

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

- https://stokes.chop.edu/programs/injury/files/PCPS_Reports/1289teen.pdf
- <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>