

# 3 women die after car crash in South L.A.

LA TIMES 2/8/12

The driver, critically injured when the car hit a tree, had no license, police say.

ANDREW BLANKSTEIN

Three women have died after a car crash in South Los Angeles last week involving an unlicensed driver, authorities said Tuesday.

Tenina M. Calhoun of Moreno Valley was driving in the 1400 block of West Florence Avenue with five other women about 2:45 a.m. Friday when she slammed into a tree, critically injuring everyone in the vehicle, five of whom were ejected.

Enisha Marie Davis, 21; Jeshai Chanae Jones, 19; and Tiesha Jermaine Turner, 28,

died between Friday and Monday from their injuries, Assistant Chief L.A. County Coroner Ed Winter said.

Calhoun, who remains in critical condition, has not been arrested. But Los Angeles police are continuing to investigate.

Law enforcement sources familiar with the case said Calhoun was cited Jan. 3 by the California Highway Patrol for driving without a license. Los Angeles police said they recovered alcohol from the car. Her vehicle was not impounded.

The triple fatality is among the latest in a string of recent accidents involving unlicensed drivers that resulted in death or injury.

In December in Panorama City, a motorist driving without a license struck and killed a 60-year-old woman.

Two Los Angeles police officers were hospitalized last week after their patrol car was struck by an unlicensed driver in Jefferson Park.

The incidents have occurred amid fierce debate about a proposed change in the Los Angeles Police Department's vehicle-impound procedures, which would allow some unlicensed drivers to avoid having to wait the usual 30 days to recover their vehicles.

Proponents of the change say impound policies unfairly target illegal immigrants, who cannot obtain California driver's licenses. Opponents cite safety statistics showing that unlicensed drivers are involved in many times more accidents than licensed drivers. They also say the change would fly in the face of state

law.

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck clarified the proposed changes last week, saying that to avoid the lengthy impound, unlicensed drivers must not have been stopped in connection with a serious accident, will have to show identification and proof of insurance and must not have any previous convictions for driving without a license.

Because the impound rules are defined as LAPD procedures rather than policy, Beck does not need approval from the Los Angeles Police Commission or the City Council. Nonetheless, the commission is scheduled to hear debate on the issue Feb. 14.

andrew.blankstein  
@latimes.com

2/8/12