

DEFINITION

Teen deaths are 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 illness, further impacts their safety. Risk factors for teens include poverty, diminished economic opportunity, neighborhood violence and academic failure. An important factor which protects against risk behaviors is the presence of strong positive relationships with parents, family or other caring adults and engagement in school.^{1,2}

According to the *2003 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, Rhode Island high school students are exposed to numerous risks and frequently engage in risk behaviors. Students report that at least once during the past month, 6% did not go to school because they felt unsafe. During the past year, 5% of students were injured in a physical fight requiring treatment by a health professional and 8% were physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Other risk behaviors reported by youth include, attempting suicide in the past

year (8%); riding in a vehicle during the past 30 days driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol (28%); and never or rarely wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car (16%).³

Between 1998 and 2002, there were 157 deaths of teens ages 15 to 19. Of these, 43 (27%) were due to disease, 49 (31%) were due to intentional injury and 64 (41%) were due to unintentional injuries (accidents). Of the intentional injuries, 31 were homicides and 18 were suicides. More than two-thirds of the accidental deaths involved motor vehicles.⁴

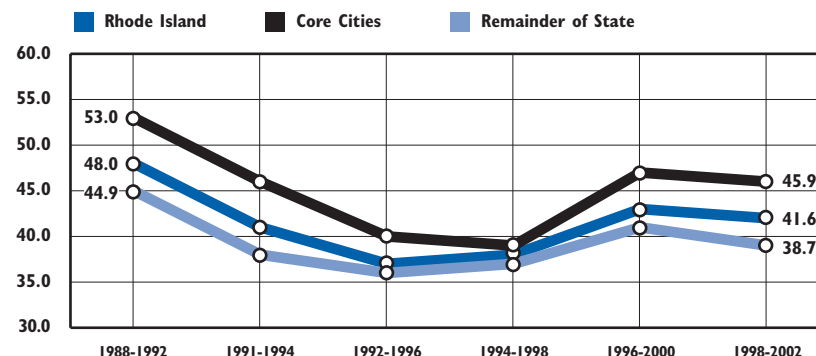
Teen Deaths by Accident, Homicide and Suicide (deaths per 100,000 Children Ages 15-19)		
	1990	2000
RI	35	40
US	71	51
National Rank*		9 th
New England Rank**		4 th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: *KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Profiles in Child Well-Being 2003*. (2003). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Teen Death Rate, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island and Core Cities, 1988-2002



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1988-2002. Data for 2000-2002 are provisional. Data for 1990 are not available. Rates per 100,000 teens age 15-19.

- ◆ During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the core cities and the remainder of the state experienced a decline in the teen death rate.⁵
- ◆ The teen death rate for the core cities remained consistently higher than the rate for the remainder of the state between 1988 and 2002.⁶

References for Indicators

¹ Resnick, et al. (September 1997). Protecting Adolescents from Harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of American Medical Association*, Vol. 10, pp. 823-32.

² *Youth Violence in the United States. (Fact Sheet)*. (January 2000). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

³ *2001 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey*. (2002). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Department of Health.

⁴ Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 1998-2002.

^{5,6} Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 1988-2002.