

Children



FACTS



Youth



Young Adults

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Throughout the world, many people and organizations are working to promote motor vehicle occupant protection for children, youth, and young adults. In spite of the great strides made in the United States, thousands of young people continue to die or experience serious injuries that could have been prevented had they been properly restrained in a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has produced this booklet since 2002 to explain the need for legislation, enforcement, education, and public awareness campaigns about protecting children, youth, and young adults in motor vehicles. Collectively, this information underscores why protecting young people is so important.

The majority of data in this fact book comes from 2006, the most recent year data was available. It has been generated from the **Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)** and the **General Estimates System (GES)** produced by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis at NHTSA. Data from NHTSA's 2007 **National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS)** is also included.

Using This Booklet as a Resource

The facts contained in this booklet can be used to develop speeches and presentations, public information and education publications, backgrounders, and news releases for the media, and to promote the use of occupant restraints in conjunction with law enforcement officials. States and local communities have a vital role to play in creating a national norm that makes it unacceptable to ride unrestrained in a motor vehicle. Our national goal must be to make child safety seats and seat belts lifelong habits for everyone.

The discussion refers to young people according to the following age groups:

- Children: newborns to age 7
- Youth: 8 to 15 (in some States 15-year-olds are permitted to obtain learner's permits, so they are sometimes included as "young drivers")
- Young adults: 16 to 20

The booklet has five main sections:

- The national scope of motor vehicle crashes;
- The need for and importance of appropriately sized restraint systems for each age group;

- Facts about restraint use for children from birth through 15 years old;
- Facts about restraint use for young adults ages 16-20; and
- Biennial telephone survey findings from NHTSA's 2007 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (MVOSS) on the behavior, attitudes, and opinions about seat belts and seat belt laws, including those of 16-to 20-year-olds.

Three appendices cover State specific information on fatalities, restraint use and child restraint laws.

Definitions

As you review the information that follows, keep in mind the following definitions:

Fatal Crash: A police-reported crash involving a motor vehicle in which at least one person dies within 30 days of the crash (including the deaths of people who were not in the vehicle, such as pedestrians and pedalcyclists).

Fatal Injury: Any injury that results in death within 30 days after the crash.

Incapacitating Injury: Any nonfatal injury that prevents the person from walking, driving, or normally continuing those activities the person was capable of before the injury. Often defined as "needing help from the scene."

Injury Crash: A police-reported crash involving a motor vehicle in which no one died but at least one person was reported to have (1) an incapacitating injury, (2) a visible but not incapacitating injury, (3) a possible but not visible injury, or (4) an injury of unknown severity.

Nonincapacitating Injury: Any injury, other than a fatal injury or an incapacitating injury, which is evident to observers at the scene of the crash. Examples: bruises, cuts, bloody nose.

Passenger Vehicles: Includes all cars, SUVs, vans up to 15-passenger capacity, and light trucks (under 10,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight rating) including pickups and truck-based station wagons. Motorcycles, buses, and large trucks (more than 10,000 lbs. GVWR) are not included in this category.

THE NATIONAL SCOPE OF MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES

In 2006, nearly 6 million police-reported motor vehicle crashes occurred in the United States.¹ In this same year, 30,521 occupants of passenger vehicles were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Nearly 21 percent (6,379) of these fatalities were children, youth, and young adults.²

Motor vehicle crash fatalities rank third in terms of years of life lost (the number of remaining years that the person would be expected to live had they not died) behind only cancer and heart disease.³

Motor vehicle-related injuries kill more children and young adults age 2 to 34 than any other single cause in the United States. For every day in 2006, an average of 5 children 14 and younger were killed and 568 were injured in motor vehicle crashes.⁴

Of the 2,329,083 occupants of passenger vehicles injured in traffic crashes in 2006:

- 53,469 children under the age of 5 were injured;
- 31,224 children 5 to 7 were injured;
- 58,067 youth 8 to 12 were injured;
- 61,059 youth 13 to 15 were injured; and
- 385,167 young adults 16 to 20 were injured.

The Importance of Occupant Restraints

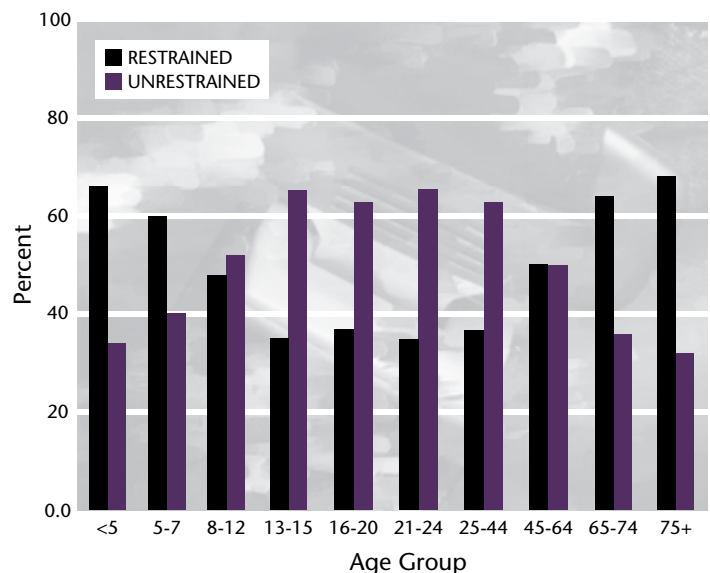
One of the most effective measures a person can take to prevent injury and death in a crash is to be appropriately restrained in rear- or forward-facing child safety seats, booster seats, or seat belts. NHTSA estimates that lap/shoulder seat belts, when used correctly, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light-truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent. Research on the effectiveness of child safety seats has found them to reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants (less than 1 year old) and by 54 percent for toddlers (1 to 4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks the corresponding reductions are 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively.⁵

Thousands of lives are saved every year because of child restraints and seat belts. Among passenger vehicle occupants in 2006:

- Child restraints saved an estimated 425 lives of children under the age of 5; if use of child restraints had been 100 percent, another 96 lives could have been saved.
- Seat belts saved an estimated 15,383 lives for those over 4 years old.
- If all passenger vehicle occupants over age 4 had worn seat belts, 20,824 lives (that is, an additional 5,441) would have been saved in 2006.

In spite of this evidence, the majority of fatally injured people are not properly restrained. In 2006, of the 30,521 fatalities of all ages, 55 percent (16,792) were unrestrained. Chart 1 compares the percentage of fatally injured occupants who were restrained to those who were unrestrained in passenger vehicle crashes.

Chart 1 Occupant Fatalities in 2006
By Age and Restraint Use, in Passenger Vehicles



¹ Traffic Safety Facts 2006 (Early Edition). A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

² Traffic Safety Facts 2006 Data, Occupant Protection. DOT HS 810 807. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

³ Subramanian, R. Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as Leading Cause of Death in the United States, 2004., DOT 810 742, March 2007. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁴ Traffic Safety Facts 2006 Data, Children, DOT HS 810 803. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁵ *ibid.*

Economic Burdens

The cost of reported as well as non-reported motor vehicle crashes totaled \$230.6 billion in 2000, the latest year for which this data is available. This translates to an annual average of \$820 for every person living in the United States. Included in this figure are \$81 billion in lost productivity, \$32.6 billion in medical expenses, and \$59 billion in property damage. The average cost for a critically injured survivor of a motor vehicle crash is estimated at \$1.1 million over a lifetime. Conversely, the use of seat belts saved society \$585 billion in medical care, lost productivity, and other injury-related economic costs since 1975.⁶

In 2004, seat belt nonuse alone caused an estimated \$18 billion in economic costs to society. When people don't wear seat belts, the potential costs increase because unbelted crash victims receive worse injuries and more fatalities than belted crash victims. Inpatient rehabilitation costs for motor vehicle injuries average \$11,265 per patient. On average, it costs more than twice as much to treat an unbelted victim than a belted one, due to these increased injuries.⁷

⁶ Blincoe, L., Seay, A., Zaloshnja, E., Miller, T., Romano, E., Luchter, S., & Spicer, R. The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2000. DOT HS 809 446, May 2002. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁷ Blincoe, L., Seay, A., Zaloshnja, E., Miller, T., Romano, E., Luchter, S., & Spicer, R. The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2000. DOT HS 809 446, May 2002. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



Children

“Child restraints saved an estimated 425 lives of children under the age of 5 in 2006.”

Youth



“In some States, a 10-year-old can ride legally in the back seat without being secured because the child is not covered by either the child restraint law or the safety belt law.”

Young Adults



“In 2006, 63 percent of the 4,842 passenger vehicle occupants age 16 to 20 who were killed were not wearing seat belts.”

