



Teen truck crash victim wasn't supposed to be riding in back

FLORIDA LAW: It is illegal for anyone under 18 to ride in the bed of a truck unless they wear a seat belt.

Posted: July 28, 2009 - 12:30am

[View this story on the All-Access Members site](#)

By [Larry Hannan](#)

By law, Miranda J. Zant should not have been riding in the bed of a pickup truck early Monday.

Zant, 16, died when the driver of the truck in which she was riding lost control, causing the truck to flip in the 13000 block of Bartram Park Boulevard in Jacksonville about 3 a.m.

Zant, of the 6200 block of Sage Drive, was one of four people thrown from the vehicle. She died at the scene.

Two other people were in the bed of the pickup and one was in the passenger seat.

Another passenger who was thrown from the vehicle remained in critical condition Monday.

Under Florida law, it's illegal for anyone under 18 to ride in the back of pickup trucks unless they are wearing seat belts, said Ann Nucatola, spokeswoman for the state Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Few, if any, pickup trucks have seat belts in the back.

For riders 18 and older, though, there is no limit to the number that can ride in the truck bed. The only restriction is that people aren't allowed to hang out of the truck, Nucatola said. There are also no rules about animals in the back of pickup trucks.

AAA Auto Club South spokesman Kevin Bakewell said the state law needs to change. Pickup beds should be used for moving materials, he said, not people.

In 2008, eight people were killed and 141 injured while riding in the back of pickup trucks in Florida, said Lt. Bill Leeper of the Florida Highway Patrol.

"It is obviously dangerous to ride in the back of pickup trucks unrestrained," Leeper said. "In the event of a crash, the possibility of being ejected and injured unnecessarily is greater."

Police could smell alcohol on the driver and on Zant, said Melissa Bujeda, spokeswoman for the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office did not release the names of anyone else involved in the accident.

Times-Union writer Adam Aasen contributed to this story.

larry.hannan@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4470

Share | | [Email](#) | [Print](#)

[Subscribe to The Florida Times-Union](#)

Related Stories

- [Truck with 6 youths crashes on Bartram Park; 1 dead](#)
- [Late-night party preceded pickup truck's fatal flip](#)
- [LAW & DISORDER: Teen driver facing vehicular homicide charge](#)

[Back to Top](#)