

Teen Deaths

Definition

Teen deaths is the number of deaths among youth ages 15-19 and the rate per 100,000 youth ages 15-19.

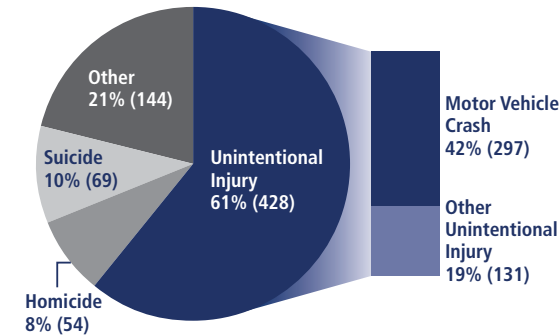
Data in context

All teens need to live in a safe and healthy community to maximize their opportunities in life. For some youth, ineffective or absent safety laws, unsupportive environments, and/or violence silence those opportunities. In 2004, Kentucky ranked 44th in the nation for deaths among teens with a rate of 95 per 100,000 compared to 66 deaths per 100,000 nationally.¹ The current rank represents a steady decline in national standings as well as a decline from the rates from previous years.

Most teen deaths nationally and in Kentucky result from unintentional injuries. Among Hispanic and White youth in Kentucky, unintentional injuries accounted for more than 60 percent of deaths, compared to fewer than a third of deaths among Black youth. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injuries, as well as overall teen deaths, accounting for 46 percent of all teen deaths in Kentucky in 2004.² In 2006, Kentucky legislators passed an extensive graduated licensing bill for teen drivers, which extends the time required to hold a permit, restricts the number of passengers under age 20, and requires a specific number of driving hours before receiving an intermediate license. The safety benefits of graduated licensing have been proven effective in reducing the number and severity of crashes experienced by young drivers in the United States and abroad.³

Although teen suicide occurs less frequently, the impact on a community is just as profound. Across the nation, teen suicide accounted for 12 percent of all teen deaths in 2004.⁴ The 2004 rate of suicide among teens represented an increase over 2003 after many years of decline.⁵ In 2005, 16.9 percent of high school teens reported contemplating suicide and nearly half of these reported attempting suicide as well.⁶ Suicide was the second leading cause of death among teens, behind unintentional injuries, across Kentucky in 2004.⁷

Causes of Death among Teens, 2003–2005



Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Vital Statistics Branch, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Suicide was more prevalent among White youth than youth of color in Kentucky, accounting for 10 percent of all deaths among White youth in 2003-2005, compared to 8 percent of deaths among Hispanic youth and 6 percent of deaths among Black youth.

All teens need safe and healthy communities in which to thrive, yet some teens live in neighborhoods lacking resources and opportunities to support success in school and work. The potential for some teens is cut short by homicide. In Kentucky in 2004, 9 percent of teen deaths were the result of homicide, with 75 percent of these deaths involving a firearm.⁸ While the number of deaths by homicide is highest among White youth (28 deaths), the higher proportion of Black youth living in unsafe neighborhoods contributes to higher rates (38 percent of all deaths among Black youth).

Kentucky's teen death rate increased from 76 per 100,000 in 1999-2001 to 84 per 100,000 in 2003-2005. Teen death rates for Black youth are slightly lower than those for White youth (82 per 100,000 and 85 per 100,000, respectively). Though the number of deaths among Hispanic youth is small, the rate of deaths was nearly twice the state rate.

Among counties for which rates are calculated during 2003-2005, those experiencing at least six deaths, Hardin County had the lowest rate at 39 per 100,000 deaths. Ten counties had more than double

the state rate: Breckinridge, Carter, Casey, Larue, Letcher, McCreary, Magoffin, Trigg, Wayne, and Whitley Counties. The counties with the largest number of teen deaths include the most populous counties, Fayette, Jefferson, and Kenton Counties.

With the formation of the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group in 2002 and the recently implemented graduated licensing program, Kentucky will likely see a decrease in teen death numbers in the coming years. The state's efforts to focus on the unintentional teen death rate, usually associated with motor vehicle accidents, are expected to have the biggest impact on lowering teen death rates.

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Vital Statistics Branch, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute. Number of youth in 2000 from the U.S. Decennial Census. Number of youth in 2004 from Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Data Note: All data refer to totals over the 3-year periods of 1999-2001 and 2003-2005. Data are reported by youth's county of residence.

