

# Resource Fact Sheet on Rural Injury Prevention: Teen Motor Vehicle Injuries for the National Rural Injury Prevention Community of Practice



The Children's Safety Network (CSN) compiled this resource fact sheet to provide Community of Practice state teams with more details on rural injuries in America. Since there is no national consensus on the definition of “rural,” rural areas are defined broadly as those with low population density, geographic isolation, and/or small population size. The resource sheet is divided into four sections—1) Data, 2) Resources, 3) Recommendations and Strategies for Preventing Rural Teen Motor Vehicle Crashes, and 4) CSN's General Recommendations for Professionals Working in Rural Areas.

## 1. Data

- Recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) shows the fatality rate for rural crashes is more than twice the fatality rate in urban crashes.<sup>1</sup>
  - A Disproportionate Number of Fatalities: Although 23 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas in 2007, rural fatal crashes accounted for 57 percent of all traffic fatalities.
  - Less Exposure, Yet More Fatalities: While the majority of deaths occur on rural roads, fewer miles are driven there. In 2007, just over 1 trillion miles were driven on rural roads versus approximately 2 trillion miles on urban roads.
  - A Higher Fatality Rate: The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled was more than double in rural areas what it was in urban areas (2.25 and 0.89 respectively).
- See link for additional state-specific data. Florida has the highest rural motor vehicle fatality rate, and Vermont has the lowest. <http://bit.ly/fY6Fdt>
- A NHTSA report found that, from 1994 to 2003<sup>2</sup>:
  - There is a higher fatal motor vehicle crash risk in rural areas, including a greater percentage of crashes involving high-speed collisions, head-on collisions, vehicle rollovers, trucks and light trucks, alcohol, the non-use of occupant-restraint devices (seat belts, etc.), and increased occupant ejection.
  - There is a disparity in emergency medical services (EMS) response time to fatal crashes, with only 55% of rural cases resulting in EMS arrival within 10 minutes from the time of notification compared to 88% of urban cases.

<sup>1</sup>United States Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration. Rural Fatalities. Retrieved December 8, 2010. [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural/rural\\_fatal.cfm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/rural_fatal.cfm)

<sup>2</sup>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Contrasting rural and urban fatal crashes 1994–2003. *Ann Emerg Med* 2006;47:574–5.

## 2. Resources

- Rural motor vehicle fatality rates by state can be found on NHTSA's State Traffic Safety Administration site: <http://bit.ly/eTotqH>
- A New NHTSA report "Geospatial Analysis of Rural Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities" finds that approximately three-quarters of U.S. traffic fatalities occurred in urban areas or in rural areas that are within 5 miles of the urban boundaries. State specific tables comparing urban and rural motor vehicle deaths are available at: <http://bit.ly/g3MXK5>
- The University of Minnesota Center for Excellence in Rural Safety has many key resources and new articles: <http://bit.ly/fmi3Mc>
  - They also have a new report on rural driving in Minnesota and the nation, highlighting high rural roadway crash fatalities - "almost 70% of the crash fatalities in Minnesota are in rural areas" <http://bit.ly/dRTF56>
  - National Rural Road Safety Public Opinion Survey: This new national survey, conducted by the University of Minnesota, finds that Americans strongly support public policies to reduce highway deaths, including ignition interlocks for those convicted of drunken driving and automated speed enforcement using cameras and radar. Respondents also support: sobriety checkpoints; mandatory motorcycle helmet laws; phased-in privileges for new drivers; and laws enabling police to ticket drivers solely for not wearing seat belts. <http://bit.ly/hao06H>
- A report emphasizes the social and cultural factors associated with the rural motor vehicle disparity. "The culture of traffic safety in rural America" by Nicholas J. Ward, University of Minnesota <http://bit.ly/fmDRpQ>
- The teen driving section of NHTSA's website has key resources and news: <http://1.usa.gov/fljRAq>
- Teendriversource, an online resource created by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute and State Farm Insurance Companies, provides research-based information and tools to help teens stay safe on the road. A guide to organizing a peer-to-peer education and awareness campaign is also available: <http://bit.ly/fxnPQL>
- CSN provides a web page on rural injuries <http://bit.ly/csnrural>
- The NHTSA Region 4 Office provides a rural seat belt program with a range of resources: <http://bit.ly/g6Ftu3>
- The CDC recently made materials available from its Parents are the Key campaign. Resources include traditional and social media materials and information for parents on establishing driving contracts with teens. <http://1.usa.gov/dGZz1Z>
- Updated U.S. Department of Transportation Rural Safety Initiative, February 2008, <http://1.usa.gov/gVhO8n>
- The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is disseminating information on effective impaired driving prevention programs in rural communities in a document entitled "Impaired driving prevention in rural communities compendium" This publication can be purchased at: <http://bit.ly/eHwdCs>
- The National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety promotes child safety by working to prevent exposure to hazards associated with agricultural work and rural environments. <http://bit.ly/fH05Qy>
- The NIOSH Agricultural Centers were established to conduct research, education, and prevention projects to address the nation's pressing agricultural health and safety problems. Each region has a NIOSH funded center on agricultural health and safety. Learn more about the centers by visiting: <http://1.usa.gov/eoEzeJ>



### 3. Recommendations and Strategies for Preventing Rural Teen Motor Vehicle Crashes

- Promote and enforce seatbelt use
- Promote states to pass and enforce graduated driver licensing laws, including passenger restrictions and night driving limitations. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) ranks states based on their current laws: <http://bit.ly/hHxGWN>
- Involve parents in rural safety messages. The research coming out on Generation Z is indicating that this generation talks with their parents more than past generations. <http://bit.ly/f3aSE3> is specific to teens and teen driving
- Work to address teen alcohol consumption. There tends to be a greater tolerance of teen drinking in rural areas, which puts these teens at greater risk for a crash
- Explore in-vehicle monitoring technology for teens <http://bit.ly/eR3wO3>



### 4. CSN's General Recommendations for Professionals Working in Rural Areas:

- Understand data and other sources of information to determine which rural subgroups are at greater/lesser risk
- Focus resources on underserved populations
- Use an asset-based approach and recognize community protective factors when working in rural areas
- Involve youth in planning activities and engage with them to strategize solutions
- Partner with 4-H and other rural serving groups
- Contact your Regional NIOSH Agricultural Center
- When developing prevention messages, think strategically about your audience. Work with rural opinion leaders to develop and communicate prevention messages. Prevention-focused messages that say “don’t do this” may not resonate with audiences that value independence and/or have a lower level of trust in experts than urban/suburban populations



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