



Lives Saved in 2011 by Restraint Use and Minimum Drinking Age Laws

In 2011, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 11,949 lives. Seat belts have saved nearly 66,000 lives during the 5-year period from 2007 to 2011. These annual estimates of lives saved, shown in Table 1, have been produced by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis since 1975. The estimates are calculated using the effectiveness of each device or law that is mentioned. More information on the methodology of lives-saved estimates is available in two NHTSA publications, *Lives Saved FAQs* (NHTSA, 2009, DOT HS 811 105), which answers 30 common questions about lives saved and includes references to many other reports on lives saved; and *Lives Saved Calculations for Seat Belts and Frontal Air Bags* (Glassbrenner & Starnes, 2009, DOT HS 811 206, NHTSA), which describes in detail the methodology of estimating lives saved by seat belts and frontal air bags.

In addition to the 11,949 lives saved in 2011 by seat belts (occupants 5 and older), 2,204 lives were saved by frontal

air bags (occupants 13 and older), 1,617 lives were saved by motorcycle helmets, 533 lives were saved by 21-year-old-minimum-drinking-age laws, and 263 lives (4 and younger) were saved by child restraints (child safety seats and lap/shoulder belts). An additional 3,384 lives would have been saved in 2011 if all unrestrained passenger vehicle occupants 5 and older involved in fatal crashes had worn their seat belts; and if all motorcyclists had been helmeted, then an additional 703 lives would have been saved.

Table 1 shows that the number of lives saved by seat belts among occupants 5 and older declined from 12,582 in 2010 to 11,949 in 2011. The number of lives saved by child restraints, frontal air bags, and the minimum legal drinking age also declined from 2010 to 2011. The number of lives saved by motorcycle helmets increased from 1,556 in 2010 to 1,617 in 2011.

Table 1: Lives Saved by Restraint Use, and 21-Year-Old-Minimum-Drinking-Age Laws, and Additional Lives That Would Have Been Saved at 100-Percent Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Use, 2007–2011

Year	Lives Saved, Age 4 & Younger	Lives Saved, Age 5 & Older	Lives Saved, Age 13 & Older	Lives Saved, All Ages	Lives Saved	Additional Lives That Would Have Been Saved at 100 Percent Use	
	Child Restraints	Seat Belts	Frontal Air Bags	Motorcycle Helmets	Minimum Drinking Age Law	Seat Belts	Motorcycle Helmets
2007	388	15,223	2,800	1,788	831	5,048	805
2008	286	13,312	2,557	1,836	716	4,171	827
2009	307	12,763	2,387	1,486	626	3,700	733
2010	303	12,582	2,315	1,556	552	3,353	708
2011	263	11,949	2,204	1,617	533	3,384	703

Source: 2007–2010 FARS Final Files and FARS 2011 Annual Report File

Table 2 shows lives-saved totals in 2011 for all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The far left column is the lives saved by child restraints, and the next three columns refer respectively to lives saved by seat belts, lives saved by frontal air bags, and lives saved by motor-

cycle helmets. The numbers in the two far right columns represent the additional lives savable at 100-percent seat belt use and 100-percent helmet use, respectively. Due to rounding, the sum of the State totals may not equal the national total.

Table 2: Lives Saved in 2011 by Child Restraints, Seat Belts, Frontal Air Bags, and Motorcycle Helmets

State	Lives Saved by Child Restraints, Age 4 and Younger	Lives Saved by Seat Belts, Age 5 and Older	Lives Saved by Frontal Air Bags, Age 13 and Older	Lives Saved by Motorcycle Helmets, All Ages	Additional Lives Savable At 100-Percent Restraint Use	
					Seat Belts	Motorcycle Helmets
Alabama	16	315	72	51	107	4
Alaska	4	19	4	5	8	0
Arizona	8	233	44	35	97	29
Arkansas	7	201	43	15	110	15
California	16	1,119	140	231	91	8
Colorado	0	144	31	17	70	18
Connecticut	0	83	16	6	23	10
Delaware	0	29	7	3	8	6
District of Columbia	0	5	1	2	1	0
Florida	14	682	125	118	208	100
Georgia	15	493	90	80	96	5
Hawaii	0	25	3	4	3	9
Idaho	1	51	12	5	31	3
Illinois	7	335	60	20	60	42
Indiana	6	345	53	11	57	37
Iowa	7	150	29	1	24	13
Kansas	5	155	32	8	68	12
Kentucky	8	280	59	17	126	16
Louisiana	6	222	53	41	124	4
Maine	0	52	12	2	23	4
Maryland	3	156	30	38	26	4
Massachusetts	0	102	27	19	66	1
Michigan	5	413	60	63	50	4
Minnesota	2	168	27	10	29	10
Mississippi	10	233	52	31	119	2
Missouri	4	227	64	43	139	3
Montana	0	63	17	6	43	4
Nebraska	4	56	15	12	28	1
Nevada	1	74	15	21	13	2
New Hampshire	1	12	9	1	15	5
New Jersey	4	224	38	51	28	2
New Mexico	6	158	23	3	36	15
New York	4	444	62	93	83	4
North Carolina	5	509	85	93	122	4
North Dakota	0	45	12	2	32	4
Ohio	5	340	76	26	138	45
Oklahoma	7	244	56	11	94	30
Oregon	1	168	19	21	14	2
Pennsylvania	6	340	99	60	163	37
Rhode Island	0	15	4	4	8	3
South Carolina	5	313	56	16	106	38
South Dakota	0	27	9	2	24	4
Tennessee	11	345	71	62	122	3
Texas	31	1,325	207	127	200	96
Utah	10	92	17	6	24	7
Vermont	2	28	4	5	9	0
Virginia	6	288	54	55	130	0
Washington	1	209	27	42	13	0
West Virginia	1	127	26	12	52	2
Wisconsin	5	220	45	5	102	30
Wyoming	1	45	9	2	23	5
National*	263	11,949	2,204	1,617	3,384	703
Puerto Rico	0	66	16	10	14	13

*Estimates for States may not add up to national total due to independent rounding.