

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. Nationally, the most prevalent causes of teen deaths are motor vehicle accidents, homicides and suicides, all of which are preventable. Factors that protect against teen deaths include parent involvement, access to mental health services geared to adolescents, and the availability of school and community programs to reduce risk behaviors and support positive youth development.¹

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. Additionally, 9% of Rhode Island high school students attempted suicide during the 12 months preceding the survey, 28% rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking in the 30 days prior to the survey, and 14% never or rarely wore a seatbelt when riding in a car.²

Between 2003 and 2007, there were 169 deaths of teens ages 15 to 19 in Rhode Island, a rate of 42.6 per 100,000 teens.^{3,4} Of the teens ages 15 to 19 who died between 2003 and 2007, 36% (60) lived in the core cities and 109 (64%) lived in the remainder of the state. Of teen deaths, 48 (28%) were due to disease, 31 (18%) were due to intentional injury, 83 (49%) were due to unintentional injuries, 3 (2%) were due to undetermined injuries, and 4 (2%) were of unknown cause. Of the intentional injuries, 14 were homicides and 17 were suicides.⁵

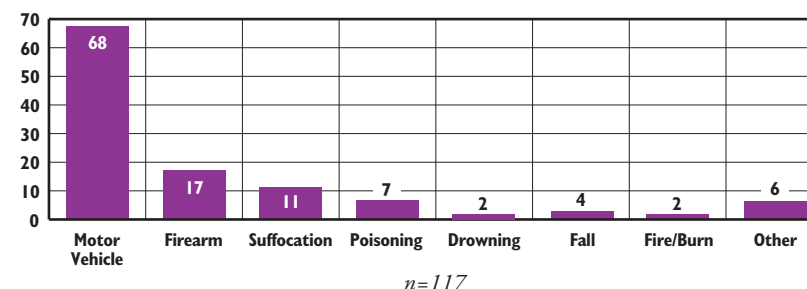
Teen Deaths (deaths per 100,000 Youth 15-19)		
	2000	2005
RI	52	39
US	67	65
National Rank*	2nd	
New England Rank**	1st	

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: *Kids Count data book: State profiles in child well-being 2008*. (2008). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Injury Deaths by Cause, Teens Ages 15 to 19, 2003-2007



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2003-2007.

- ◆ Between 2003 and 2007 in Rhode Island, nearly three-quarters (71%) of the 117 deaths caused by injury were unintentional. The majority of the injury deaths (56%) were caused by motor vehicle accidents.⁶
- ◆ Among the 43 teenage boys ages 15 to 19 killed in Rhode Island motor vehicle crashes between 2003 and 2007, 21 (49%) were driving and 15 (35%) were passengers in vehicles driven by other teenage boys ages 15-19. The other seven (16%) were passengers in cars driven by adults or were pedestrians or bicyclists.⁷
- ◆ In Rhode Island between 2003 and 2007, 18 teenage girls died in motor vehicle accidents. Of these, seven (39%) were driving, 10 (56%) were passengers and one was a pedestrian. Twelve (67%) of the teenage girls who died were in vehicles driven by themselves, another teenager or a young adult.⁸
- ◆ More than one-third (36%) of the teen drivers who died in motor vehicle crashes between 2003 and 2007 had been drinking and 38% of teen passengers who died had also been drinking.⁹

References

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

² *Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, trend analysis report*. (2007). Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis.

^{3,5,6} Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 2003-2007.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates, 2003-2007.

^{7,8,9} Department of Transportation, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 2003-2007. Analysis by the Rhode Island Department of Health, 2008.