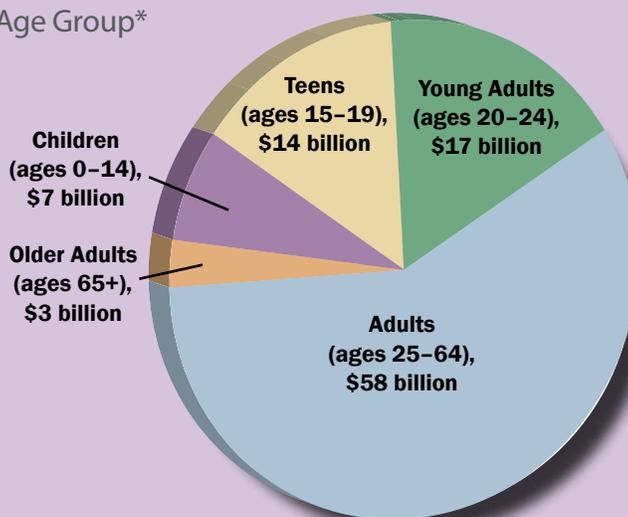


# Save lives, save dollars. Prevent motor vehicle–related injuries.

Every 12 minutes, someone dies in a car crash on U.S. roads.

Every 10 seconds, someone is injured and taken to an emergency department.

Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle–Related Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries, by Age Group\*



\*United States, in 2005 dollars

## Prevention: A Cost-effective Solution

Every year, nearly 40,000 Americans die from motor vehicle–related injuries; another 270,000 persons are hospitalized. These injuries cost the states and our nation an estimated \$99 billion in lifetime medical care and lost productivity. **Policymakers can play an important role in reducing the human and economic toll of motor vehicle–related injuries by supporting prevention policies that have been shown to save lives and reduce costs.**

See the next page for cost-effective policies to:

- Improve child passenger safety.
- Improve teen driver safety.
- Reduce alcohol-impaired driving.
- Increase safety belt use.

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## Proven Policy Solutions



### Improve Child Passenger Safety

Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death for children—more than 1,300 children are killed in crashes every year.

Child passenger safety laws save lives and prevent injuries. Every state has a child safety seat law in place, but specific requirements vary. Many laws do not offer full protection for children as they grow and their safety needs change.

Policymakers can:

- Strengthen child safety seat laws so that every time children ride, they are in federally approved child restraints that are appropriate for their age and size.
- Support distribution and education programs that provide approved child safety seats to parents and caregivers who need financial assistance.
- Encourage incentive and education programs to provide children and parents with rewards and opportunities for the purchase and correct use of child safety seats.

*A \$30 booster seat produces cost savings greater than 9 to 1.*

### Improve Teen Driver Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. In 2008 alone, crashes took the lives of more than 5,800 people younger than age 20.

Every state has a graduated driver licensing (GDL) policy aimed at reducing the number of young drivers whose roadway inexperience leads to fatal and nonfatal errors, but policies vary considerably. The strongest GDL policies are associated with a 38% and 40% reduction in fatal and nonfatal injury crashes, respectively, for 16-year-old drivers.

Policymakers can strengthen their state's GDL policy by:

- Limiting the number of teen passengers who may accompany a teen driver without adult supervision to no more than one (unless they are family members).
- Imposing a nighttime driving restriction from at least 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. for unsupervised drivers younger than age 18.

*For a cost of only \$70 per teen, graduated licensing programs generate \$500 in cost savings.*

### Reduce Alcohol-impaired Driving

About 12,000 people die each year in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes—one every 45 minutes.

To prevent alcohol-impaired driving, policymakers can:

- Implement policies that require ignition interlock devices for all individuals convicted of driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level over the legal limit. The use of ignition interlock devices among those convicted of driving while impaired significantly reduces repeat offenses. When interlocks are installed, re-arrest rates decrease by about 70%.
- Maintain the minimum legal drinking age at 21 years old—this law saves more than 700 lives a year.
- Mandate the regular use of sobriety checkpoints to systematically stop drivers to assess their level of alcohol impairment.
- Support policies that prevent excessive alcohol consumption and policies that prevent access to alcohol by anyone under age 21 (e.g., compliance checks and responsible beverage server training).

*The public saves between \$3 and \$7 for every \$1 spent on ignition interlock devices.*

### Increase Safety Belt Use

In 2008, safety belt use saved more than 13,000 lives.

Primary safety belt laws, which give officers the authority to pull over and ticket motorists solely because they are not wearing a belt, are more effective in encouraging seat

belt use and reducing injuries than secondary laws, which allow officers to ticket for nonbelt use only after the motorist has been pulled over for a separate offense. States that upgrade from a secondary to a primary law have seen a 14% increase in safety belt use and a 7% reduction in motor vehicle–related deaths.

Policymakers can:

- Upgrade to a primary safety belt law if one is not in place.
- Increase fines for violating safety belt laws, as higher fines produce greater adherence.
- Support the use of enhanced safety belt enforcement programs that include media promotion.

*Increasing seat belt usage to 90% in all states would save an additional \$5.2 billion a year in medical, legal, and productivity costs.*