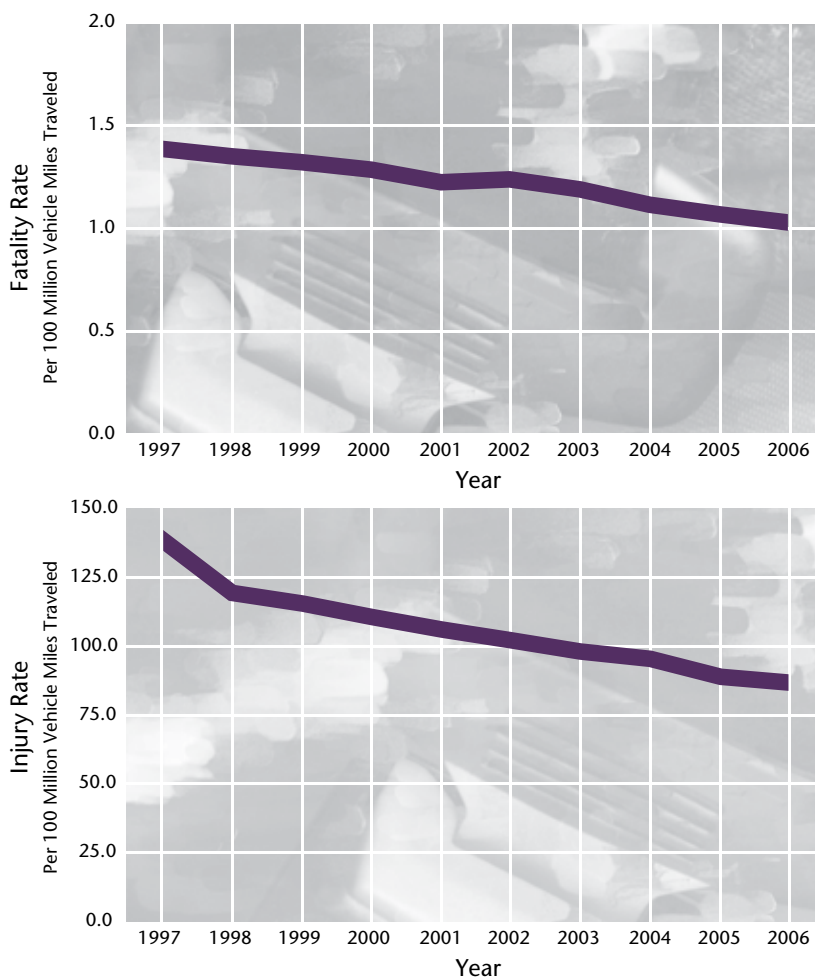


There is a strong positive correlation between the restraint use of an adult driver and that of young children in the vehicle.

The use of occupant restraints must be reinforced at an early age to reduce the disproportionately high rates of death and injury that children, youth, and young adults experience in motor vehicle crashes. But parents should not have to bear the burden by themselves. In communities across the country, health professionals, law enforcement officers, educators, elected officials and public employees, and every adult must contribute to the social and legal infrastructures necessary to make seat belt use a lifelong habit.

It is true that fatality and injury rates (per 100 million vehicle miles traveled [VMT]) have declined slightly during the past 10 years (see Chart 2). However, thousands of children and young adults still continue to be killed and injured in motor vehicle crashes. In 2006, 6,379 young people from birth to age 20 were killed. An additional 588,986 were injured in passenger vehicle crashes. (See Appendix A for a State-by-State breakdown.)

Chart 2 Occupant Fatality and Injury Rates, 1997-2006
Per 100 Million VMT, in Passenger Vehicles



Despite widespread public education campaigns, a significant percentage of children, youth, and young adults who were killed in passenger vehicle crashes in 2006 were unrestrained. There were a total of 452 fatalities among children under the age of 5; of these, 34 percent (153) were unrestrained. Among the 218 fatalities for children 5 to 7 years old, 40 percent (87) were unrestrained.

For children 8 to 12 years old there were 340 fatalities, of which 52 percent (176) were unrestrained. The 13- to 15-year-old age group had the highest percentage of unrestrained occupants, at 65 percent. Of the 527 fatalities in this age group, 342 weren't wearing their seat belts.

Charts 3 and 4 illustrate the toll that motor vehicle crashes take on our youth.

Chart 3 Occupant Fatalities in 2006

By Age, in Passenger Vehicles

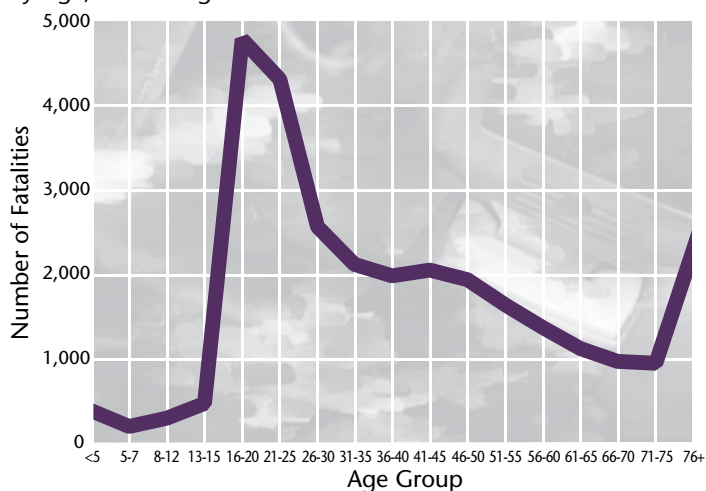
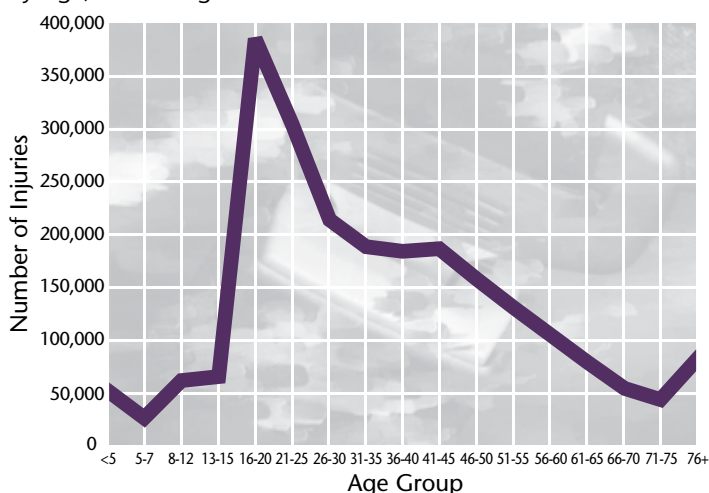


Chart 4 Occupant Injuries in 2006

By Age, in Passenger Vehicles



Seat Belt Use Makes a Difference

Research conducted by NHTSA on occupant protection use from 1997 to 2006 shows that in vehicles where adult drivers wears seat belts, children are more likely to be restrained as well. Research about fatally injured children from birth to 15 reveals the following:

- When drivers didn't wear their seat belts, 63 percent of children up to age 4 were also unrestrained. But when a driver was wearing a seat belt, 75 percent of the children were properly restrained.
- Among fatally injured children 5 to 7 years old, 77 percent were unrestrained when the driver was unrestrained. But when the driver was wearing a seat belt, far fewer children (34 percent) 5 to 7 were unrestrained.
- Among fatally injured children 8 to 12 years old, 85 percent were unrestrained when the driver was unrestrained. When the driver was wearing a seat belt far fewer children (39 percent) 8 to 12 were unrestrained.
- Among fatally injured children 13 to 15 years old, 90 percent were unrestrained when the driver was unrestrained. Conversely, when the driver was wearing a seat belt far fewer children (48 percent) 13 to 15 were unrestrained.

Exhibit 1 illustrates the relationship between driver and child restraint use in crashes in which a child was fatally injured.

