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Take caution when driving in rain

By **DEREK TAFT**
Guest Columnist

I have worked at Domino's Pizza in Portland for two years.

Over these last two years I have learned a lot of useful information.

I have also gained many friends and many of them have become more like family.

There is one day that stands out in my mind the most, the day that I almost lost my life.

It was a day like any other, except one thing that made it the day of hell, this is how it started.

I went to work for Domino's as a delivery driver.

The manager that morning was Nick Webb, and we had started the doing the prep (putting food in containers and sealing it for that day).

When we finished, we turned on the oven and started putting utensils where they go.

It came 11 a.m. all too fast, and phone calls started pouring in like crazy.

It had started to rain off and on all day.

I had made several deliveries before I got the one that almost cost me my life.

I had to make a delivery that I had made a hundred times before, but somehow it was different this time.

The place that I am talking about is New Deal Potts Road in Portland.

When I had left, it was wet and raining, but we have to deliver in rain, sleet, or snow.

So, I head out to deliver my pizza. After a little while, I arrived at New Deal Potts Road.

As I was going down the road, the rain started to fall harder and harder.

I know I wasn't supposed to speed, but I was going at least fifteen miles over the speed limit.

By this time the roads were extremely slick.

I saw a turn coming on a bridge and hit the brakes.

My truck started hydroplaning out of control, and I hit the bridge abutment head on.

When my truck hit the abutment the first thought that went through my mind was "my mom is going to kill me."

My truck hit so hard that turned sideways.

The truck was about six feet from going into the creek.

The gentleman behind me stopped to see if I was ok.

Well, I was in the truck trying to figure out how to get out, and it took a lot of my strength to move myself next to the passenger door and get out that way.

I was trying to do this while the smoke from the airbags filled the truck.

I finally pulled myself out through the passenger door onto the truck bed.

By the time I did this, the adrenaline had worn off, and my left knee and left ankle were hurting really bad.

I climbed onto the toolbox and I called Nick and told him what happened.

At the same time the guy that was behind me had called the police.

By this time I was in so much pain I could not think straight, and after about 10 minutes the ambulance and fire trucks came.

The Emergency Medical Technicians were asking me a lot of questions to see if I had any head trauma, and I was still on the tool box in pain.

Two firemen had to pick me up and lay me down in the weeds while the ambulance workers went to get the stretcher.

It took two firemen, a State Trooper, and two EMT's to get me on the stretcher.

That was how much pain that I was in.

So, when they got me on the stretcher they put on a neck brace just in case I really did have serious injuries.

They finally got me strapped in, and put the stretcher on wheels to roll me to the ambulance.

When I was in the ambulance, the EMT's went ahead and put an intravenous fluids tube in me and checked my blood pressure.

While they were doing that, all my family and friends were calling my cell phone to make sure that I was ok.

Then, a few minutes later, the State Trooper came in and asked me the same questions that the EMTs had asked me.

When I go to the hospital they gave me Morphine and Mepergan.

The next thing that the doctors did was x-ray my leg to see if I had any

broken bones.

I did not have broken bones thank goodness.

The doctors told me that I had bruises and contusions to my legs and ankles.

I did not know this at the time, but my mom, the General Manager (Candis Concepcion) and Assistant Manager (Kristy Hardy) of Domino's all came to see me.

When Candis came in, she made sure that I was ok.

When we were talking she said, "You will never deliver pizzas for us again, but we will put you back on the inside making pizzas".

After being in the hospital for six hours the doctor released me, but I had to have help from Candis and my mom to get me to the car.

When I got home, my mom ran a bath for me and Nick came by to make sure that I was all right.

He stayed there for a little while to help me with a few things.

It's been six months since my accident and I am doing fine.

Every once in a while though I will feel an extreme pain in my neck and back, which is just a reminder of what a bad day I was having.

I have figured out since my wreck that the rain is my kryptonite.

I have learned to be cautious when it is raining.

I have also learned that my life is a serious thing that does not need to be taken lightly.

Everyone needs to slow down when driving in the rain.

UNIVERSITY REPS VISIT VOL STATE CAMPUS

The following universities will be on the Vol State campus to meet with students about transferring to their university after graduating from Vol State. The university reps will be located in the Advising Center, Suite 174, in the Ramer Administration Building, on the following dates:

Austin Peay State University

Tuesday, March 13 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 17 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Middle Tennessee State University

Thursday, March 15 9:00 a.m. – noon
Thursday, March 29 9:00 a.m. – noon
Thursday, April 12 9:00 a.m. – noon
Thursday, April 26 9:00 a.m. – noon

Tennessee State University

Wednesday, March 21 9:00 a.m. – noon
Wednesday, April 4 9:00 a.m. – noon
Wednesday, April 18 9:00 a.m. – noon

Tennessee Tech University

Wednesday, March 14 9:00 a.m. – noon
Wednesday, March 28 9:00 a.m. – noon