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Police officer fined for negligent driving

As an officer with the Police Coast Guard, his job was to keep our waters safe. But on land, he **drove negligently** and slammed into a pedestrian, causing him to now be in a vegetative state.

Lee Koon Seng, 32, was fined \$4,000 Friday for **causing grievous hurt by negligent driving**. He was also **disqualified** from holding a driving licence for all vehicles for three years.

According to court documents, Mr Janson Tay, 29, had been crossing Balestier Road to get back to his car with his friend, Mr Andrew Guy Anthony, at around 3.50am on Jan 12 last year. Visibility was dim along the three-lane road then.

Mr Anthony, 23, told The New Paper previously: "Janson was a few steps behind me, and I didn't see any oncoming car". As he reached the centre divider, he heard a loud bang and turned around to see a pair of shoes on the road. Recognising them as Mr Tay's, he rushed over and saw his friend lying on the road a few metres away. The impact was so great, the car's windscreen cracked.

Lee alighted, checked on Mr Tay and called for an **ambulance**. Mr Tay was taken to **Tan Tock Seng Hospital** in a coma. He was diagnosed to have a **severe traumatic brain injury** with **multiple skull fractures with internal bleeding**.

In April last year, TNP reported that Mr Tay's friends held a football match to raise funds for his **medical bills**. His parents quit their jobs to care for him round-the-clock.

Mr Tay, who worked as a used car salesman before the **accident**, spent the first three months after the **accident** in the **intensive care unit**, then another four months in a normal ward. He went home after that, but remains **unconscious** most of the time.

His mother, Mrs Sally Tay, 54, said his eyes have flickered open before, but he is still **unresponsive**. Before the **accident**, Mr Tay loved singing. He was one of the Top 14 male contestants of Singapore Idol 2006 and a contestant of Project Superstar the year before.

Mrs Tay makes sure she turns up for every court hearing. She said: "He can't defend himself now. As his mum, I must defend him." Yesterday, after Lee's sentence was passed, Mrs Tay left the courtroom with her sisters hastily.

She sank into a seat along the corridor and sobbed as her sisters watched helplessly. She said: "The driver asked for leniency. He said he wants to start afresh, start from scratch.

What about my son... he has done nothing wrong. But how is he going to start afresh?"

Mr Tay is her only son, and to survive financially, the family sold their four-room flat in Toa Payoh and moved in with Mrs Tay's sister. When asked about their finances, Mrs Tay only offered a cryptic laugh.

Her voice turned hoarse. She said: "My son had **three major brain operations** and parts of his skull were taken off. I don't expect anything. But he's my only son, you know. "I know the driver didn't hit him intentionally. But just because it's negligence doesn't mean he doesn't need to say sorry. "He is not remorseful at all."

At a previous court hearing, Lee's lawyer, Ms Grace Malathy, pleaded for leniency on her client's behalf.

She pointed out that Lee had a clean record and pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity. She added that he also assisted with investigations.