Exhibit 1 Driver and Child Restraint Use in Fatal Crashes Involving Children From Birth to 15, 1997-2006

Percentage of Child Passengers Unrestrained, by Age Group				
	<5	5 to 7	8 to 12	13 to 15
Driver Unrestrained	63	77	85	90
Driver Restrained	25	34	39	48

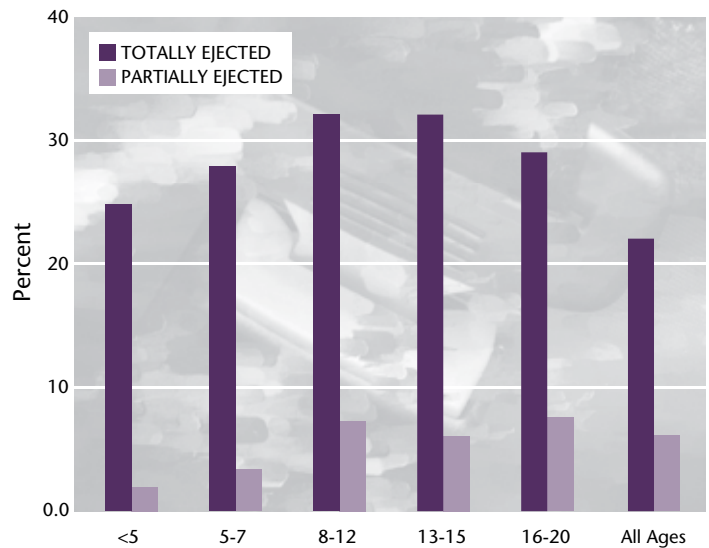
This strong association between parental and child restraint use speaks to the importance of maintaining programs and outreach for children, youth, and parents to encourage the use of occupant restraints. NHTSA's 2007 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (MVOSS) further illustrates this need. In the 2007 MVOSS, researchers asked people their level of agreement with the statement, "I have a habit of wearing a seat belt because my parents insisted I wear them when I was a child." Among people 16 to 24, 80 percent either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement.

Restraints for All Age Groups Save Lives

Most of the people who die in motor vehicle crashes are vehicle occupants; less than one-fourth of fatalities caused by crashes involve pedestrians, pedalcyclists, and motorcyclists. Seat belts and child safety seats have been designed to protect drivers and passengers from death and injury during a crash. But these restraints cannot save lives if they are not used. *See Appendix B—Passenger Vehicle Occupants Killed in Motor Vehicle Crashes, by State and Restraint Use, 2006.*

- In 2006, seat belts saved an estimated 15,383 lives among passenger vehicle occupants over 4 years old.
- In 2006, an estimated 425 lives were saved by child restraint use for children under age 5. Of these 425 lives saved, 392 were associated with the use of child safety seats and 32 with the use of seat belts.
- Over the period from 1975 to 2006, among children 4 and younger an estimated 8,321 lives were saved by child safety seats or seat belts.
- Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. In 2006, 76 percent of people in fatal crashes who were completely ejected from a passenger vehicle were killed. Seat belts are effective in preventing total ejections: only 1 percent of people wearing seat belts were totally ejected from passenger vehicles, compared with 31 percent of unbelted people.
- In fatal crashes in 2006, children 8 to 15 years old were the most likely to be totally ejected (32 percent) compared to those of all ages (22 percent). *See Chart 5.*

Chart 5 Occupant Fatalities in 2006
By Age and Ejection Status, in Passenger Vehicles



Use of Correct Restraint Types

Young children who are either placed in the wrong type of child restraint systems (CRS) or moved prematurely into seat belts meant for larger children and adults continues to be a serious problem.

To increase correct restraint use, NHTSA required a new system to help make child safety seat installation easier. This new system, called LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), is required on most child safety seats and vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002.

NHTSA recommends that all infants should ride in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats as long as possible up to the height and weight limit of the particular seat. By supporting the entire posterior torso, neck, head and pelvis, a rear-facing car seat distributes crash forces over the entire body rather than focusing them only at the belt contact points.

When children outgrow these rear-facing child safety seats (at a minimum 1 year old and 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper limit of the particular seat (usually at age 4 and 40 pounds).

- Despite these recommendations, in 2007, NHTSA found that about one-fifth of all infants less than 1 year old were not riding

in rear-facing child safety seats, and 24 percent of children less than 20 pounds were not in rear-facing child safety seats.⁸

- NHTSA found that most of the “premature graduation” for these children were to front-facing child safety seats, before the children were ready for them.

In a study conducted for NHTSA in 2004, misuse of child restraints systems – misuse that can be expected to raise the risk of injury – was approximately 73 percent. The most common problems were loose harness straps securing the child to the seat and loose attachment of the child safety seat to the vehicle.⁹

The reason young children should ride in the rear seat is that children in the front seat of cars with air bags can be killed or seriously injured if that air bag deploys. NHTSA also recommends that children 12 and younger sit in the rear seat away from the force of a deploying air bag. If the vehicle has side-impact air bags, NHTSA recommends that children be properly restrained and in a proper seating position at all times. To minimize injury risks, children should not lean or rest against side-impact air bags that are the chest-only or head/chest combination types.

Booster Seat Use Saves Lives and Reduces the Risk of Injury

The appropriate restraint system for children 4 to 7 years old is either a front-facing safety seat or a booster seat, depending in the child’s height and weight. Booster seat use substantially reduces the risk of injury for children; however, most children in this age group are currently (and very often incorrectly) restrained only by seat belts designed for adults; thus, the seat belts don’t fit the children properly.

A 2003 study conducted by the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia found that the use of belt-positioning booster seats lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent compared with the use of vehicle seat belts. The study also found that none of the 4- to 7-year-olds who were in belt-positioning booster seats had any injuries to the abdomen, neck, spine, or back. Yet, such injuries did occur in children who only used seat belts but who were too small for them.¹⁰

⁸ Child Restraint Use in 2007 – Use of Correct Restraint Types, DOT HS 810 895, January 2008. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁹ Misuse of Child Restraints, DOT HS 809 671, January 2004. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Persuading parents to place their children in the appropriate occupant restraint will reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured.

The 2007 National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats (NSUBS),¹¹ a nationwide survey of observed restraint use conducted by NHTSA, found that among 4- to 7-year-old children:

- Booster seat use was only 37 percent;
- Thirty-five percent of children were in adult seat belts;
- Fifteen percent of the children were completely unrestrained;
- Thirteen percent of the children were in child safety seats.

These results indicate that as many as one half of children 4 to 7 in the United States were not being properly protected (35 percent prematurely in seat belts and 15 percent unrestrained).

Children who have outgrown child safety seats, but are too small to ride safely in adult belts, should be properly restrained in booster seats until they can place their backs firmly against the vehicle seat-back cushion with their knees naturally bent over the vehicle seat cushion (usually at age 8 or unless they are 4 feet 9 inches tall). If placed in an adult seat belt prematurely, a child may suffer serious internal injuries, slip out of the seat belt, or be ejected from the vehicle during a crash.

Closing the Gaps in Occupant Restraint Laws Can Save Young Lives

Every State except New Hampshire has adult seat belt laws and all States have child restraint laws requiring drivers to restrain children in approved, age-appropriate child restraint devices or seat belts. In some States, though, these laws do not cover all occupants in all seating positions such as in the rear seat.

In a number of States, laws concerning the use of child safety seats cover children only up to age 4. In some States laws concerning the use of adult seat belts cover only front-seat occupants, leaving children in rear seats uncovered by any occupant protection law.

¹⁰ Durbin, D., Elliott, M., & Winston, F. Belt-positioning booster seats and reduction in risk of injury among children in vehicle crashes. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. (2003). Vol. 289 (21), 2835-2840.

¹¹ Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. Booster Seat Use in 2007. DOT 810 894. January 2008. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

