

Traffic Safety Facts



Crash • Stats

DOT HS 811 153

A Brief Statistical Summary

June 2009

Lives Saved in 2008 by Restraint Use And Minimum Drinking Age Laws

In 2008, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 13,250 lives. Seat belts have saved over 75,000 lives during the 5-year period from 2004 to 2008. These annual lives saved counts, shown in Table 1, have been produced by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis since 1975. The counts are estimates that are calculated using the effectiveness of each device or law that is mentioned.

In addition to the 13,250 lives saved in 2008 by seat belts (occupants 5 and older), 2,546 lives were saved by frontal air bags (occupants 13 and older), 1,829 lives were saved by motorcycle helmets, 714 lives (age 18, 19, and 20) were saved by 21-year-old-minimum drinking age laws, and 244 lives (4 and

under) were saved by child restraints (child safety seats and lap/shoulder belts). An additional 4,152 lives would have been saved in 2008 if all unrestrained passenger vehicle occupants 5 and older involved in fatal crashes had worn their seat belts. If all motorcyclists had been helmeted an additional 823 lives would have been saved.

Table 1 shows that the number of lives saved by seat belts among occupants 5 and older declined from 15,223 in 2007 to 13,250 in 2008. The number of lives saved by child restraints, frontal air bags, and the minimum legal drinking age also declined from 2007 to 2008. The number of lives saved by motorcycle helmets increased from 1,788 in 2007 to 1,829 in 2008.

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, 2004-2008

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, Age 18- 20	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
2004	455	15,548	2,660	1,324	927	5,874	673
2005	424	15,688	2,752	1,554	882	5,667	731
2006	427	15,458	2,824	1,667	888	5,468	756
2007	388	15,223	2,800	1,788	831	5,048	805
2008	244	13,250	2,546	1,829	714	4,152	823

Source: FARS 2004-2007 Final File, 2008 Annual Report File

Table 2 shows lives saved totals in 2008 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, by frontal

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



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Table 2: Lives Saved in 2008 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	8	325	76	50	117	6
Alaska	0	25	4	2	8	1
Arizona	5	260	52	42	113	26
Arkansas	4	176	48	17	125	15
California	33	1,424	173	291	161	26
Colorado	4	233	35	18	88	26
Connecticut	0	89	18	12	24	14
Delaware	1	53	8	5	10	3
DC	0	7	2	4	1	0
Florida	8	818	184	170	340	100
Georgia	13	508	111	97	136	5
Hawaii	1	29	5	4	3	7
Idaho	4	79	15	11	39	4
Illinois	12	391	76	20	86	37
Indiana	3	321	60	19	72	37
Iowa	2	171	31	5	32	18
Kansas	0	122	32	7	68	13
Kentucky	3	245	60	25	151	22
Louisiana	4	276	71	29	155	12
Maine	0	64	12	2	22	5
Maryland	2	240	38	48	41	4
Massachusetts	0	84	26	24	62	0
Michigan	8	465	67	67	46	6
Minnesota	7	193	30	7	52	22
Mississippi	7	260	71	19	173	3
Missouri	6	263	78	49	164	9
Montana	1	51	15	8	32	8
Nebraska	3	88	18	9	35	1
Nevada	0	126	18	26	26	6
New Hampshire	0	30	12	6	25	7
New Jersey	5	175	36	42	35	4
New Mexico	2	156	24	1	34	18
New York	6	447	70	87	101	14
North Carolina	15	590	102	92	137	6
North Dakota	2	18	8	2	12	4
Ohio	13	390	88	38	152	56
Oklahoma	1	258	55	13	105	24
Oregon	5	218	20	28	25	0
Pennsylvania	8	450	109	70	165	45
Rhode Island	0	13	5	3	10	1
South Carolina	4	254	68	17	132	35
South Dakota	1	32	10	2	23	4
Tennessee	5	338	78	76	148	6
Texas	14	1,477	221	115	309	120
Utah	1	128	18	7	34	9
Vermont	0	38	7	4	11	0
Virginia	7	249	64	47	113	2
Washington	6	236	29	46	23	1
West Virginia	2	132	31	24	36	4
Wisconsin	6	194	46	12	105	26
Wyoming	0	42	11	5	33	5
National*	244	13,250	2,546	1,829	4,152	823
Puerto Rico	7	88	15	17	12	19

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