

Ohio's Safety Plan

2009 Update

Emphasis Area 3 High-Risk Behaviors: Young Driver

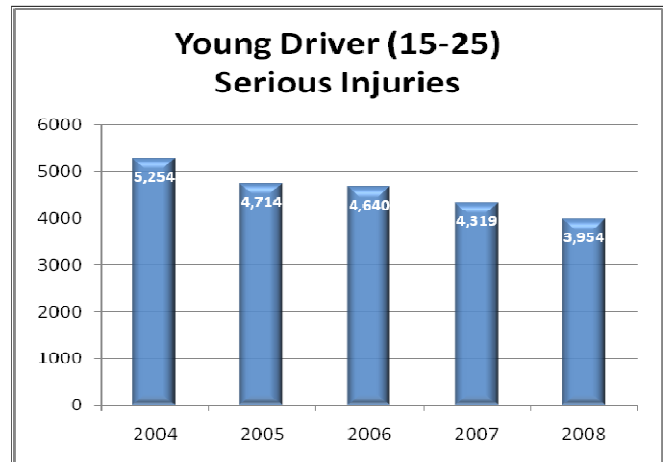
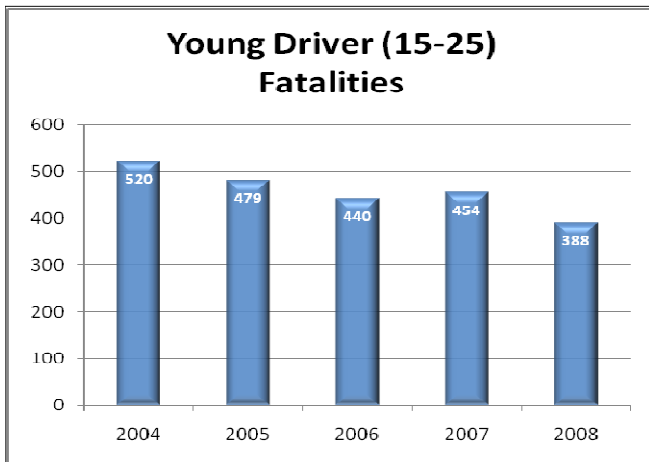


In 2008, 388 people died and 3,954 people were seriously injured in crashes involving young drivers between the ages of 15 and 25. These crashes represented 33 percent of all fatalities and 39 percent of all serious injuries in that year.

Young drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes than other drivers on the road. Young drivers make up about 15 percent of registered drivers in Ohio, yet they were involved in about one-third of all injuries and fatalities in 2008.

Young drivers face several risk factors:

- Young drivers are inexperienced. They are more likely than older drivers to underestimate dangerous situations or not be able to recognize hazardous situations.
- They are more likely than older drivers to speed and follow other vehicles too closely. The presence of male teenage passengers increases the likelihood of this risky driving behavior.
- Young drivers also have a lower rate of seat belt use and higher rate drinking and driving when compared to other age groups.



Driving Tips for Parents and Teens:

- **Don't rely solely on driver training.** Take an active role in helping your teen learn to drive.
- **Remember that you're a role model.** New drivers learn by example.
- **Require seat belt use, always.** Teens are less likely to buckle up when other teens are present and parents are **not** in the vehicle.
- **Restrict nighttime driving.** Teens are most likely to crash between 9 p.m. and 12 a.m.
- **Restrict passengers.** Other teens can distract a new driver and lead to greater risk taking behind the wheel.
- **Choose vehicles for safety, not image.** Teens should drive cars that reduce the chances of crashing.

State and local governments are also using various strategies to reduce crashes involving young drivers.

Those strategies include:

Support strengthening the Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law to restrict the number of passengers and night-time driving.

GDL laws were strengthened in 2008.

Continue Safe Communities programs that target young drivers and passengers.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) provides grants to support these community-based organizations so they can conduct youth education programs, including seat belt challenges, mock crashes, and driving simulator programs.

Develop a comprehensive teen driving program.

ODPS is developing a comprehensive teen driving program that encourages peer-to-peer communication with teens. To achieve this, ODPS has developed a partnership with Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). The SADD national student of the year will be assisting ODPS in this effort. The partnership will be highlighted during two major events: National Teen Safety Week in October and another event in the spring.

Encourage law enforcement to aggressively enforce seat belt and alcohol laws.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) will continue to support the national “Click It or Ticket” seat belt campaign and the Drunk Driving “Over the Limit. Under Arrest” campaign. These campaigns combine paid advertising and earned media with grants to local law enforcement agencies to conduct high-visibility enforcement. A sustained media campaign will be conducted throughout the year to address teen driver safety issues.

Support efforts to enforce state laws.

ODPS is teaming with the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy to develop online courses regarding motorcycles, young drivers (GDL laws) and older drivers.