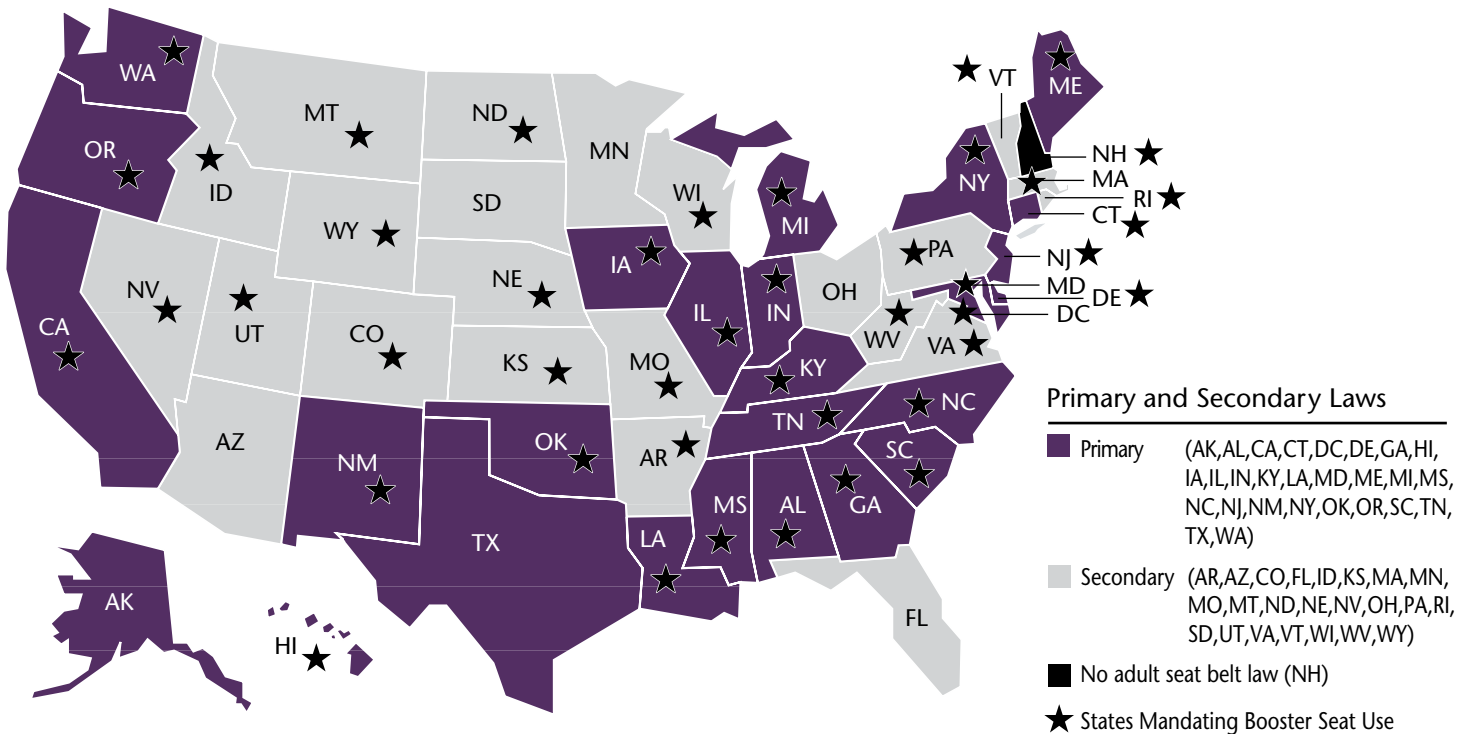
For example, in some States, a 10-year-old can ride legally in the back seat without being secured because, at this age and in this seating position, the child is not covered by either the child restraint law or the general (front-seat-only) seat belt law. There are other exemptions that further reduce the number of children who are covered by any restraint law.

Appendix C contains information on State child restraint laws.

A recent study published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine revealed that children age 4 to 7 in States with booster seat laws are 39 percent more likely to be appropriately restrained in those booster seats or child safety seats than children in States without such laws. In States with booster seat laws, children 4 and 5 years old were 23 percent more likely to be appropriately restrained while those 6 and 7 years old were twice as likely to be in child restraints, such as booster seats, than they were in States without booster seat laws. For 6- to 7-year-olds, the effect was much stronger when the law included those age 4 to 7 than when it only included those 4 and 5 years old.¹²

As this booklet is published, 43 States and the District of Columbia had enacted provisions in their child restraint laws requiring the use of a booster seat or other appropriate restraint device by children who have outgrown their forward-facing child safety seats, but who are still too small to use an adult seat belt system correctly. The following jurisdictions have enacted these lifesaving provisions: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. See Exhibit 2 for a map of States that mandate booster seats or appropriate restraint use by older children. A number of other States are considering legislation that would require similar upgrades for booster-seat-age child passengers.

Exhibit 2 States With Primary and Secondary Seat Belt Laws and Booster Seat Requirements



¹² Winston, F.K., Kallan, M.K., Elliot, M.R., et al. Effect of booster seat laws on appropriate restraint use by children 4 to 7 years old involved in crashes. Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. March 2007; Vol. 161.

Primary Enforcement Laws Help Protect Children of All Ages

Seat belt laws have played an integral role in increasing belt use, contributing to an increase from 14 percent¹³ in 1983 to 82 percent in 2007. The extent of this effect has been in part related to the type of enforcement allowed by law (primary versus secondary). Although child restraint laws are “primary” laws (laws that allow law enforcement officers to stop vehicles and issue citations for unrestrained drivers or passengers), the seat belt laws in 23 States are “secondary” enforcement laws (*see Exhibit 2*). This means that police officers cannot stop drivers for the sole purpose of enforcing the use of occupant restraints. Rather, police officers can write tickets for not using occupant restraints only if they stop vehicles for other driving infractions.

In a national evaluation of seat belt use in 2007, seat belt use in primary law States was 87 percent, 14 percentage points higher than in States with secondary laws (73 percent).¹⁴

Earlier studies have also documented that primary enforcement seat belt laws are more effective in increasing seat belt use. For instance, in the evaluation of the May 2005 *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization the median use rate for secondary law locations was 9 percentage points lower compared to primary law locations (77 percent versus 86 percent).¹⁵

As previously mentioned, studies have shown that drivers who use seat belts are more likely to buckle up the children they transport. For this reason, it is hypothesized that primary laws may also indirectly increase child passenger restraint use.¹⁶

Primary laws permit a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle and issue a citation for a seat belt violation, even if this is the only violation the officer notices. A secondary law allows officers to issue seat belt citations to motorists only after they stop the drivers for other violations.

In 2006, seat belts saved an estimated 15,383 lives among passenger vehicle occupants over 4 years old.



¹³ This seat belt use rate was estimated from State Seat Belt Surveys.

¹⁴ Seat Belt Use in 2007-Overall Results, DOT HS 810 841, September 2007. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

¹⁵ Evaluation of the May 2005 Click It or Ticket Mobilization to Increase Seat Belt Use. DOT HS 810 778, May 2007. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

¹⁶ Durbin, D., Smith, R., Kallan, M., Elliott, M., & Winston, F. Seat belt use among 13-15-year-olds in primary and secondary enforcement law states. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. (2006). Vol. 39, 524-529.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for the age group 4 through 15.¹⁷ However, fatality rates did decline for children in 2006, by 3.6 percent for children from birth to 3 years old, and 3.3 percent for 4- to 7-year-olds. Overall fatalities for children 8 to 15 years old also declined, by 11 percent.

Facts About Restraint Use

In 2006, the use of child restraints saved the lives of an estimated 425 children under the age of 5.

During 2006, a total of 1,537 children from birth to age 15 were killed in passenger vehicle crashes. About 50 percent of child fatalities were unrestrained. The breakdown by age group is:

- 34 percent of children from birth to 4 were unrestrained;
- 40 percent of children 5 to 7 were unrestrained;
- 52 percent of children 8 to 12 were unrestrained; and
- 65 percent of children 13 to 15 were unrestrained.

At 100 percent child safety seat use for children under 5 years old, an estimated 518 lives could have been saved – that’s an additional 98 than were already saved.

From 1975 through 2005, an estimated 8,325 lives of children from birth to age 4 were saved by the use of occupant restraints including child safety seats and seat belts.

Chart 6 shows data on the use and nonuse of occupant restraints among those killed in passenger vehicle crashes in 2006. In most age groups except the youngest (4 and under) and the oldest (65 and older) the majority of occupants who were killed were not restrained. Unfortunately, being properly restrained cannot prevent all passengers from being fatally injured, especially in some kinds of high-impact crashes. However, a certain and higher percentage of occupants in all age groups would not have been killed had they been properly restrained.

As children get older, they are less likely to be properly restrained (when compared to the <5 age group). This decrease illustrates the critical need for public information and education about the importance of restraint use, along with the need for ongoing enforcement of existing laws.

Chart 6 Occupant Fatalities in 2006
By Age and Restraint Use, in Passenger Vehicles

Age Group	Percent Restrained	Percent Unrestrained
<5	66	34
5-7	60	40
8-12	48	52
13-15	35	65
16-20	37	63
21-24	35	65
25-44	37	63
45-64	50	50
65-74	64	36
75+	68	32
Total	45	55

When viewing the chart, keep in mind that even with the use of occupant restraints:

- Some crashes are so severe that occupants do not survive even when properly protected by child safety seats, booster seats, or seat belts.
- There are instances in which the effectiveness of a child restraint or seat belt is compromised by incorrect use, such as improper installation or use of a child safety seat, or placing a child in a seat belt designed for an adult.
- Occupants in the youngest age group, 4 and under, and the oldest age group, 65 and older, are more fragile. Therefore, they are more vulnerable to death or serious injury during a crash.
- In many States, there is no law requiring the use of appropriate occupant restraints (booster seats) for children who have outgrown their child safety seats but who do not yet fit properly in adult belt systems. As a result, many young children are inappropriately placed in adult belts.

Facts About Motor-Vehicle-Related Deaths and Injuries

- Based on the 10-year period between 1997 and 2006, an average of 1,849 children from birth to age 15 died and approximately 273,000 were injured in passenger vehicle crashes each year.
- Every day in the United States, an average of 5 children younger than 15 were killed and 568 were injured in motor vehicle crashes.
- In 2006, a total of 1,537 children 15 and younger were killed and 203,819 were injured in passenger vehicle crashes. Approximately 9 percent of the injured occupants had incapacitating injuries.


