



Lives Saved in 2015 by Restraint Use and Minimum-Drinking-Age Laws

Findings

In 2015, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 13,941 lives of occupants 5 and older, and an estimated 2,573 lives of occupants 13 and older were saved by frontal air bags. An estimated 266 child occupants 4 and younger were saved by the use of child restraints, and 1,772 lives were saved by the use of motorcycle helmets. An additional 2,804 lives would have been saved in 2015 if all unrestrained passenger vehicle occupants 5 and older involved in fatal crashes had worn their seat belts. Similarly, if all motorcyclists had been helmeted, then an additional 740 lives would have been saved. An estimated 537 lives were also saved due to minimum-drinking-age laws.

Introduction

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has been producing annual estimates of lives saved since 1975. Table 1 presents estimates of lives saved in 2015 by restraint use and as a result of minimum-drinking-age

laws. The estimates are calculated using the effectiveness of each device or law. More information on the methodology of lives-saved estimates is available in two NHTSA publications: *Lives Saved FAQs* (NCSA, 2009) that 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) that describes in detail the methodology of estimating lives saved by seat belts and frontal air bags.

Results

Table 1 shows that the estimated number of lives saved by seat belt use among occupants 5 and older increased from 12,801 in 2014 to 13,941 in 2015. Use of motorcycle helmets contributed to an increase in lives saved from 1,673 in 2014 to 1,772 in 2015. The estimated number of lives saved by child restraints among children 4 and younger, by frontal air bags among occupants 13 and older, and by the minimum-drinking-age laws all increased from 2014 to 2015 (Table 1).

Table 1: Lives Saved by Restraint Use, 21-Year-Old-Minimum-Drinking-Age Laws, and Additional Lives That Would Have Been Saved at 100-Percent Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Use, 2011–2015

Year	Lives Saved, Age 4 and Younger	Lives Saved, Age 5 and Older	Lives Saved, Age 13 and 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
2011†	262	12,071	2,341	1,622	543	3,396	707
2012†	285	12,386	2,422	1,715	537	3,051	782
2013	263	12,644	2,398	1,640	507	2,812	717
2014†	253	12,801	2,400	1,673	486	2,815	661
2015	266	13,941	2,573	1,772	537	2,804	740

Source: 2011–2014 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Final Files and FARS 2015 Annual Report Files

†2011–2012 estimates differ from previously published estimates due to a computational correction. Previous estimates did not properly account for 2011 through 2013 model year passenger vehicles.

Table 2 shows the estimated total number of lives saved in 2015 for all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In this table, the second column from left contains estimates of lives saved by child restraints. The next three columns contain estimates of lives saved by seat belts, lives saved by frontal air bags, and lives saved by motor-

cycle helmets, respectively. The numbers in the two far right columns represent the additional lives savable with 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 2015 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	5	319	77	34	50	3
Alaska	0	28	4	4	6	2
Arizona	5	240	52	34	68	29
Arkansas	6	212	45	18	90	18
California	17	1,342	181	260	67	8
Colorado	1	199	39	23	60	25
Connecticut	1	92	19	12	24	12
Delaware	2	35	8	8	7	2
District of Columbia	0	5	1	1	0	0
Florida	14	962	170	193	187	108
Georgia	17	657	116	84	37	4
Hawaii	0	18	4	6	3	6
Idaho	5	78	18	6	33	8
Illinois	1	420	77	24	39	40
Indiana	1	391	67	11	57	33
Iowa	1	167	28	5	21	12
Kansas	5	143	30	9	52	11
Kentucky	8	287	64	18	79	23
Louisiana	7	248	57	47	73	5
Maine	2	56	12	5	16	9
Maryland	2	253	35	41	27	2
Massachusetts	1	72	23	23	41	3
Michigan	10	441	66	48	53	23
Minnesota	0	227	33	12	22	16
Mississippi	8	296	61	17	121	3
Missouri	0	286	76	53	129	3
Montana	1	64	19	3	39	7
Nebraska	0	75	23	12	38	2
Nevada	0	132	19	26	18	4
New Hampshire	0	30	10	6	21	6
New Jersey	5	202	36	25	32	3
New Mexico	0	99	19	12	15	7
New York	7	443	65	87	55	5
North Carolina	27	590	107	105	109	5
North Dakota	0	48	11	3	22	1
Ohio	5	394	94	33	126	42
Oklahoma	9	253	51	15	75	23
Oregon	3	219	28	34	16	1
Pennsylvania	5	369	99	52	137	33
Rhode Island	1	10	3	3	3	1
South Carolina	13	361	72	33	56	48
South Dakota	1	40	11	5	24	8
Tennessee	10	377	78	66	109	5
Texas	40	1,712	258	122	269	88
Utah	0	107	19	10	27	7
Vermont	0	19	4	7	5	0
Virginia	4	287	65	45	113	1
Washington	3	269	37	43	23	1
West Virginia	1	100	23	15	23	3
Wisconsin	6	231	48	9	61	24
Wyoming	3	34	12	4	21	6
National*	266	13,941	2,573	1,772	2,804	740
Puerto Rico	1	62	16	11	9	11

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

These figures and recent trends can also be found on the State Traffic Safety Information Web site at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/nca/STSI/USA%20WEB%20REPORT.HTM

References

Glassbrenner, D., & Starnes, M. (2009, December). Lives saved calculations for seat belts and frontal air bags (Report No. DOT HS 811 206). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811206.pdf.

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2009, December). Lives saved FAQs (Report No. DOT HS 811 105). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811105.pdf.

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