

New Safety Study Finds Five Key Facts and Factors Linked to Deaths of Young Drivers - Breaking News: January 2, 2008 Transportation Research Board (TRB)

LINK: http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=8493

A study just released by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) finds that young drivers continue to die at higher rates than any other age group. The report, entitled "NCHRP 500: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers" points to five key facts and contributing factors:

Deadliest Time: Among 16-year old drivers, the risk of a fatal crash is about 3-times higher after 9 p.m. than during the daytime.

Alcohol Factor: Alcohol involved crashes increase from relatively low rates among 16-year-old drivers to a peak among drivers ages 20-to-24. Although alcohol-involved crashes remain high among drivers into their mid-30's impaired driving declines each year as individuals take on more stable jobs, marry and begin to have children.

Lack of Supervision: Drivers 18 and older are more likely to live outside the family home. This results in them driving more and having fewer protective constraints on their time and driving. Their crash rates continue downward due to increasing experience, but their crash numbers increase as a result of greater exposure and an increase in dangerous behaviors of which driving after drinking is perhaps the most obvious example.

Risk Factor: While 15-to-20 year olds represented 8.4 percent of the U.S. population and 6.3 percent of licensed drivers, they accounted for 13.6 percent of the drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes.

Passenger Risk: Young drivers especially 16- and 17-year olds are responsible for a larger number of passenger injuries and fatalities per crash than more experienced drivers. More than one-half of all fatalities occur when passengers younger than 20 are present and there is no adult in the vehicle.

The NCHRP Report 500 was written by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Sciences as part of a series of implementation guides addressing the emphasis areas of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Strategic Highway Safety Plan (<http://safety.transportation.org>). To read the complete report, visit http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=8493.