- In 2006, there were:
 - 452 crash fatalities and 53,469 injured among children 4 and under;
 - 218 crash fatalities and 31,224 occupants injured among children 5 to 7;
 - 340 crash fatalities and 58,067 occupants injured among children 8 to 12; and
 - 527 crash fatalities and 61,059 occupants injured among children 13 to 15.

Chart 7 further highlights facts about injury severity.

Chart 7 Occupants Injured in Passenger Vehicles in 2006

By Age and Injury Severity

Age Group	Injury Severity									
	Incapacitating		Non-Incapacitating		Possible Injury		Injured, Severity Unknown		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<5	3,942	7	11,256	21	36,911	69	1,360	3	53,469	100
5-7	3,381	11	7,662	25	18,984	61	1,197	4	31,224	100
8-12	4,875	8	14,156	24	38,143	66	894	2	58,067	100
13-15	6,900	11	15,185	25	37,294	61	1,684	3	61,059	100
16-20	43,412	11	118,340	31	212,574	55	10,841	3	385,167	100
21-24	28,305	11	67,857	27	149,312	59	5,497	2	250,971	100
25-44	75,427	9	186,326	23	514,833	64	21,727	3	798,314	100
45-64	47,461	9	117,491	23	322,996	64	13,499	3	501,446	100
65-74	10,327	10	24,139	24	66,419	65	1,612	2	102,498	100
75+	9,241	11	25,494	29	49,212	57	2,921	3	86,868	100
TOTAL	233,271	10	587,901	25	1,446,679	62	61,232	3	2,329,083	100



Sixty-three percent of the 4,842 young people 16 to 20 killed when riding in passenger vehicles in 2006 were not wearing seat belts.

In 2006, young drivers between 16 and 20 made up 6 percent (12.7 million) of the 202.8 million licensed drivers in the United States. The number of teenage drivers is increasing, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the driving population. Each year at least 2 million people—mostly teenagers—begin driving. At the same time, motor vehicle crashes kill more young adults than any other cause.

Teen drivers die at four times the rate of adult drivers age 25 to 69. Sixteen-year-old drivers have crash rates that are three times greater than 17-year-old drivers, five times greater than 18-year-old drivers, and twice the rate of 85-year-old drivers. The factors contributing to these higher crash rates include a lack of driving experience and inadequate driving skills; excessive driving during night-time; risk-taking behavior; poor driving judgment and decision making skills; drinking and driving; and distractions from teenage passengers.¹⁸

In addition to the disproportionate harm teen drivers experience from motor vehicle crashes, consider the following:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young adults 16 to 20.
- More young adults 16 to 20 are killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes than children 15 and under. In 2006, of the 6,379 young people from birth to age 20 killed, 77 percent were 16-20 years old. Of the 588,986 children up to age 20 who were injured in crashes, 66 percent were 16 to 20 years old. *See Chart 8.*
- Driver fatalities for 16- to 20-year-olds decreased by less than one percent between 1996 and 2006, dropping from 3,029 in 1996 to 3,009 in 2006.
- During 2006, a young person died in a traffic crash an average of once every hour on weekends (6 p.m. Friday to 5:59 a.m. Monday) and nearly once every 2 hours during the week.
- In 2006, a total of 1,636 16- to 20-year-olds died when they were totally or partially ejected from a passenger vehicle.

¹⁸ Traffic Safety Facts (2007). Graduated Drivers Licensing System. DOT HS 810 727. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- ▶ Although young drivers make up about 6 percent of the total licensed driving population, 12 percent (7,293) of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were young drivers 16 to 20 years old, and 15 percent (506,000) of all drivers involved in police-reported injury crashes were young drivers.
- ▶ In 2006, 16- to 20-year-old occupants had the highest fatality and injury rates per 100,000 licensed drivers. In fact, the fatality rate for young occupants (38.54) was more than two times the rate for drivers of all ages (15.22). *See Chart 9.*

Chart 8 Percentage of All Occupants From Birth to Age 20 Killed or Injured in 2006
By Age, in Passenger Vehicles

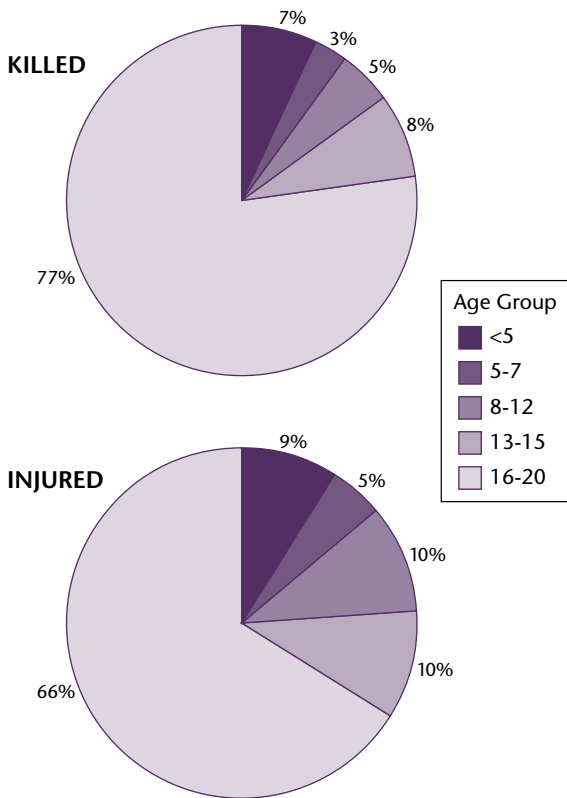
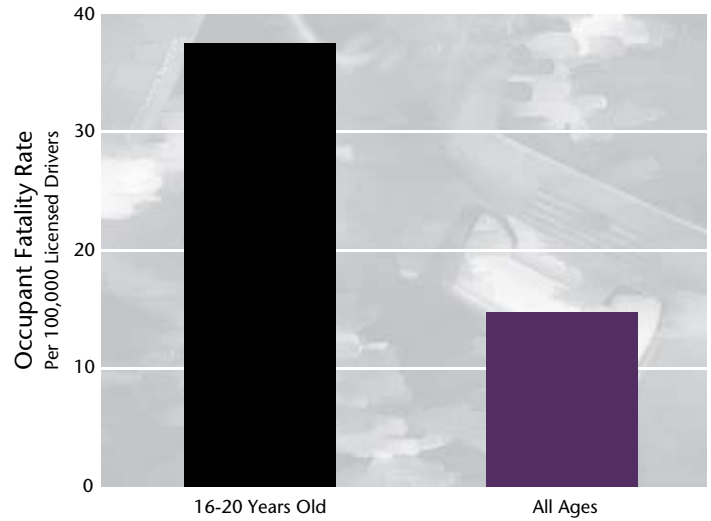


Chart 9 Occupant Fatality Rates Per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in 2006
By Age, in Passenger Vehicles



- ▶ In 2006, 43,412 16-to 20-year-olds experienced incapacitating injuries. This number represents about 18 percent of all (233,271) incapacitating injuries.
- ▶ In 2006, 118,340 young adults experienced non-incapacitating injuries. This number represents about 20 percent of all (587,901) people with non-incapacitating injuries.
- ▶ Drivers 16 to 20 have the highest involvement rates for fatalities and injuries (per 100,000 licensed drivers) in passenger vehicle crashes. This is especially true for male drivers in this age group. *See Charts 10 and 11.*

Chart 10 Driver Fatality Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in 2006

