

# Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety

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The **Traffic Safety Program** promotes child and adult motor vehicle occupant protection, as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and other wheeled vehicle safety statewide through a variety of methods, including written materials, community coalitions and education.

- Always wear a seat belt.
- Children aged 5 – 8 should use a properly fitted booster seat.
- Children younger than 5 should be in an appropriate child safety seat.

## Services and Coalitions

The **CAR-SAFE Line** is a toll-free phone line for Massachusetts residents who have questions about passenger safety and related Massachusetts laws. Staff can answer specific questions about passenger safety, distribute educational materials, and refer callers to local resources. Contact the CAR-SAFE Line at **800-CAR-SAFE (800-227-7233)**.

### Find local Child Passenger Safety Technicians and Checkpoints

- [Massachusetts Highway Safety Division](#)
- [AAA Southern New England, List of Child Passenger Safety Technicians in Massachusetts](#)

**Massachusetts Partnership for Passenger Safety (PPS)** coordinates public and private resources to support the safe transportation of all motor vehicle occupants in Massachusetts. Its goal is to reduce motor vehicle related injuries and increase public awareness of passenger safety issues. The PPS is led by MDPH and includes representatives from over 20 public and private agencies. The PPS also offers a statewide Speaker's Bureau. Upon request, members of the Speaker's Bureau can provide presentations on child and youth passenger safety. For more information, please call Colleen McGuire at 617-624-6070 or [colleen.mcguire@state.ma.us](mailto:colleen.mcguire@state.ma.us)

- [Booster Seat Information \(PPT\) | Word](#)
  - [Spanish Version \(PPT\) | Word](#)
- [New Booster Seat Law Passed - Massachusetts Booster Seat FAQs \(PDF\) | Word](#)
- [Child Safety Seat Loan, Rental and Distribution Programs in Massachusetts \(PDF\) | RTF](#)
- [Selecting a Child Safety Seat \(From the Executive Office of Public Safety's Highway Safety Division\)](#)
- [Installing a Child Safety Seat \(From the Executive Office of Public Safety's Highway Safety Division\)](#)

## Massachusetts Statistics

In Massachusetts, motor vehicle traffic crashes are the second leading cause of injury death. In FY 2005, motor vehicle crashes were the third leading cause hospitalizations and the fourth leading cause of emergency department visits.

Many of the injuries and deaths could be prevented by regular use of seat belts and child safety seats. Research shows that lap/shoulder belts, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate to critical injury by 50%. While increasing safety belt use in Massachusetts has come a long way over the past decade, this state still has the second lowest reported rate of safety belt use in the nation, at just 64.8%. Careful use of alcohol in relation to driving is another important means of prevention.

- In 2005, 446 people were killed and nearly 90,000 Massachusetts residents in 2005 required hospital in-patient and emergency department treatment for injuries related to motor vehicle crashes (including occupants, motorcyclists, pedestrians, and bicyclists).
- Men in Massachusetts are 2 times more likely to die from motor vehicle injuries than are women.
- In 2005, young drivers were at highest risk for fatal motor vehicle crashes. Drivers 20-24 years old had the highest rates of motor vehicle traffic deaths, followed by teenagers 15 - 19 years old. Adults 75 and over had the third highest rate of motor vehicle traffic deaths. Motor vehicle crashes killed more young adults ages 15-24 than any other injury.
- In 2005, approximately 57% of the people killed in motor vehicle crashes in Massachusetts were unrestrained.
- In 2005, the estimated total economic cost to Massachusetts for motor vehicle crashes was over \$6.4 billion. This figure only accounts for acute medical care and does not include rehabilitation costs.

#### **The link with traumatic brain injury:**

- From 1995 to 2005, 38% of TBI deaths were to young adults 15 -24 years old.
- Motor vehicle injuries to occupants were the third leading cause of traumatic brain injury (TBI) death in Massachusetts between 1995 and 2005.
- In FY 2005, motor vehicle injuries to occupants accounted for more than a quarter of all TBI hospitalizations.

#### **The link with alcohol:**

- In 2005, of 442 persons killed in a motor vehicle crash, 39% were alcohol-related.

## Massachusetts Laws

- [Regulations related to injury](#)

## Related Links

- [Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety's Highway Safety Division](#)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) Child Passenger Safety Program](#)
- [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#)
- [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#)

- [Massachusetts Highway Department](#)
- [Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center's Injury Prevention](#)
- [Building Safe Communities](#)
- [Operation Lifesaver](#)
- [National Sleep Foundation](#)
- [Massachusetts Traffic Safety Laws](#)

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