

Graduated Drivers Licenses: Optimal systems can reduce death among young drivers

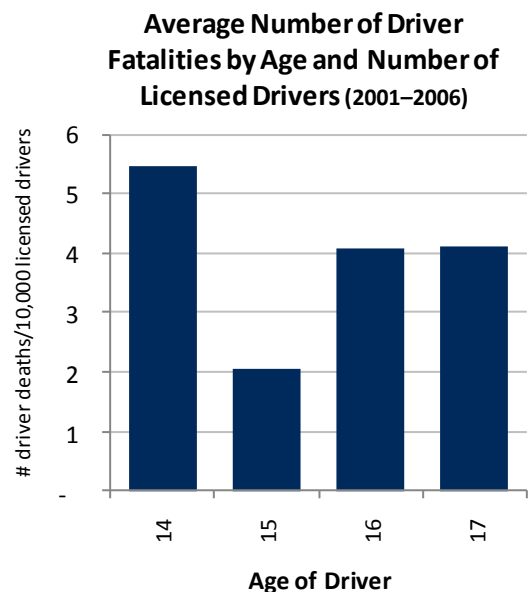
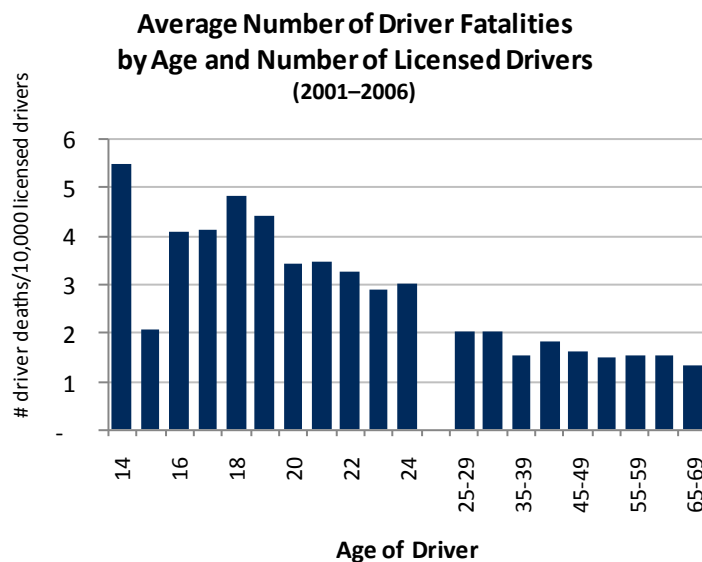


Graduated Drivers Licensing Laws

- Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for teens from 1999 to 2005, causing 78% of all Arkansas teen fatalities during that time period.
- Studies estimate a crash reduction of 20 percent to 30 percent in states with strong graduated drivers licensing (GDL) laws. Optimal GDL systems include age, night-time driving, passenger, and cell phone use restrictions as well as mandatory seat belt use.
- Compared with other states, current Arkansas law has one of the youngest eligibility ages for instructional permits (14 years); teens can advance to driving without adult supervision and without night-time restrictions by the time they are 16.

Crashes and Fatalities

- Over 6 years (2001–2006), more than 49,000 teen drivers (aged 14–17) were involved in a traffic crash in Arkansas—that’s about 158 drivers aged 14–17 having a traffic crash each week.
- During that same time period, 122 teens aged 14–17 who were driving in Arkansas were killed in a traffic crash, or 20 young drivers each year.
- The rate of crashes for teen drivers is much higher than the rate for adults; over a 6-year period, approximately 19 percent of licensed 16-year-old drivers had a crash compared to less than 8% percent of 25-year-old drivers.

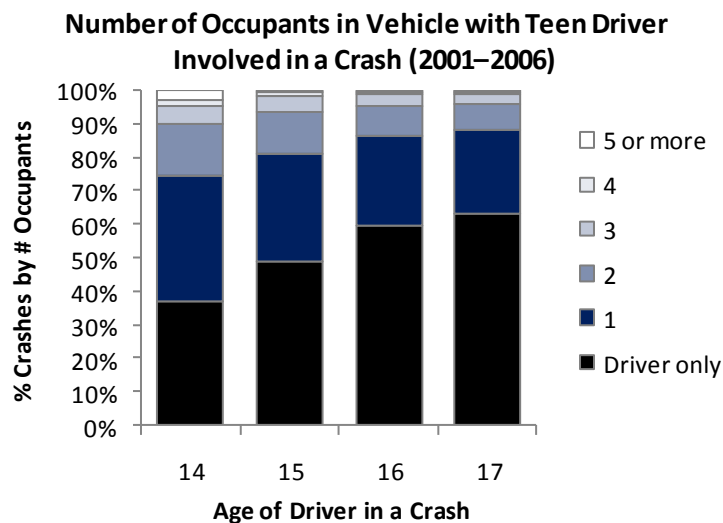


Time of Day

- A substantial number—15 percent—of fatal crashes that involve a driver aged 14 to 17 occur between the hours of 11 pm and 6 am .
- Another 14 percent of fatal crashes involving a young teen driver happen between 9 pm and 11 pm.

Occupants & Number of Vehicles Involved in Crashes with Teen Drivers

- When a teen driver has a fatal crash, more than half the time (57 percent), it is a single-vehicle crash involving only the car the teen is driving.
- The number of individuals in a car with a teen driver is often considered a distraction. In Arkansas, 2 of every 5 crashes involving a driver aged 14-17 had one or more passengers in the car with the teen driver.



Data sources: Arkansas State Police traffic crash data (2001-2006). Analyses reflect the number of *drivers* involved in crashes. Certain vehicle types were excluded from the analyses, e.g., buses, motorcycles, ATVs, and farm equipment. Other information sources: U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), the Arkansas Children's Hospital Injury Prevention Center, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.