



## **ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT DRIVES HOME IMPACT OF RECKLESS DRIVING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN MOCK CRASH AT ABINGTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

*Annual Event Takes Place Before Prom to Deter Students  
from Driving While Impaired*

ABINGTON – Even though they knew it was not real, the emotional impact of seeing their classmates being cut out of the vehicle wreckage by Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) firefighters was not lost on Abington Senior High School students who watched a mock crash unfold outside their school May 25<sup>th</sup> – a day before the senior prom.

“It’s scary,” said Emily Geliebter, a senior who watched the scene with her friend Megan Williams.

Watching as classmates they knew were pulled from wrecked cars, the two students said the message about the consequences of drinking and driving came through loud and clear. That has been the point of this annual exercise, which takes place each year prior to Abington Senior High School’s prom and involves the collective efforts of the ATFD, the Abington Township Police Department and the Second Alarmers Rescue Squad, all of whom respond to a fake accident involving two cars of students and a bicyclist, with beer cans strewn about the scene to indicate the involvement of alcohol. The students selected to portray the accident victims are often athletes or class representatives who are well-known by the crowd assembled to watch.

While being lectured about the dangers of drinking and driving sometimes gets the message across, Melanie said students don’t actually see the consequences and still have a tendency to think it won’t happen to them. Watching the aftermath of the mock crash, however, helped her to visualize what could happen.

“It’s different when you actually see it,” added Emily.

Senior Ryan Acuna said the experience was eye-opening.

“It’s made me think twice about drinking and partying after prom,” he said.

Fellow classmate Will Ames agreed.

“It’s definitely a scary thought that it could be you being saved by the Jaws of Life,” he said.

Weldon Fire Company Assistant Chief Keith Maslin, who has been participating in the mock crash for about six years, said the event definitely has an impact that stays with people based on what he hears from residents in the community who witnessed the crash as high school students.

“If we can get through to one kid, I believe we did something,” he said.

The event is brought even closer to home through the involvement of the high school’s Firefighter Club. Club members help respond to the accident and their classmates have the opportunity to see what they do as volunteers.

“It touches them more when they see their classmates out there, rather than going someplace else and seeing people they don’t know,” said Assistant Chief Maslin.

In addition, students get a little insight to the many different roles firefighters can play in the community – and that they do much more than responding to fire calls.

“I didn’t know they did this,” said Megan.

“I think it’s cool to see our classmates out there helping out,” said Emily.

The ATFD headquarters is located at 1176 Old York Road in Abington. For more information, visit [www.abingtonfd.org](http://www.abingtonfd.org).