

TEEN DRIVING: FACTS AND STATISTICS

FATALITIES

- Motor vehicle crashes are the No. 1 cause of death among teens in the U.S.
- The fatality rate for drivers age 16 to 19 is four times that of drivers age 25 to 69 years
- The crash fatality rate (crash fatalities/100,000 population) is highest for 16- to 17-year-olds within the first six months after getting their license — and remains high through age 24
- The top three predictors for fatality are non-use of seat belts, teen drivers and roads with speed limits of 45 mph or higher
- Approximately two-thirds of teen passenger deaths (ages 13 to 19) occur when other teenagers are driving

CRASHES

- In their first year on the road, teens are almost 10 times more likely to be in a crash
- 20 percent of 11th graders report being in a crash as a driver in the past year
- 25 percent of 9th graders report being in a crash as a passenger in their lifetimes
- Crash risk increases incrementally with each mile per hour over the speed limit
- Current data on crashes involving 16-year-old drivers shows that having multiple teenage passengers in the vehicle is twice as likely to cause a fatal crash as alcohol-impaired driving
- Crashes are more common among young drivers than any other age group. In the United States, 1 in 4 crash fatalities involve someone 16 to 24 years old, nearly twice as high as other age groups

PARENTAL INFLUENCE

- 66 percent of teens say they care about their parents' opinion on cell phone use while driving
- 56 percent of teens rely on their parents to learn how to drive

DISTRACTION

- 90 percent of teens see passenger behavior that distracts the driver

SPEEDING

- Nearly half of teens report seeing passengers encouraging drivers to speed at least sometimes
- Half of teen drivers report driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit at least sometimes

CELL PHONE USE

- Nine out of 10 teens reported it was common to see teens driving while talking on a cell phone

SEAT BELT USE

- Teens have the lowest seat belt use rates of any age group, leading to deadly consequences
- Only 65 percent of teens consistently wear their seat belts as both a driver and passenger
- Six out of 10 drivers ages 16 to 20 who were killed in crashes were unrestrained
- Almost two out of three teens killed as occupants of motor vehicles are unrestrained

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Teens are actually less likely than adults to get behind the wheel after drinking, but when they do, their risk of crashing is far greater
- 53 percent of teens saw substance use behind the wheel at least sometimes

SOURCES

1. http://stokes.chop.edu/programs/injury/files/PCPS_Reports/1289teen.pdf
2. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>



FACT SHEET

MANAGE THE RISKS, MASTER THE ROAD



TEEN DRIVING: THE STATISTICS ARE FRIGHTENING

- Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen fatalities. About 44% of all teen deaths in 2003 were attributed to vehicle crashes – more than triple the number of teen suicides and more than double the number of teen homicide victims (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
- Teen drivers are often at the wheel when these tragedies occur. In 2002, for example, 61% of teenage passenger deaths happened when another teen was driving (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety).
- Teenagers far exceed all other age groups in terms of per capita deaths relating to vehicle crashes, both as drivers and passengers (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety).
- One out of every five licensed 16-year-old drivers will be in a vehicle crash (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety).
- The first year of unsupervised driving is the most dangerous. In fact, the crash risk drops by more than two-thirds after a driver completes his or her first 1,500 miles of independent driving (McCartt, Shabanova & Leaf, 2001).
- For 16- and 17-year-olds, carrying just one passenger increases the crash risk by about 50% (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety).
- Approximately two-thirds of teens killed in vehicle crashes in 2003 were not wearing seat belts (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
- More than one-third of teen driver fatalities involve speeding (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Despite these staggering statistics, surveys indicate that less than 50% of new teenage drivers receive any formal driver training prior to receiving their license. Many states are actually cutting funding for formal driver's education programs in public high schools. Nationally, only 27 states offer financial support, according to a 2003 USA Today poll. That's a far cry from the late 1970s, when every state mandated in-school driver's education.

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More for Teens by Dr. Mark R. Horowitz

FATALITIES

- * Vehicle deaths/injuries are the biggest health threat to teenagers in the U.S.A., accounting for two out of five deaths among teens ages 16-19.
- * 14% of all deaths due to motor vehicle crashes are teenagers.
- * Of teen drivers fatally injured in vehicles, more than 1/3 were speed-related.
- * Among 16-20 year olds there are 23 driving fatalities each and every day.
- * 53% of teenage vehicle deaths occur on weekends (Friday-Sunday).
- * 43% of teenage motor vehicle deaths occur between 9 pm and 6 am.
- * If a 16-year-old driver brings along a friend, the death rate rises by nearly 40%.
- * If another joins them, the rate rises by 85%\$.
- * If there are four in the vehicle, the rates soar to 182% over driving alone.

CRASHES

- * Teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as other drivers.
- * Crashes involving young drivers typically are single-vehicle crashes, primarily run-off-the-road crashes, which involve driver error and/or speeding.
- * The risk of crash involvement per mile driven among 16-19 year-olds is four times the risk among older drivers. Risk is highest at age 16, and then 17.
- * In 2004 16-20 year-olds had 1,622,000 vehicle crashes: 4,444 crashes each day and 185 each and every hour and more than three crashes every minute.

ATTITUDE

- * Crash rates are high largely because of young drivers' immaturity combined with driving inexperience.
- * Immaturity is apparent in young drivers' risky driving practices such as speeding and tailgating.
- * Teenagers' lack of experience behind the wheel makes it difficult for them to recognize and respond to hazards.
- * Teens get in trouble trying to handle unusual driving situations, even small emergencies.