By Age and Gender, in Passenger Vehicles

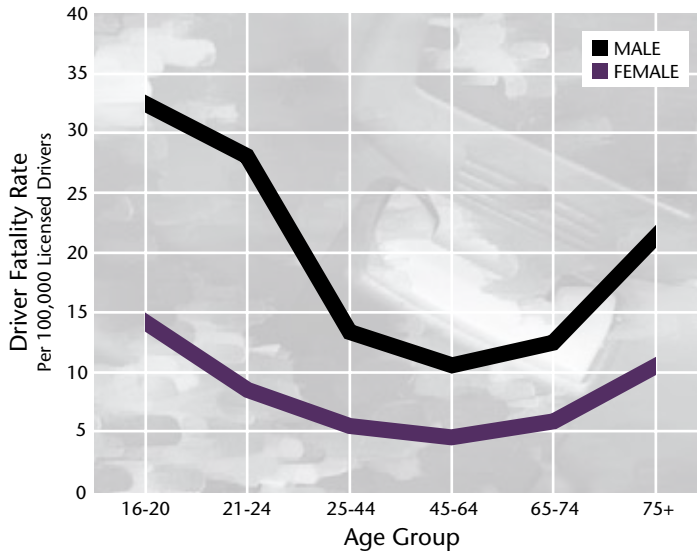
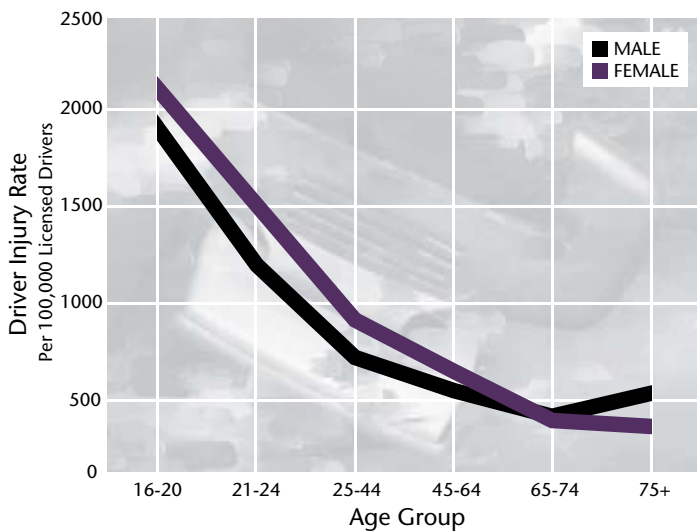


Chart 11 Driver Injury Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in 2006

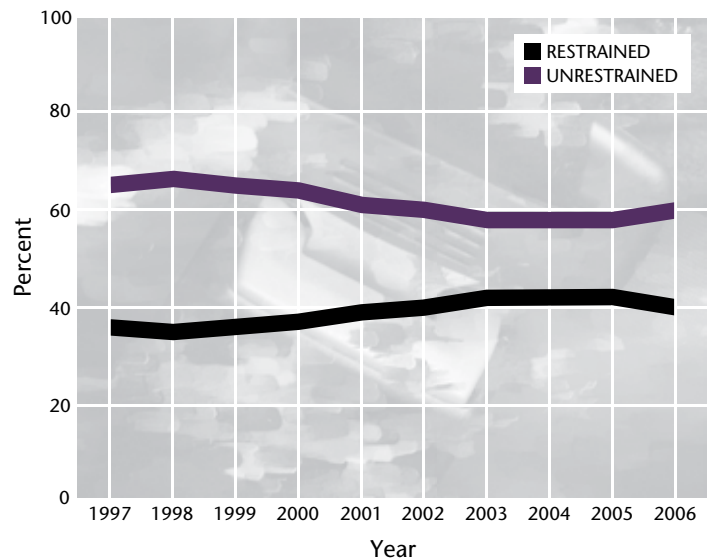
By Age and Gender, in Passenger Vehicles



Young Adults and Seat Belt Use

- In 2006, 63 percent of the 4,842 passenger vehicle occupants age 16 to 20 who were killed were not wearing seat belts.
- Despite a small improvement in seat belt use for 16- to 20-year-old drivers, the percentage of fatalities in which the driver was not wearing a seat belt has been about 60 percent or higher for the past 10 years. *See Chart 12.*
- The unrestrained fatality rate (per 100,000 population), however, has improved for teen passenger vehicle occupants, decreasing from 792 in 2000 to 6.64 in 2006.
- Drivers are less likely to use restraints when they have been drinking. In 2006, 65 percent of the young drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking were unrestrained. Of the young drivers who had been drinking and were killed in crashes, 77 percent were unrestrained.¹⁹

Chart 12 Percentage of Driver Fatalities Among 16- to 20-Year-Olds, in Which Driver Was Unrestrained, 1997-2006



¹⁹ Traffic Safety Facts (2007). Young Drivers. DOT HS 810 817. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The following information was reported in NHTSA's 2007 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (MVOSS). This telephone survey was administered to a randomly selected national sample of 6,000 people 16 and older (with younger ages over-sampled).

Seat Belt Use Behavior

- Eighty-two percent of 16- to 20-year-olds reported they wear their seat belts all the time. About 11 percent reported that they wear their seat belts most of the time.
- Most drivers (89 percent) reported that when they were riding as passengers, they usually rode in the front seat. However, only 58 percent said they always wore seat belts when riding in the back seat, while 11 percent said they never wore their seat belts when riding in the back seat.

Attitudes Toward Seat Belt Use

- Among people 16 to 24, 80 percent either strongly agreed with the statement, "I have a habit of wearing a seat belt because my parents insisted I wear them when I was a child."
- The number dropped to 59 percent among people 25 to 34 and to 33 percent among people 35 to 44, reflecting the lower usage rates during their childhood years.
- The vast majority of 16- to 20-year-olds (94 percent) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement, "If I were in an accident, I would want to have my seat belt on." However, about one-half (44 percent) of 16- to 20-year-olds also agreed with the statement, "Seat belts are just as likely to harm you as help you."

- Twenty-seven percent of 16- to 20-year-olds agreed with the statement, "I would feel self-conscious around my friends if I wore a seat belt and they did not."
- Avoiding serious injury was the most frequent reason given for wearing a seat belt.
- The most common reasons given by drivers in the 16-to-20 age group for not wearing seat belts were that they forgot (68 percent) or were driving a short distance (61 percent).
- Twenty-eight percent of 16- to 20-year-olds agreed with the statement that a crash close to home was usually not as serious, and 26 percent agreed that putting on a seat belt makes them worry more about being in a crash.

Opinions About Seat Belt Use Laws

- When asked how they felt about laws that require drivers and front-seat passengers to wear seat belts, 80 percent of 16- to 20-year-olds said they favor them.
- Many (68 percent) 16- to 20-year-olds answered "yes" when asked whether police should be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation when no other traffic laws are being broken.
- Many (70 percent) 16- to 20-year-olds favored fines for drivers who do not wear seat belts.
- About 41 percent of 16- to 20-year-olds favored points against a license as a penalty for seat belt violations.

The most common reasons given by drivers in the 16- to-20 age group for not wearing safety belts were that they forgot or were driving a short distance.

Appendix A

People Killed in Passenger Vehicle Crashes, by State and Age Group, 2006

Appendix B

People Killed in Passenger Vehicle Crashes, by State and Restraint Use, 2006

Appendix C

State Child Restraint Laws

Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities, by State and Age Group, 2006

AGE	<5	5 to 7	8 to 12	13-15	16-20	21-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	75+	TOTAL
Alabama	14	8	13	23	153	110	329	215	48	61	974
Alaska	1	2	1	2	5	3	13	15	2	2	46
Arizona	16	12	13	22	141	74	271	187	42	73	851
Arkansas	15	5	5	7	90	55	167	108	27	31	510
California	51	19	39	37	460	362	837	594	141	216	2,756
Colorado	6	2	7	9	66	36	120	79	23	20	368
Connecticut	2	0	0	2	41	28	59	39	9	22	202
Delaware	3	0	0	1	16	7	34	20	9	14	104
Dist of Columbia	0	0	0	0	5	2	7	3	0	1	18
Florida	20	8	22	32	301	271	594	411	149	221	2,029
Georgia	21	10	10	13	183	164	409	290	100	103	1,303
Hawaii	0	2	1	2	16	6	40	19	4	4	94
Idaho	2	1	3	5	35	16	58	55	11	25	211
Illinois	11	5	10	17	164	108	280	194	44	81	914
Indiana	13	5	7	8	118	78	204	134	38	55	660
Iowa	7	1	1	6	52	31	66	77	28	60	329
Kansas	4	1	1	10	53	37	96	72	25	51	350
Kentucky	10	5	6	8	97	74	239	144	56	64	703
Louisiana	10	8	9	9	109	88	282	165	27	39	746
Maine	1	1	0	5	28	15	39	20	10	22	141
Maryland	3	2	2	3	74	64	128	98	34	44	452
Massachusetts	0	0	2	3	53	45	68	72	19	33	295
Michigan	9	6	8	13	98	99	221	170	50	95	769
Minnesota	3	0	1	8	66	35	96	80	27	44	360
Mississippi	15	6	6	18	101	84	280	173	37	46	766
Missouri	8	6	10	21	172	103	248	180	55	74	877
Montana	3	1	1	3	28	28	62	50	14	23	213
Nebraska	8	4	1	14	43	24	50	40	22	24	230
Nevada	7	3	10	3	34	37	103	70	13	28	308
New Hampshire	0	0	1	0	14	12	26	24	4	17	98
New Jersey	5	1	1	7	58	48	103	74	25	50	372
New Mexico	9	3	12	5	44	48	110	72	19	19	341
New York	9	3	6	9	153	116	229	157	58	108	848
North Carolina	20	7	17	23	167	133	338	277	89	112	1,183
North Dakota	2	0	2	5	18	6	24	20	8	6	91
Ohio	9	10	9	10	142	95	249	217	71	100	912
Oklahoma	16	8	7	12	90	66	165	143	40	52	599
Oregon	6	2	9	3	56	46	96	84	26	22	350
Pennsylvania	11	5	9	12	167	133	334	205	77	136	1,089
Rhode Island	0	0	1	1	8	12	8	10	2	5	47
South Carolina	7	2	9	10	108	80	269	161	57	56	759
South Dakota	2	0	2	3	24	16	39	37	13	13	149
Tennessee	16	5	14	16	161	103	303	195	86	84	983
Texas	43	33	40	61	393	337	816	524	139	163	2,549
Utah	4	2	1	4	42	27	58	44	16	16	214
Vermont	0	0	0	2	13	6	18	18	6	9	72
Virginia	12	2	7	14	132	106	200	168	46	74	761
Washington	7	4	0	8	88	65	122	108	23	27	452
West Virginia	4	4	0	4	45	30	103	62	24	25	301
Wisconsin	5	4	1	8	97	79	159	109	32	49	543
Wyoming	2	0	3	6	20	23	56	31	5	10	156
TOTAL	452	218	340	527	4,842	3,671	9,225	6,514	1,930	2,729	30,448

