



## Traffic-related Injuries among Teenagers

### National

- Two out of five deaths among U.S. teens are the result of a motor vehicle crash.
- Compared to older drivers, teens are more likely to drink alcohol and drive and less likely to wear seat belts.
- In 2004, teenagers represented 10% of the total U.S. population, but represented 13% of all motor vehicle crash death.
- The risk of crash involvement per mile driven among drivers 16-19 years of age is 4 times higher than the risk among older drivers; the crash rate per mile driven is almost 3 times higher among 16-year-olds as it is among 18-19 year-olds.
- Sixty-two percent of teenage passenger deaths in 2004 occurred in crashes in which another teenager was driving.
- In 2004, more than half (54%) of teenager's fatalities occurred on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday and 22% between midnight and 6 am.
- Among fatal injuries of teenage drivers (16-19 years old), 28% of males and 13% of females had a high Blood Alcohol Concentration (0.08 percent or higher), even though every state has a legal minimum alcohol purchasing age of 21 in 2004.

### Oklahoma

- In Oklahoma, youths 16-20 years of age have the highest death rate from motor vehicle crashes; approximately 126 died in 2004 from motor vehicle crashes.
- Sixteen percent of the alcohol/drug related crashes were youths 16-20 years old.
- In 2004, approximately 22% of motor vehicle deaths among youths 16-20 years of age involved alcohol.
- In 2004, approximately 15% of the drivers killed in a motor vehicle crashes were 16-20 years old.

### Prevention

- Safety education programs with multiple exposures should be implemented in Oklahoma schools, particularly in elementary schools where children are most amenable to learning new behaviors and forming safety habits for life. The Injury Prevention Service developed the *Oklahoma Elementary School Injury Prevention Education: The Subject-Integrated Safety Curriculum for Teachers*, a comprehensive 25-lesson injury prevention curriculum for grades K-5, which includes lessons on bicycle safety, motor vehicle safety, water safety, burn prevention, and first aid. Evaluation of the curriculum showed a 15% increase in observed seat belt use and a 10% increase in bicycle helmet use in the program schools.
- Night curfew laws with active police enforcement have proven effective in reducing the high crash rates of teenage drivers, as well as juvenile crimes.
- Since 1996, Oklahoma has had a "zero tolerance" law which makes it illegal for persons less than 21 years of age to drive or operate a motor vehicle with a blood or breath alcohol concentration of 0.02 percent or higher. In 1997 following enactment of the zero tolerance law in Oklahoma, alcohol involvement in crashes among 15-19 year-olds dropped to 20%.
- Studies in the United States, Sweden, and Australia suggest that driver education produces no beneficial advantage in reducing collisions compared to informal training. Some studies even showed that high school driver education had a negative impact on safety by increasing the number of licensed 16 year olds.



- Graduated driver licensing systems are designed to phase in beginning drivers to full driving privileges through a three-stage process as they mature and develop their driving skills, instead of the traditional approach in which a young driver gets unrestricted driving privileges after passing a test. Graduated licensing ensures that initial driving experience is accumulated under lower - risk conditions. **Graduated driver licensing systems implemented in California, Maryland, New Zealand, and Oregon reduced the rate of crashes involving 15-17 year-old drivers**
- In 2005, the Oklahoma Legislature passed Graduated Driver Licensing legislation, which requires:
  - 1) must be 15 ½ years to apply for a driving permit to drive with a licensed driver and be enrolled in a certified driver education course or participate in parent-taught driver education, which requires a minimum of 40 hours of supervised driving;
  - 2) must be 16 years of age and hold an instruction permit for at least 6 months, including 40 hours of supervised driving (10 of which must be at night) to apply for a provisional license;
  - 3) after receiving a provisional license, cannot drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., with exceptions for driving to work, school, church or related activities, or if a licensed driver is seated next to the teenager, and cannot carry more than one passenger other than members of the custodial parent's household, unless supervised; and
  - 4) restrictions on provisional license end after 6 months (or 1 year for drivers who have not completed driver education).

For more information about Graduated Driver Licensing go to:

<http://www.dps.state.ok.us/dls/gdl.htm>