

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 5-24 and are the leading cause of all injury deaths.

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Preventing crash-related deaths involves three priority areas: seat belts and child passenger safety, teen driver safety, and alcohol-impaired driving.

Motor Vehicle Crash Injuries

- Each year more than 650 Oklahomans die and more than 35,000 are injured in motor vehicle crashes.
- In 2011, there were 8 crashes every hour in Oklahoma.
- Males are two times more likely than females to die in a motor vehicle crash.

Preventing Motor Vehicle Crashes

- **Seat Belts:** A properly worn seat belt (both lap and shoulder belt) reduces the risk of serious or fatal injury during a crash by over 50%.
 - Drivers and front seat passengers are required by Oklahoma law to wear a seat belt.
 - More than half of Oklahomans killed in a motor vehicle crash were not using a seat belt.
- **Car Seats:** Child safety seats can reduce fatal injury by up to 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers (ages 1-4).
 - Children are more likely to be properly restrained when the driver is properly restrained.
 - Children under 13 years of age are required by Oklahoma law to be protected by a car seat or seat belt while traveling in a motor vehicle.
- **Teen Driver Safety:** Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Oklahoma teens ages 15-19.
 - New drivers tend to make some wrong decisions when first getting behind the wheel; the graduated driver licensing (GDL) system helps new drivers gain skills from stage to stage.
 - Supervised practice, continued guidance, and rules after licensing can help parents protect their teen drivers.
- **Impaired and Distracted Driving:** Never drive under the influence (DUI). Drinking, or using any substance that can impair your driving, is dangerous and against the law, and could be fatal.
 - Convictions for DUI cases can range from a license suspension to jail time to a prison sentence, depending on the circumstances involved.
 - Distracted driving is any activity that diverts a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. Before you start your car, put your cell phone away and secure your children in a child safety restraint. Avoid anything that can cause you to take your eyes off the road.

Internet Resources

1. Oklahoma Highway Safety Office:
http://ok.gov/ohso/Data/Fatality_Status_Report/index.html
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/>

Live Injury-Free!