Note: Passengers of unknown age are not included in this table.

APPENDIX B

Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities, by State and Restraint Use, 2006

State	Restraint Use						Total	
	Restrained		None Used		Unknown			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	370	38.0	568	58.3	36	3.7	974	100
Alaska	28	60.9	17	37.0	1	2.2	46	100
Arizona	273	31.8	465	54.2	120	14.2	858	100
Arkansas	134	26.3	303	59.4	73	14.3	510	100
California	1,557	56.4	917	33.2	286	10.4	2,760	100
Colorado	139	37.8	226	61.4	3	0.8	368	100
Connecticut	90	44.3	71	35.0	42	20.7	203	100
Delaware	51	49.0	51	49.0	2	1.9	104	100
Dist of Columbia	10	55.6	6	33.3	2	11.1	18	100
Florida	779	38.3	1,156	56.9	97	4.8	2,032	100
Georgia	507	38.9	648	49.7	150	11.5	1,305	100
Hawaii	38	40.4	39	41.5	17	18.1	94	100
Idaho	85	40.3	116	55.0	10	4.7	211	100
Illinois	378	41.4	436	47.7	100	10.9	914	100
Indiana	261	39.5	309	46.7	91	13.8	661	100
Iowa	161	48.9	129	39.2	39	11.9	329	100
Kansas	138	39.4	200	57.1	12	3.4	350	100
Kentucky	229	32.6	474	67.4	0	0.2	703	100
Louisiana	263	35.2	437	58.5	47	6.3	747	100
Maine	48	34.0	65	46.1	28	19.9	141	100
Maryland	254	55.9	176	38.8	24	5.3	454	100
Massachusetts	79	26.4	158	52.8	62	20.7	299	100
Michigan	424	55.1	251	32.6	94	12.2	769	100
Minnesota	146	40.6	184	51.1	30	8.3	360	100
Mississippi	214	27.9	552	72.1	0	0.2	766	100
Missouri	238	27.1	563	64.2	76	8.7	877	100
Montana	65	30.5	143	67.1	5	2.3	213	100
Nebraska	77	33.5	136	59.1	17	7.4	230	100
Nevada	133	42.6	147	47.1	32	10.3	312	100
New Hampshire	22	22.4	71	72.4	5	5.1	98	100
New Jersey	148	39.6	205	54.8	21	5.6	374	100
New Mexico	154	44.9	171	49.9	18	5.2	343	100
New York	417	49.2	371	43.8	60	7.1	848	100
North Carolina	579	48.9	534	45.1	72	6.1	1,185	100
North Dakota	30	33.0	60	65.9	1	1.1	91	100
Ohio	385	42.2	502	55.0	26	2.8	913	100
Oklahoma	242	40.4	351	58.6	6	1.0	599	100
Oregon	204	58.3	106	30.3	40	11.4	350	100
Pennsylvania	345	31.6	599	54.9	148	13.6	1,092	100
Rhode Island	12	25.5	35	74.5	0	0.0	47	100
South Carolina	259	33.8	455	59.3	53	6.9	767	100
South Dakota	26	17.4	112	75.2	11	7.4	149	100
Tennessee	371	37.7	551	55.9	63	6.4	985	100
Texas	1,254	48.9	1,136	44.3	172	6.7	2,562	100
Utah	101	46.5	86	39.6	30	13.8	217	100
Vermont	34	46.6	35	47.9	4	5.5	73	100
Virginia	274	36.0	452	59.3	36	4.7	762	100
Washington	242	53.3	197	43.4	15	3.3	454	100
West Virginia	93	30.5	159	52.1	53	17.4	305	100
Wisconsin	204	37.6	296	54.5	43	7.9	543	100
Wyoming	53	34.0	96	61.5	7	4.5	156	100
TOTAL	12,618	41.3	15,523	50.9	2,380	7.8	30,521	100

State Child Restraint Laws¹

State	Rear Seat Belts Required ²	Child Safety Seat Required	May Use Child Safety Seat or Seat Belt	Max Fine ⁴	Points	Major Exemptions to Child Passenger Laws ⁶	Children Allowed in Cargo Area of Pickups?
AL	<15 yrs	<6 yrs	Ages 4-15 yrs	Up to \$50	Up to 2 points	Tow trucks or buses weighing >1 ton	Yes
AK	<16 yrs	<4 yrs		\$50	2	None	No
AZ	<16 yrs	<5 yrs	Ages 5-15 yrs	\$10		All vehicle belts in use	
AR	<15 yrs	Age 6 yrs & >60 lbs	Age 6 yrs or >60 lbs	\$100		None	No
CA	<16 yrs	<6 yrs or <60 lbs	Ages 6-17 yrs	Up to \$295 per child	1	None	
CO	<16 yrs	<1 yr & <20 lbs rear facing; 1-4 yrs & 20-40 lbs forward facing; ages 4 & 5 & <55" tall booster seat	Ages 6-16 or 55" tall. Booster seat or seat belt required.	\$59		Transported in motor vehicle as a result of a medical emergency. Booster seat exempted if only lap belt available	Yes, if sitting & tailgate closed
CT	<16 yrs	<6 yrs and <60 lbs	60 lbs & 7-<16 years	\$199	2	None	No
DE	<16 yrs ³	<7 yrs	60 lbs & over	\$20	2	No major exemptions	No
DC	<16 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 8-16 yrs	\$150	3	All vehicle belts in use ⁷	No
FL	<18 yrs	<4 yrs	Ages 4-5 yrs	\$60	3	A truck of net weight of more than 5,000 lbs	No
GA	<17 yrs	<5 yrs	A 40 lb child may be secured by lap belt if vehicle not equipped with lap and shoulder belt, or if all belts being used to properly restrain other children	\$50	1	May use belt if age 6 and over	No
HI	<18 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 8-17 yrs	\$100		All vehicle belts in use ⁷	Yes >13 yrs old if all seats are occupied
ID	>6 yrs	<7	7 yrs and older	\$69		All vehicle belts in use ^{7,8}	Yes
IL	<16 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 4-15 yrs, all seating positions	\$50		None	Yes
IN	<12 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 8-15 yrs, all seating positions & vehicles	\$25	4	Vehicle registered out of State	<16 yrs not allowed
IA	<11 yrs	<6 yrs	Ages 6-10 yrs	\$25		Motorcycles, school buses, emergency vehicles & medical reasons per physician	Yes
KS	<14 yrs	<8 yrs unless 4'9" or 80 lbs ²¹	Age 8 or 80 lbs or 4'9"	\$60		All vehicle belts in use	If >13 yrs
KY	<16 yrs	40" & Under		\$50		None	Yes
LA	<13 yrs	<6 yrs or 60 lbs	Ages 3-13 yrs	\$100		Ambulances, school buses, church buses, commercial vehicles	If >11 yrs
ME	<12 yrs, <100 lbs	<8 yrs and between 40-80 lbs	<12 & 100 lbs	\$60		All vehicle belts in use ⁹	<16 yrs not allowed
MD	<16 yrs	<6 yrs	>40 lbs	\$25		All vehicle belts in use, vehicle registered out of State exempt	No
MA	<13 yrs	<5 yrs and <40 lbs	5-12 yrs	\$25		Child physically unable to use conventional child restraint or one designed for special needs, certified in writing by a physician	If >16 yrs

