Motor vehicle collisions (MVC) are the number one cause of unintentional death among children ages 1 to 19 years.\(^1\)

**Fatalities**

- In 2016, \(3,183\) children\(^1\) died as occupants of motor vehicles during collisions, at a rate of \(3.88\) per 100,000 children.\(^1\)
- Between 1994 and 2016, there has been a 51 percent decrease in the number of MVC occupant deaths and a 55 percent reduction in the fatality rate.\(^1\) However, both the annual number and rate have been increasing since 2013. Between 2013 and 2016, there has been an 11 percent increase in both the number and rate of deaths.

---

\(^{1}\) For the purposes of this fact sheet, children include those ages 19 years and under. Teenagers include those ages 14 to 19 years.
• From 2007 to 2011, an average of 37 children ages 14 years and under died per year in MVCs that did not occur on public roadways, but on private land such as driveways and parking lots.²

• In 2017, 42 children, ranging in age from 5 days to 14 years, died from heatstroke or suspected heatstroke while left in cars.³

• An estimated 267 deaths per year are caused when a vehicle backs up onto a person and 31 percent of these deaths are children under 5 years of age.⁵

Non-fatal Injuries
• In 2015, there were more than 427,000 visits to Emergency Departments by children due to motor vehicle collisions.⁶

• Based on data collected in 2001-2012, an estimated 95,000 children ages 14 and under are seen in emergency rooms for not-in-traffic crash injuries each year.²

Risk Factors
• In 2016, teenagers ages 14-19 years accounted for 74 percent of MVC fatalities among children and died at more than 6 times the rate of children under 14 (9.29 per 100,000 teens versus 1.47 per 100,000 children 0 to 13 years).¹

• Boys are more likely to suffer fatal MVC injuries than girls; 61 percent of fatalities are among boys and 39 percent among girls.¹

• Fatality rates are highest among American-Indian and Alaska Native children and lowest among Asian children.¹

• While only 21 percent of the population lives in rural areas, this is where 60 percent of MVC fatalities occurred in 2016.¹

• For the 2,839 child fatalities where restrained use was known and applicable in 2016, 44 percent were unrestrained, and teens were less likely to be restrained than those under 14 years. The proportions of unrestrained fatalities by age group were 48 percent for teens, 43 percent for children ages 9 to 13 years, and 26 percent for children under 9 years.¹

Prevention
• Vehicle safety technologies first introduced in 1956, such as seat belts, air bags and electronic stability control, are responsible for 613,501 lives saved in motor vehicle collisions from 1960 to 2012.⁷

• It is estimated that in 2015 seat belts saved the lives of 13,941 children ages 5 and older, while child restraint systems were responsible for saving another 266 children under age 5.⁸
• When installed and used correctly, child safety seats decrease the risk of a fatal injury by 71 percent among infants, 54 percent among toddlers and 45 percent among children ages 4 to 8.9,10

• Back up cameras on vehicles may reduce the blind zone by an average of 94 percent.11

References


For more information or questions, contact the Research department at Safe Kids Worldwide via email at mmackay@safekids.org.