Rate Calculation: (average number of deaths among youth ages 15-19 between 1999-2001 * 100,000) / (number of youth ages 15-19 in 2000)
(average number of deaths among youth ages 15-19 between 2003-2005 * 100,000) / (number of youth ages 15-19 in 2004)

- 1 Annie E. Casey Foundation (2007). *2007 KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. WISQARS data online. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Accessed August 2007.
- 3 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2007). *Q&A: Teenagers – Graduated Driver Licensing*. Available at <http://www.iihs.org>. Accessed August 2007.
- 4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. WISQARS data online. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Accessed August 2007.
- 5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007). "Suicide Trends Among Youth and Adults Aged 10-24 Years – United States 1990-2004." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 56, no. 35.
- 6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. WISQARS data online. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Accessed August 2007.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.

Teen deaths (number & rate per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)

	1999-2001		2003-2005	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Kentucky	655	76	697	84
Adair	3	*	2	*
Allen	3	*	1	*
Anderson	4	*	4	*
Ballard	2	*	1	*
Barren	3	*	10	142
Bath	3	*	2	*
Bell	3	*	3	*
Boone	9	49	5	*
Bourbon	1	*	2	*
Boyd	7	70	7	76
Boyle	4	*	6	103
Bracken	0	*	1	*
Breathitt	5	*	2	*
Breckinridge	3	*	7	185
Bullitt	7	53	13	95
Butler	2	*	3	*
Caldwell	2	*	2	*
Calloway	6	66	5	*
Campbell	8	41	11	58
Carlisle	2	*	0	*
Carroll	2	*	4	*
Carter	3	*	12	226
Casey	4	*	8	263
Christian	15	97	9	63
Clark	10	152	6	94
Clay	3	*	4	*
Clinton	3	*	3	*
Crittenden	1	*	4	*
Cumberland	2	*	1	*
Daviess	10	48	12	62
Edmonson	1	*	1	*
Elliott	2	*	1	*
Estill	5	*	5	*
Fayette	36	65	35	66
Fleming	3	*	3	*
Floyd	8	86	3	*
Franklin	6	61	4	*
Fulton	3	*	0	*
Gallatin	1	*	1	*
Garrard	2	*	5	*

	1999-2001		2003-2005	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Grant	5	*	5	*
Graves	14	185	6	82
Grayson	7	140	3	*
Green	0	*	3	*
Greenup	5	*	6	82
Hancock	1	*	3	*
Hardin	25	106	9	39
Harlan	2	*	6	93
Harrison	7	182	5	*
Hart	3	*	6	166
Henderson	4	*	6	71
Henry	1	*	2	*
Hickman	2	*	1	*
Hopkins	3	*	5	*
Jackson	1	*	5	*
Jefferson	96	71	89	69
Jessamine	9	101	10	109
Johnson	3	*	6	128
Kenton	11	36	23	75
Knott	4	*	2	*
Knox	4	*	5	*
Larue	3	*	6	224
Laurel	11	100	14	137
Lawrence	8	227	0	*
Lee	2	*	0	*
Leslie	5	*	4	*
Letcher	6	104	12	251
Lewis	4	*	3	*
Lincoln	4	*	5	*
Livingston	2	*	5	*
Logan	3	*	6	121
Lyon	2	*	0	*
McCracken	8	63	8	70
McCreary	8	186	10	251
McLean	1	*	0	*
Madison	6	32	9	48
Magoffin	1	*	8	306
Marion	5	*	1	*
Marshall	3	*	5	*
Martin	2	*	5	*
Mason	3	*	3	*

	1999-2001		2003-2005	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Meade	10	174	3	*
Menifee	0	*	2	*
Mercer	7	180	2	*
Metcalfe	2	*	3	*
Monroe	4	*	1	*
Montgomery	2	*	6	143
Morgan	0	*	5	*
Muhlenberg	6	91	3	*
Nelson	7	84	4	*
Nicholas	5	*	0	*
Ohio	4	*	1	*
Oldham	9	94	7	61
Owen	3	*	2	*
Owsley	1	*	2	*
Pendleton	2	*	3	*
Perry	10	152	7	114
Pike	12	82	15	119
Powell	5	*	1	*
Pulaski	10	90	14	128
Robertson	0	*	0	*
Rockcastle	2	*	2	*
Rowan	6	82	6	87
Russell	1	*	4	*
Scott	6	78	8	100
Shelby	4	*	6	81
Simpson	3	*	2	*
Spencer	1	*	4	*
Taylor	3	*	5	*
Todd	1	*	3	*
Trigg	2	*	6	246
Trimble	3	*	2	*
Union	5	*	2	*
Warren	7	28	13	56
Washington	2	*	2	*
Wayne	5	*	7	177
Webster	2	*	1	*
Whitley	6	70	15	179
Wolfe	1	*	2	*
Woodford	5	*	8	163

* Rates were not calculated for counties with fewer than 6 occurrences.