State Child Restraint Laws¹ (continued)

State	Rear Seat belts Required ²	Child Safety Seat Required	May Use Child Safety Seat or Seat belt	Max Fine ⁴	Points	Major Exemptions to Child Passenger Laws ⁶	Children Allowed in Cargo Area of Pickups?
MI	<16 yrs	Age 4 yrs or older, but <8yrs and less than 4'9" tall ³⁰		\$1529		All vehicle belts in use ⁷	No ^{12,13}
MN	<11 yrs	<4 yrs		\$50		Child being nursed	No ^{12,14}
MS	<8 yrs	<4 yrs		\$25		See footnote ²⁰	Yes
MO	<16 yrs	<6 yrs and 60 lbs	Ages 6 and up	\$25		School buses (if child is 4 years old or older), and vehicles for hire	No
MT	<19 yrs	<6 yrs	Age 6 and <60 lbs	Up to \$100		Physical or medical reasons per physician	No ^{13,14}
NE	<16 yrs	<6 yrs		\$25		Medical reasons per physician, emergency vehicles, taxi cabs	No
NV	<18 yrs	<6 yrs & 60 lbs	Ages 6-17 yrs	\$500		Public transportation	No
NH	<18 yrs	<6 yrs and 55"		\$25		None	No
NJ	<18 yrs	<8 yrs or 80 lbs		\$25		Children <8 yrs but more than 80 lbs may be placed in seat belt; All vehicle belts in use ⁷	No
NM	<16 yrs	<1-4 yrs ¹⁸	Ages 5-12 yrs	\$25		All vehicle belts in use ⁹	No, if <18
NY	<16 yrs	<7 yrs		\$100	3	Booster seat exempted for children 4-6 yrs if only lap belt available	Yes ¹⁵
NC	<16 yrs	<8 yrs and 80 lbs	8 yrs or 80 lbs or 40 lbs if no lap & shoulder belt available	\$25	Driver license =2 Insurance = 0	Child's personal needs being attended to, or all available belts being used	If >11 yrs ^{12,14,16} If the vehicle is being operated in a county that has no incorporated area with a population in excess of 3,500
ND	<18 yrs (front and back seat)	<7 yrs	Ages 7-17 yrs	\$25	1	Child restraint and seat belts not required in vehicles that were not equipped with seat belts when manufactured; transported in an emergency situation	Yes
OH	<4 yrs or <60 lbs	<4 yrs or <60 lbs		\$100		Vehicle registered out of State	If traveling <25 mph ¹²
OK	No	<6 yrs	6-12 yrs	\$50 plus court cost		Children who weigh >40 lbs in the back seat of a vehicle with only a seat belt if all lap/shoulder belts are in use by another	Yes
OR	<16 yrs ²⁰	<4'9" tall, unless 8 yrs old	Age 6 yrs & >60 lbs	\$97		None unless all belted positions taken or <18 yrs and in scope of employment or licensed hunter between hunting camps	Yes
PA	8-18 yrs	<8 yrs		Up to \$150		If a child is greater than 80 lbs but less than 8 yrs old, a parent may use a seat belt. If a child is less than 40 lbs, but over 4, a parent can use a car seat with a harness until the child reaches 40 lbs. If the vehicle has lap belts only, a parent may use the lap belt. Medical exemptions also exist	No

State Child Restraint Laws¹ (continued)

State	Rear Seat Belts Required ²	Child Safety Seat Required	May Use Child Safety Seat or Seat Belt	Max Fine ⁴	Points	Major Exemptions to Child Passenger Laws ⁶	Children Allowed in Cargo Area of Pickups?
RI	<17 yrs	<7 yrs & 54" & 80 lbs in Federally Approved Child Restraint System in back seat	Age 7 yrs or older	\$75		All vehicle belts in use	No, up to age ¹⁶
SC	<17 yrs	<6 yrs or <80 lbs	>1 but <6 years	\$150		If all vehicle belts in use	Yes, if on a hayride, traveling less than 35 mph, or on a farm, or in a parade or an adult is with them
SD	<18 yrs	<5 yrs & <40 lbs	Ages 5-17, & > 40 lbs	\$20		None	Yes
TN	<18 yrs	<4 yrs ²⁵		\$505		All vehicle belts in use ^{8,10}	If >5 yrs or moving <20 mph
TX	<17 yrs	<4 yrs or <36"	Ages 4-16 yrs ¹⁷	\$200		All vehicle belts in use	<17 yrs not allowed
UT	<19 yrs	<8 yrs, unless 57" tall	Ages 8-18 yrs	\$45		All vehicle belts in use, physical or medical reasons per physician	Yes, If all seats are in use in the vehicle cab
VT	<16 yrs	> 1 yr but <8 and > 20 lbs	<16 yrs	\$25		All vehicle belts in use ¹¹	Yes
VA	<16 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 6-15	\$50	3	No major exemptions	Yes
WA	<16 yrs	<8 unless 4'9" ²⁷	Ages 6-16 yrs ²³	\$124		No major exemptions ²⁴	Yes
WV	<16 yrs	<8 yrs	Ages 3-8 yrs	\$20		All vehicle belts in use	No
WI	<8 yrs ²⁸	<8 yrs ²⁸	Age 8 or 80 lbs or 4'9"	\$30-\$75		Children ages 4 through 8 with a physical medical condition must have written statement signed by a licensed physician that he/she cannot be restrained by a child restraint or seat belt	No ¹⁴
WY	<12 yrs	<9 yrs properly secured in CRS in back seat ²²	Ages 5-11 yrs ²⁶	\$50		Physician provides medical exemptions, rendering aid and or assistance to child by parent/guardian	Yes
AS	<5 yrs	>4 yrs	Ages <13 yrs	\$30			Yes, < 13 must be accompanied by adult
CNMI	<12 yrs	<5 yrs	Ages <13 yrs	\$250		A child who, for medical or physical reasons is unable to utilize a child passenger restraint system	Yes, < 13 must be accompanied by adult
GU	<12 yrs	<4 yrs	Ages 2-12 yrs	\$50		Yes >13 yrs	Yes, < 13 must be accompanied by adult
PR	All persons, all ages, unless in a safety seat must wear a seat belt	<5 yrs	<12 must ride in back seat	\$100		None	No

¹ This chart applies to children younger than age 19.

² Front seat restraints are required for all children younger than 16.

³ Children < 12 years old and < 66 inches may not occupy front seat if equipped with passenger-side air bag.

⁴ Maximum fine for first offense of child safety seat laws. Fines may be increased on subsequent violations and different for older children.

⁵ Or 30 days in jail.

⁶ Major exemptions are considered to be exemptions in private passenger vehicles (cars, vans, or pickups). Many States have exemptions for buses, taxis, or other public transportation, children with medical conditions, and emergency situations.

⁷ Unrestrained children must be in the rear.

⁸ Law does not apply if the child's personal or physiological needs are being met.

⁹ Only for children > 1 year old.

¹⁰ Only for ages 4 through 11.

¹¹ Only for children older than age 4.

¹² Unless properly restrained in a seat belt or child safety seat.

¹³ Unless number of children exceeds number of seat belts available.

¹⁴ Unless used in farm work or farm activity.

¹⁵ Unless there are more than five children younger than age 18 not accompanied by a person older than 18.

¹⁶ Unless supervised by an adult.

¹⁷ Booster seats are considered child safety seat systems as long as the seat is appropriate for that child (child should fit within the weight range stated on the seat).

Organizations to Contact for Additional Information About Occupant Restraints

This page lists organizations that have additional information on occupant restraint use and other occupant protection issues.

Federal Resources

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590
888-327-4236
Hearing Impaired TTY: 800-424-9153
Web site: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Transportation Safety Board

490 L'Enfant Plaza SW.
Washington, DC 20594
202-314-6000
Web site: www.nts.gov

State Resources

Governors' Highway Safety Association

750 First Street NE., Suite 720
Washington, DC 20002
202-789-0942
Fax: 202-789-0946
Web site: www.ghsa.org

Private Sector

National Safety Council

Headquarters
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
630-285-1121
Web site: www.nsc.org

AAA

1000 AAA Drive
Heathrow, FL 32746-5063
407-444-7000
Web site: www.aaafoundation.org/home

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 800
Arlington, Virginia 22201
703-247-1500
Web site: www.hwysafety.org

National SAFE KIDS Campaign

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
202-662-0600
Web site: www.safekids.org

Advocates for Highway Safety

750 First Street NE
Suite 901
Washington, DC 20002
202-408-1711
Web site: www.saferoads.org

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

South 34th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-590-1000
Web site: www.chop.edu

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