



June 23, 2014

Contact: Jessica Saunders
Safe Kids Greater Dayton and community relations manager
at Dayton Children's Hospital
saundersj@childrensdayton.org
937-641-3666
safekids.org

The Number One Killer of Teens is Motor Vehicle Crashes

New Study Supports Goals of Ohio Teen Drivers' Bill, HB 204

More teens die in motor vehicle crashes than from any other cause of death, with 2,439 teens dying nationally in 2012. In Ohio in 2012, 85 teens died and in 41 of these fatalities the teen was not wearing a seat belt. To help states like Ohio develop public policy strategies and legislation to drive down the number of teens killed in cars, Safe Kids Worldwide with support from the GM Foundation conducted a survey among 1000 teen passengers and drivers on their attitudes about road safety.

"Just one of our Ohio teens dying on our highways is one too many," said Safe Kids Greater Dayton coordinator Jessica Saunders. "But losing 85 of our best and brightest is tragic and with tougher licensing laws we can make a difference. That's why passage of HB 204 is so important." Saunders is also the community relations manager at Dayton Children's Hospital.

Among the findings in the survey are the following: One in four teens surveyed said they don't use a seat belt on every ride. The top reasons they gave for not buckling up were that they forgot or it was not a habit (34 percent), they were not going far (16 percent), or the seat belt was not comfortable (11 percent). When asked why other teens don't buckle up, one in three teens (33 percent) said that going to a party was a reason. The survey also addressed the perilous practice of night driving. Further, 58 percent of teens said they have ridden with a teen driver at night.

Those survey results support the goals of legislation (HB 204) introduced by Representative Rick Perales (R-Beavercreek) to strengthen Ohio's teen drivers' licensing law. The bill includes upgrades to preclude a provisional driver from driving between 10pm and 5am, unless a parent is present and requires that all passengers in vehicles driven by provisional drivers to wear seat belts at all times. Because of the distracting nature of driving with other teen passengers, the bill would also bar a provisional driver from carrying a teen passenger for the first year of driving (unless accompanied by a licensed adult driver). Safe Kids has been working in favor of the bill with the National Safety Council and other allies.

The report, "Teens in Cars," was funded as part of a \$2 million grant from the General Motors Foundation. It was based on a national survey of 1,000 teens ages 13 to 19.

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT](#)

"We all know that it only takes one time to be riding in a vehicle without buckling up for a life to be changed forever," said Kate Carr, President and CEO of Safe Kids Worldwide. "This survey illustrates that

we must be even more vigilant in our efforts to reach teens with messages that will resonate so they understand the importance of buckling up every ride, every time.”

Nationally, unintentional injury is the number one killer of kids and car crashes claim more than 25 percent of all preventable injuries in kids 19 and under. Additionally, fatalities are split almost equally between teen drivers (56 percent) and passengers (44 percent).

The report recommended that states pass laws like HB 204 to enhance teen driver and passenger safety and for Congress to increase flexibility in a federal funding program designed to encourage states to reform their GDL laws.

Tips for Families

1. Buckle up on every ride, every time. This is important for everyone, both drivers and passengers.
2. Talk to teens and kids about ways to speak up if a driver of any age isn't driving safely.
3. Be a role model in all your driving habits.

[Download the Report](#)

[Download the Infographic](#)



About Safe Kids Worldwide

[Safe Kids Worldwide](#) is a global network of organizations dedicated to providing parents and caregivers with practical and proven resources to protect kids from unintentional injuries, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. Throughout the world, almost one million children die of an injury each year, and almost all of these tragedies are preventable. Safe Kids works with an extensive network of more than 500 coalitions in the United States and in more than 25 countries to reduce traffic injuries, drownings, falls, burns, poisonings and more. Since 1988, Safe Kids has helped reduce the U.S. childhood death rate from unintentional injury by 55 percent. Working together, we can do much more for kids everywhere. Join our effort at safekids.org.

About the GM Foundation

Since its inception in 1976, the GM Foundation has donated hundreds of millions of dollars to American charities, educational organizations and to disaster relief efforts worldwide. The GM Foundation focuses on supporting Education, Health and Human Services, the Environment and Community Development initiatives, mainly in the communities where GM operates. Funding of the GM Foundation comes solely from GM. The last contribution to the GM Foundation was made in 2001. For more information, visit www.gm.com/gmfoundation.

