

Traffic Safety Facts

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2007 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (MVOSS) Results: Crash Injuries and Emergency Medical Services

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conducts the Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (MVOSS) on a periodic basis to monitor the public's attitudes, knowledge, and self-reported behavior regarding occupant protection devices (seat belts, child restraints, air bags). The 2007 survey consisted of two questionnaires, each administered by telephone to a randomly selected national sample of about 6,000 persons age 16 and older. Interviewing ran from January 9, 2007 to April 30, 2007.

Following are selected findings from Volume 4 in the series of NHTSA reports that present detailed results from the survey. Volume 4 addresses crash injury, emergency medical services (EMS), and driver use of wireless phones. All information provided is based on self-report.

1 out of 4 Have Suffered Crash Injuries

Just over one-quarter (26%) of people 16 and older reported ever having been injured in a motor vehicle crash where they required medical attention. The proportions for males and females were about the same, 25% and 26% respectively.

About 1% (1.1%) of the total population 16 and older incurred a crash injury in the past year; 8% incurred crash injury in the past 5 years (this includes the 1% during the past year). More than one-third (35%) of those who sustained a crash injury during the past year were under age 25. Figure 1 shows the higher crash injury rates during the past year among the youngest age groups.

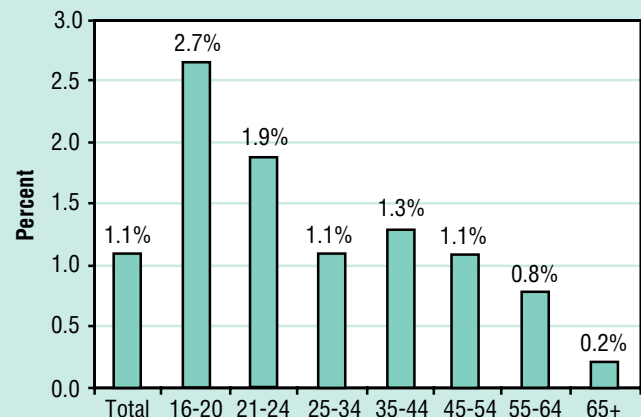
Those who received a crash-related injury requiring medical attention at any time in the past were asked where they were treated for the injuries. If they were injured in multiple crashes, then respondents were asked to provide information only on the most recent crash (this was true for all questions). They were given the opportunity to report more than one type of treatment site if they received treatment at more than one place. Most (76%) were treated in a hospital emergency room. Forty percent were treated at the crash scene and 34% were treated in a doctor's office.

Nearly one-fourth (24%) of those injured in a vehicle crash ended up hospitalized. Hospitalization was more likely if

the individual had not been wearing a seat belt, with 32% of nonusers being hospitalized compared to 19% of those wearing a seat belt. More than one-half (56%) of those ever injured received follow-up treatment, most often in a doctor's office (44%).

Almost one-half (47%) of crash injuries occurred within 5

Figure 1: Percent of Population Crash-Injured In Past Year by Age



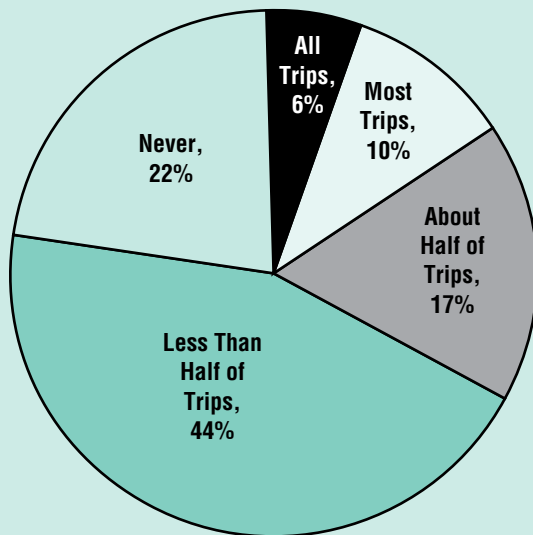
miles of home. Most often, crash injury victims were going home (43%), to work (13%), or to a friend's home (10%) when the crash occurred. These were also the most common locations from which the crash victims began their trips that resulted in injury (40% coming from home, 18% from work, and 12% from a friend's home).

Overall, 26% of the total population 16 and older had been injured in a vehicle crash to the extent of needing medical attention. More than one-half of those ever injured, or 15% of the total population, had at some time been unable to perform some of their normal activities for at least a week because of the crash. Four percent of the total population was unable to resume some of their normal activities even a year after the crash.

Wireless Phone Use

More than 8-in-10 drivers (81%) 16 or older usually have a wireless phone in their vehicles when they drive. Most of them said they keep the phone turned on so they can receive calls during all (74%) or most (12%) trips. And about one-third (33%) said they talk on the phone during half or more of their trips while driving (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: How Often Talk On Phone While Driving



Drivers who said they at least on occasion talked on the phone while driving were asked if they tend to hold the phone by hand when using it, or tend to use the phone hands free. More than one-half (54%) tend to hold the phone by hand. Among the 45% who typically use the phone hands free, more than one-half (53%) said they always use the phone hands free.

Drivers who at least on occasion talk on the phone while driving were asked what they do when they want to dial the phone. Thirty-two percent said they tended to dial while driving, 37% said they tended to dial while temporarily stopped, and 19% said they tended to pull over and stop before dialing.

Emergency Medical Services

Forty-four percent of persons 16 or older have called 9-1-1 or some other emergency number at some time in the past. More than one-half (53%) called for an ambulance, rescue squad, or EMS; 28% called for the police; and 11% called for the fire department. About one-third of those who had called an emergency number had done so in the past week (2%), month (7%), or year (24%). That translated into 14% of the total population 16 or older having called an emergency number within the past year.

About two-thirds of people (69%) expected an ambulance to arrive within 10 minutes of being called for a medical emergency in the neighborhood. African-Americans (60%) and Hispanics (63%) were less likely to expect arrival within 10 minutes than were Whites (72%) and non-Hispanics (71%). Similarly, African-Americans (59%) and Hispanics (57%) were less likely to be very confident that the emergency workers would know what to do than were Whites (70%) and non-Hispanics (69%).

Respondents were asked how interested they would be in taking training to become an EMS provider, assuming it was low cost and convenient. About two-in-five said they would be very interested (13%) or somewhat interested (25%). Interest in such a course was inversely related to age, that is, as people got older, interest declined. More than one-half in the 16-to-20 (64%), 21-to-24 (57%) and 25-to-34 (51%) age groups said they would be very interested or somewhat interested. From this point, interest declined to 38% in the 35-to-44 age group, 34% in the 45-to-54 age group, 25% in the 55-to-64 age group, and 14% for those 65 and older.

How to Order

For a copy of *2007 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey, Volume 4 Crash Injury and Emergency Medical Services Report* (62 pages plus appendix) prepared by Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, Inc., write to the Office of Behavioral Safety Research, NHTSA, NTI-130, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, or send a fax to 202-366-7394, or download from www.nhtsa.dot.gov. Alan Block was the project manager for this study.



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