

Summer Deadliest Time for Teen Drivers

(MSC News)--- “Teen crash rates are higher than any other age group, and this data confirms that the impact of their crashes extend well beyond the teen who is behind the wheel,” said Peter Kissinger, President and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. “Since teens drive more during the summer than any other season, this insight is a timely reminder to everyone—drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists— to be mindful when sharing the roads with young drivers.”

The study analyzed data of police-reported crashes of drivers aged 15-19, from 1994-2013 and found that:

While the overall number of teen crashes are down, the majority of people killed (66%) and injured (67%) in crashes involving a teen driver are people other than the teen themselves

Nearly 50 percent of those injured were in another vehicle; 17 percent were in the teen driver’s car; and 2 percent were non-motorists (i.e., pedestrian, bicyclist)

Nearly 30 percent of those killed were in another car, 27 percent were the teen’s passenger and ten percent were non-motorists (i.e., pedestrians, bicyclist)

AAA is promoting the study findings to raise attention among parents of teen drivers and all road users during the “100 Deadliest Days” period. Based on a AAA analysis of the government’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), in 2013, an average of 220 teen drivers and passengers died in traffic crashes during each of the summer months, a 43 percent increase compared to the rest of the year.

“Keeping teen drivers safe is the shared responsibility of parents, policy makers, other motorists, and obviously the teens themselves,” said Rose White, Traffic Safety Director for AAA Nebraska and The Auto Club Group. “We should be especially vigilant over the summer because the negative consequences of not doing so affect all of us.”

AAA has been a long term advocate on behalf of teen drivers and their families and has been a leader at the state level in advocating for the implementation and improvement of both graduated drivers licensing (GDL) laws and quality driver education programs. Additional data from this study point to the drop in overall crash rates for teen drivers that can be attributed to strong GDL legislation. In the last 20 years, non-fatal injury crashes and fatal crashes of teen drivers aged 15-19 decreased by 51 percent and 56 percent respectively. In comparison, crashes resulting in non-fatal injuries and fatalities, including but not limited to those involving teen drivers fell by 25 percent and 17 percent respectively.

“While great strides have been made to improve the safety of teen drivers over the past 20 years, motor vehicle crashes still remain the leading cause of death for drivers aged 15 to 19, so advocating on behalf of teen driver safety remains a top priority for AAA,” said White.

Tools to help parents prepare for the “100 Deadliest Days” of summer driving and other resources to coach teens through the learning-to drive process including a parent-teen driving agreement can be found on AAA’s award-winning website TeenDriving.AAA.com. Parents have found the online AAA StartSmart program to be particularly useful, helping them to quickly become effective in-car coaches, make informed decisions about access to a vehicle, and manage their teen’s overall driving privileges.

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