

DEFINITION

Teen deaths is the number of deaths from all causes to teens ages 15 to 19, per 100,000 teens. The data are reported by place of residence, not place of death.

SIGNIFICANCE

The main threats to adolescents' health and safety are risk behaviors, including substance abuse and violence. Teens' emotional health, including self-esteem and mental health, further impacts their safety.¹ Risk factors for teens include drug, alcohol, or tobacco use, poverty, association with delinquent peers, poor family functioning, and academic failure.² Important factors which protect against risk behaviors are engagement in school and the presence of strong positive relationships with parents, family or other caring adults.³

According to the *2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, Rhode Island high school students are exposed to numerous risks and frequently engage in risk behaviors. Students reported the following risk behaviors at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey: 8% had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, 26% (34% of males and 19% of females) were in a physical fight and 14% of students were physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Other risk

behaviors reported by high school students included: 9% of students attempted suicide during the 12 months preceding the survey, 28% rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking, and 14% never or rarely wore a seatbelt when riding in a car.⁴

Between 2002 and 2006 there were 172 deaths of teens ages 15 to 19 in Rhode Island, a rate of 43.0 per 100,000 teens.^{5,6} Of the teens ages 15 to 19 who died between 2002 and 2006, 37% (64) lived in the core cities and 63% (108) lived in other cities/towns in Rhode Island. Of teen deaths, 50 (29%) were due to disease, 38 (22%) were due to intentional injury, 80 (47%) were due to unintentional injuries and 4 (2%) were undetermined. Of the intentional injuries, 20 were homicides and 18 were suicides.⁷

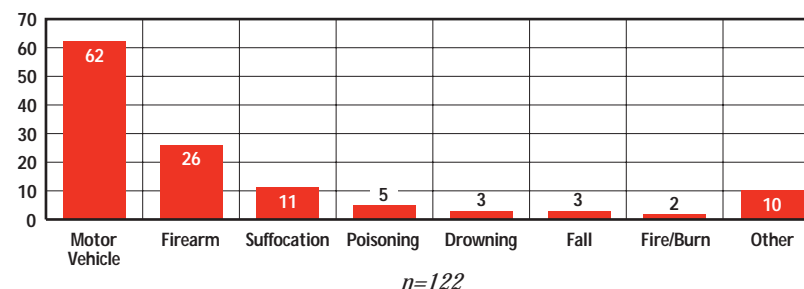
Teen Deaths (deaths per 100,000 Youth 15-19)		
	2000	2004
RI	52	54
US	67	66
National Rank*	12th	
New England Rank**	5th	

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: *Kids Count data book: State profiles in child well-being 2007*. (2007). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Injury Deaths by Cause, Teens Ages 15 to 19, 2002-2006



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006.

- ◆ Between 2002 and 2006 in Rhode Island, more than two-thirds (69%) of the 122 deaths caused by injury were unintentional or undetermined. The majority of the injury deaths (52%) were caused by motor vehicle accidents.⁸
- ◆ Among the 43 teenage boys ages 15 to 19 killed in Rhode Island motor vehicle crashes between 2002 and 2006, 20 (47%) were driving and 16 (37%) were passengers in vehicles driven by other teenage boys ages 15-19. The other 7 (16%) were passengers in cars driven by adults or were pedestrians.⁹
- ◆ In Rhode Island between 2002 and 2006, 15 teenage girls died in motor vehicle accidents. Of these, 6 (40%) were driving, 8 (53%) were passengers and one was a pedestrian. Eleven (73%) of the teenage girls who died were in vehicles driven by themselves, another teenager or a young adult.¹⁰
- ◆ More than one-third (35%) of the teen drivers who died in motor vehicle crashes between 2002 and 2006 had been drinking and 38% of teen passengers who died had also been drinking.¹¹

References

¹ *KIDS COUNT indicator brief: Reducing the teen death rate*. (2005). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

² Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. (2006). *Understanding youth violence: Fact sheet*. Retrieved January 21, 2008 from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>

³ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. (2007). *Youth violence: Fact sheet*. Retrieved January 21, 2008 from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yvfacts.htm>

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