
YOUNG DRIVER FACT SHEET

October 2012

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for all 15-20 year olds, according to the National Center for Health Statistics' most recent available data.
- Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. Each year, over 5,000 teens (16-20) are killed in passenger vehicle crashes.
- Research shows which behaviors contribute to teen-related crashes. Inexperience and immaturity combined with speed, drinking and driving, not wearing seat belts, distracted driving (cell phone use, loud music, other teen passengers, etc.), drowsy driving, nighttime driving, and other drug use aggravate this problem.
- In 2011, 54 drivers age 20 or younger, were involved in fatal crashes in Iowa.
- In 2010, 4,585 young drivers were involved in fatal crashes nationwide, which is 10% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes. For all police-reported crashes, 14% involved young drivers.
- In 2010, 1,963 drivers ages 15-20 died in motor vehicle crashes nationwide and an additional 187,000 young drivers were injured in motor vehicle crashes.
- Among those young drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2010, 30% who did not have valid operator's licenses (198 of 669) also had previous license suspensions or revocations at the time of the crash.
- For fatally injured young drivers, alcohol becomes an increasingly significant factor. In 2010, 30% of young drivers ages 15-20 who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or higher.
- For young drivers, alcohol involvement is higher among males than females. In 2010, 25% of the young male drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking at the time of the crash, compared with 17% of the young female drivers involved in fatal crashes.
- Drivers are less likely to use restraints when they have been drinking. In 2010, 56% 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, 71% were unrestrained. In comparison, of the non-drinking young drivers killed, 47% were unrestrained.

