

Motor Vehicle-Related Deaths Among Older Americans Fact Sheet:

Key statistics:

- For people 65-84 years old, death rates due to motor vehicle crashes are about 1.7 times higher for men than for women.
- For people older than 85 years, the rate for men is about three times the rate for women.²
- During the past decade, the number of licensed drivers aged 70 years or older has increased by nearly 50%.³ As the U.S. population ages, that number will continue to increase.

Compiled by the Men's Health Network : Washington, D.C. : www.menshealthnetwork.org

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/older.htm> (downloaded 4-18-99)

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)

Motor Vehicle-Related Deaths Among Older Americans Fact Sheet (excerpts)

How large is the problem of motor vehicle-related deaths among older Americans?

- In 1996, 7,078 people aged 65 years or older died of injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes.¹ Of those who died, 80% were occupants of motor vehicles and 17% were pedestrians.
- For people 65-84 years old, death rates due to motor vehicle crashes are about 1.7 times higher for men than for women. For those older than 85 years, the rate for men is about three times the rate for women.²
- During the past decade, the number of licensed drivers aged 70 years or older has increased by nearly 50%.³ As the U.S. population ages, that number will continue to increase.

Are motor vehicle-related death rates for older people higher than those for other age groups?

- Motor vehicle-related death rates per 100,000 are higher for people 70 years old or older than for people in any other group except those younger than 25 years.¹
- Per mile driven, drivers 75 years old or older have higher rates of motor vehicle crashes that result in someone's death than do drivers in all other age groups except teenagers.¹

What factors contribute to older people's high rate of death due to motor vehicle crashes?

- Age-related declines in sensory (e.g., vision or hearing) and cognitive functions, and physical impairments due to medical conditions may affect some older people's driving ability.⁴
- Older people who are injured in motor vehicle crashes are more likely to die of their injuries than are people in other age groups.¹
- About half of fatal crashes involving drivers 80 years old or older occur at intersections and involve more than one vehicle.¹

What are older drivers doing to reduce their risk of injury due to motor vehicle crashes?

- As a group, adults aged 70 years or older wear safety belts more often than does any other age group except infants and preschool children.⁵
- Older drivers tend to drive when conditions are safest.⁶ They limit their driving during bad weather and at night, and they drive fewer miles than younger drivers do.
- Older drivers are less likely to drink and drive.⁷ In 1996, drivers younger than 70 years old who died in motor vehicle crashes were five times more likely than those 70 years old or older to be intoxicated (blood alcohol concentration of at least 0.10 grams per deciliter).²

Do older drivers pose more of a risk for injury to others on the road than younger drivers do?

- A study of crashes involving older drivers in Wisconsin found that drivers 65-74 years old did not pose a greater risk of serious injury or death for others than younger drivers did.⁸ For drivers aged 75-84, the results were inconclusive.

References

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