



Lives Saved in 2017 by Restraint Use and Minimum-Drinking-Age Laws

Findings

In 2017, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 14,955 lives of occupants 5 and older. An estimated 2,790 lives of occupants 13 and older were saved by frontal air bags. An estimated 325 child occupants 4 and younger were saved by the use of child restraints, and 1,872 lives were saved by the use of motorcycle helmets. An additional 2,549 lives could have been saved in 2017 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 749 lives could have been saved. An estimated 538 lives were saved due to minimum-drinking-age laws.

Introduction

Since 1975, NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has been producing annual estimates of lives saved. Table 1 presents estimates of lives saved in 2017 by restraint use and as a result of minimum-drinking-age laws. The esti-

mates 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 14,753 in 2016 to 14,955 in 2017. The estimated number of lives saved by frontal air bags among occupants 13 and older increased from 2,774 in 2016 to 2,790 in 2017. The estimated number of lives saved by child restraints among children 4 and younger, by the use of motorcycle helmets, and by the minimum-drinking-age laws all decreased from 2016 to 2017 (Table 1).

Table 1: Lives Saved by Restraint Use, 21-Year-Old Minimum-Drinking-Age Laws, and Additional Lives That Could Have Been Saved at 100-Percent Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Use, 2013–2017

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 Could Have Been Saved at 100-Percent Use	
	Child Restraints	Seat Belts	Frontal Air Bags	Motorcycle Helmets	Minimum-Drinking-Age Law	Seat Belts	Motorcycle Helmets
2013	263	12,644	2,398	1,640	507	2,771	717
2014	253	12,801	2,400	1,673	486	2,877	661
2015	273	14,062	2,597	1,800	542	2,715	742
2016	334	14,753	2,774	1,885	556	2,471	805
2017	325	14,955	2,790	1,872	538	2,549	749

Source: 2012–2016 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Final Files and FARS 2017 Annual Report Files.

Table 2 shows the estimated total number of lives saved in 2017 for all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In this table, the second column from the far 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 motorcycle

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 2017 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	10	337	87	43	50	2
Alaska	1	35	5	2	6	1
Arizona	4	281	56	42	69	34
Arkansas	7	214	41	18	72	13
California	22	1,488	218	287	89	16
Colorado	3	226	49	18	70	27
Connecticut	0	112	20	13	17	13
Delaware	2	41	9	4	6	2
District of Columbia	0	8	2	2	1	0
Florida	8	1,099	200	174	181	110
Georgia	16	648	125	72	34	6
Hawaii	1	33	5	6	2	5
Idaho	1	94	21	6	36	6
Illinois	14	483	86	30	50	42
Indiana	11	436	73	25	49	40
Iowa	3	142	26	8	21	13
Kansas	1	203	40	13	67	13
Kentucky	14	329	67	18	80	22
Louisiana	13	278	59	48	64	5
Maine	3	68	14	5	14	6
Maryland	2	209	37	43	27	5
Massachusetts	0	61	29	29	45	0
Michigan	11	510	78	46	47	27
Minnesota	4	192	28	10	23	15
Mississippi	7	283	67	19	111	3
Missouri	9	309	81	60	103	8
Montana	2	71	16	5	33	5
Nebraska	2	72	21	16	23	0
Nevada	3	78	17	27	14	3
New Hampshire	0	23	10	4	19	3
New Jersey	0	241	40	47	23	1
New Mexico	4	154	25	9	22	14
New York	11	396	62	80	41	4
North Carolina	16	633	110	97	90	4
North Dakota	0	44	9	2	18	3
Ohio	14	456	104	27	138	42
Oklahoma	4	234	50	14	60	26
Oregon	8	255	30	32	12	1
Pennsylvania	5	355	94	58	99	34
Rhode Island	0	25	5	4	5	2
South Carolina	3	387	79	26	53	38
South Dakota	2	39	11	4	22	4
Tennessee	11	463	85	74	91	3
Texas	50	1,725	275	142	227	94
Utah	1	96	20	8	21	10
Vermont	0	28	6	8	7	0
Virginia	5	323	68	68	88	0
Washington	5	283	39	47	22	0
West Virginia	4	128	26	9	24	4
Wisconsin	4	289	54	19	51	17
Wyoming	3	40	11	2	13	5
National*	325	14,955	2,790	1,872	2,549	749
Puerto Rico	1	67	17	8	15	6

*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 website at www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/nca/STSI/USA%20WEB%20REPORT.HTM

For More Information

For questions regarding the information presented in this document, please contact NCSAWEB@dot.gov.

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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For questions regarding the information presented in this document, please contact NCSARequests@dot.gov. This Crash•Stats and general information on highway traffic safety can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/research-data. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236.