



NEWS RELEASE

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STATE STUDY LINKS TEEN CRASHES AND HOSPITAL CHARGES

May Deadliest Month for Teens Over Last Five Years

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

ARMER/911
Program

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal
and
Pipeline Safety

ST. PAUL — The threat and impact of teen drivers on Minnesota roads is detailed in a new study that reveals crashes involving 16–17-year-old drivers resulted in nearly \$11 million in hospital charges to the injured motorists involved. Teens also have a fatal crash involvement rate four-and-a-half times higher than adult drivers.

The report was developed by the state departments of Public Safety (DPS) and Health, in cooperation with the Minnesota Hospital Association, MnDOT and Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board. Officials used 2002 crash and hospital data to compile the study that linked nearly 27,000 crashes with hospital emergency room and inpatient information.

“This report quantifies what hospitals across the state see all too frequently — the serious, and often devastating, impact of auto crashes involving teen drivers,” says Bruce Rueben, President, Minnesota Hospital Association.

The study finds 16–17-year-old drivers are overrepresented in fatal crashes as an age group, and have higher crash rates overall and during nighttime hours. Teens are also more likely to crash when traveling with passengers. Teens accounted for just 2.1 percent of all vehicle miles driven in Minnesota but represented 8.6 percent of drivers in fatal crashes. Teen driver injury crash rate during nighttime hours was nearly four-times higher that of adult drivers, while novice drivers with two or more passengers were one-and-one-half-times more likely to be involved in an injury crash than adult drivers with passengers.

DPS officials say the relevancy of the report is underscored by data that shows teen belt use dips during the last three months of the school year — and over the last five years, May has been deadliest month for teens.

“The end of the school year is an exciting time, but it’s important that teens don’t transfer that excitement behind the wheel,” says Katherine Burke Moore, deputy director of the Office of Traffic Safety. “Every teen needs to make sure distractions are limited and everyone is buckled up.”

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