervisor Sally Quichocho.

This death marks the island's ninth traffic fatality this year, compared to 12 traffic fatalities last year.

Officers at the Guam Police Department's Dededo precinct said Highway Patrol officials continue to investigate the incident.

## Violating rules of the road



Pacific Daily News file photo

**Awareness campaign:** Guam International Airport Authority Officer Dean Delgado, left, stops a motorist as he and fellow officers participate in the national "Click It or Tickle" campaign on Route 10A in front of the airport recently. Officers were out to spot and cite violators as part of the campaign to get people to buckle up.

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## Police say drivers compromise safety

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Not even halfway through the year, the island has witnessed nine traffic fatalities.

While the number may be startling to some residents, one police officer said it's not uncommon to see drivers violating several traffic safety rules at once that can ultimately lead to fatal accidents: texting while driving, drinking and driving, improper seat belt usage, and speeding.

"It's a combination of all those things," said Tumon precinct's Police Officer 3 Anthony Kamminga. "It's a violation to be texting and driving."

Even talking on the phone requires looking at your phone at least once or twice to start and end the call.

Kamminga said, so it's advisable to avoid talking on the phone while driving as much as possible, though it isn't mandated by law. The law only says a person can't look at his or her phone while driving, he said.

Kamminga also noted that while local nonprofit groups and agencies urge people not to drink and drive, it happens on a regular basis.

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# Safety: Wear seat belts properly to make it effective

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"As much as they advertise don't drink and drive, it still happens," he said.

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse spokeswoman Christine Camacho said instilling this lesson in youths is the best way to prevent them from drinking and driving later in life.

About 25 percent of heavy drinkers and 20 percent of binge drinkers are aged between 18 and 24, according to Guam's data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes remain the most visible social consequence of alcohol abuse, according to Mental Health.

"According to Guam's (2007) Substance Abuse Epidemiological Profile, youth on Guam reportedly drink as early as 13 years old; 36

### SEAT BELT SAFETY

▲ Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

▲ In 2008, seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide. From 2004 to 2008, seat belts saved over 75,000 lives — enough people to fill a large sports arena.

▲ During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle

percent of high school youth on Guam are current drinkers and about 19 percent engage in binge drinking," a fact sheet released by Mental Health stated.

That's why Camacho said adults, who are legally allowed to drink — but not drive afterward — should set examples for their kids.

### Speed limits

As short as distances are on

is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive and distracted drivers.

▲ Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. In fact, if you don't wear your seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; a movement of such force could injure or even kill you. See [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov) for more on air bag safety

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Guam, Kamminga said people break speed limits daily.

He said he pulls people over more than 10 to 15 times a day, and far more people speed without getting ticketed.

If the safety factor isn't enough to deter drivers from speeding, Kamminga said it's the court that determines penalty fines for speeding depending on whether roads are

wet, whether it was nighttime or daytime, and whether the driver was speeding in a school or construction zone, etc.

However, with medians and island-wide road construction in the way, "it gets hard to pursue someone," he said, which is why not all violators get caught.

Regarding the use of seat belts, Kamminga said some people think that as long as the strap is across their chests it's enough to keep them safe, or to avoid getting a ticket, so they end up wearing the strap under their arms. But even this isn't the way to wear a seat belt to make it effective.

He said everyone should look at their vehicles' user manuals to use the seat belt properly.

"The law says to follow what's in the vehicle manual, and that's the way you're supposed to wear it," he said. "It will save your life."

As a deterrent and means to catch violators, police set up routine checkpoints on the weekends, Kamminga said. Residents don't necessarily like the checkpoints, but he said because they're random, it's a way not only to catch people who have been drinking and driving, but also to catch violators who have expired licenses or aren't wearing their seat belts properly.

"That's why it's random," he said. Not wearing a seat belt was once a secondary offense, meaning people who got pulled over for other violations could also be cited for not wearing a seat belt.

However, due to a national campaign by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Guam now adheres to a "Click it or ticket" policy, which means drivers can get pulled over and ticketed for not wearing a seat belt.