



# Lives Saved in 2012 by Restraint Use and Minimum Drinking Age Laws

In 2012, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 12,174 lives. Seat belts have saved nearly 63,000 lives during the 5-year-period from 2008 to 2012. 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 12,174 lives saved in 2012 by seat belts (occupants 5 and older), 2,213 lives were saved by frontal

air bags (occupants 13 and older), 1,699 lives were saved by motorcycle helmets, 525 lives were saved by 21-year-old-minimum-drinking-age laws, and 284 lives (4 and younger) were saved by child restraints (child safety seats and lap/shoulder belts). An additional 3,031 lives would have been saved in 2012 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 781 lives would have been saved.

Table 1 shows that the number of lives saved by seat belts among occupants 5 and older increased from 11,983 in 2011 to 12,174 in 2012. The number of lives saved by child restraints, frontal air bags, and motorcycle helmets also increased from 2011 to 2012. The number of lives saved by the minimum-drinking-age law decreased from 535 in 2011 to 525 in 2012.

**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, 2008–2012**

| 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 |
| 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 | 262                          | 11,983                     | 2,210                       | 1,622                 | 535                      | 3,394  | 706                |
| 2012 | 284                          | 12,174                     | 2,213                       | 1,699                 | 525                      | 3,031  | 781                |

Source: 2008–2011 FARS Final Files and FARS 2012 Annual Report File

Table 2 shows lives-saved totals in 2012 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 2012 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              | 11   | 304  | 69  | 52  | 75  | 3                  |
| Alaska               | 0  | 21   | 3   | 3   | 5   | 2                  |
| Arizona              | 4  | 231  | 45  | 41  | 90  | 27                 |
| Arkansas             | 3  | 189  | 42  | 15  | 108   | 17                 |
| California           | 26   | 1,194                                      | 140   | 239   | 96  | 10                 |
| Colorado             | 2  | 149  | 30  | 15  | 58  | 20                 |
| Connecticut          | 0  | 90   | 16  | 7   | 22  | 10                 |
| Delaware             | 1  | 35   | 7   | 8   | 7   | 2                  |
| District of Columbia | 0  | 0  | 0   | 2   | 0   | 0                  |
| Florida              | 12   | 752  | 129   | 135   | 190   | 98                 |
| Georgia              | 15   | 486  | 85  | 74  | 85  | 3                  |
| Hawaii               | 0  | 27   | 4   | 7   | 4   | 11                 |
| Idaho                | 0  | 73   | 12  | 7   | 31  | 4                  |
| Illinois             | 12   | 346  | 63  | 17  | 47  | 45                 |
| Indiana              | 13   | 316  | 53  | 18  | 40  | 46                 |
| Iowa                 | 5  | 161  | 26  | 7   | 26  | 18                 |
| Kansas               | 5  | 143  | 31  | 7   | 61  | 13                 |
| Kentucky             | 6  | 272  | 57  | 23  | 97  | 26                 |
| Louisiana            | 1  | 246  | 48  | 45  | 101   | 1                  |
| Maine                | 1  | 55   | 15  | 6   | 20  | 5                  |
| Maryland             | 3  | 209  | 33  | 41  | 35  | 3                  |
| Massachusetts        | 1  | 95   | 23  | 29  | 50  | 1                  |
| Michigan             | 11   | 417  | 66  | 42  | 50  | 25                 |
| Minnesota            | 3  | 173  | 28  | 8   | 21  | 16                 |
| Mississippi          | 9  | 203  | 50  | 20  | 82  | 2                  |
| Missouri             | 5  | 195  | 67  | 56  | 111   | 4                  |
| Montana              | 0  | 48   | 16  | 6   | 34  | 8                  |
| Nebraska             | 2  | 62   | 18  | 12  | 31  | 0                  |
| Nevada               | 2  | 90   | 15  | 21  | 17  | 2                  |
| New Hampshire        | 0  | 25   | 8   | 6   | 19  | 7                  |
| New Jersey           | 1  | 181  | 32  | 40  | 43  | 3                  |
| New Mexico           | 2  | 132  | 20  | 14  | 26  | 15                 |
| New York             | 7  | 460  | 61  | 91  | 79  | 6                  |
| North Carolina       | 10   | 507  | 79  | 105   | 119   | 7                  |
| North Dakota         | 1  | 55   | 13  | 2   | 26  | 4                  |
| Ohio                 | 9  | 379  | 89  | 22  | 148   | 47                 |
| Oklahoma             | 1  | 263  | 53  | 12  | 95  | 24                 |
| Oregon               | 0  | 146  | 16  | 28  | 10  | 2                  |
| Pennsylvania         | 10   | 328  | 102   | 62  | 136   | 39                 |
| Rhode Island         | 1  | 32   | 5   | 1   | 13  | 2                  |
| South Carolina       | 4  | 278  | 61  | 25  | 61  | 39                 |
| South Dakota         | 2  | 40   | 9   | 2   | 31  | 8                  |
| Tennessee            | 7  | 373  | 77  | 79  | 133   | 2                  |
| Texas                | 50   | 1,479                                      | 214   | 107   | 185   | 101                |
| Utah                 | 4  | 68   | 15  | 12  | 27  | 4                  |
| Vermont              | 2  | 19   | 6   | 5   | 7   | 1                  |
| Virginia             | 2  | 276  | 57  | 46  | 120   | 2                  |
| Washington           | 2  | 176  | 23  | 46  | 12  | 2                  |
| West Virginia        | 2  | 91   | 28  | 10  | 39  | 5                  |
| Wisconsin            | 4  | 230  | 45  | 16  | 83  | 34                 |
| Wyoming              | 1  | 55   | 9   | 1   | 24  | 4                  |
| <b>National*</b>     | <b>284</b>   | <b>12,174</b>                              | <b>2,213</b>                                      | <b>1,699</b>                                | <b>3,031</b>  | <b>781</b>         |
| Puerto Rico          | 0  | 61   | 15  | 10  | 15  | 13                 |

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