

TEEN DEATHS

Definition

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

Data in context

Teen years are a period of transition into adulthood for youth and can include increased exposure to health and safety risks. Ineffective or absent safety laws, under-resourced environments, and violence silence opportunities for some youth. The most prevalent causes of teen deaths in the United States – motor vehicle crashes, homicide, and suicide – are also the most preventable.¹

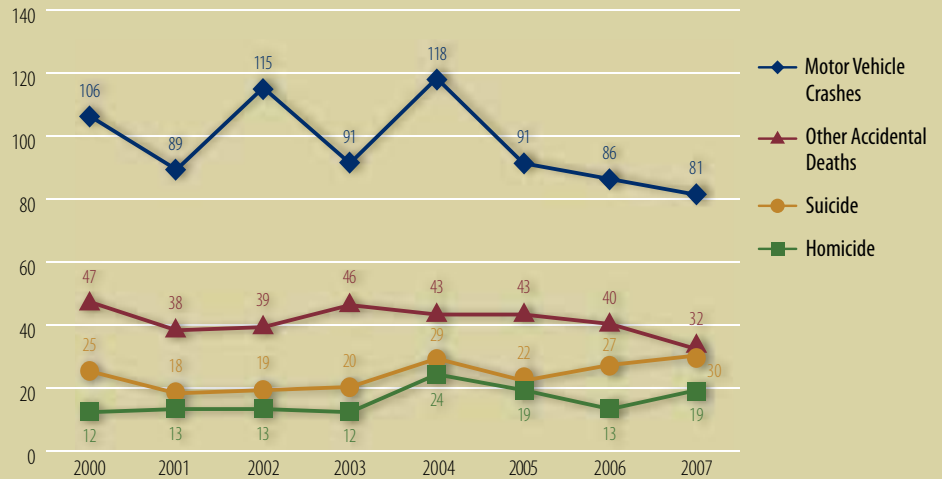
In 2006, Kentucky ranked 32nd in the nation for deaths among teens with a rate of 75 per 100,000 compared to 64 deaths per 100,000 nationally.² Since 2000, Kentucky's teen death rate has improved at a faster pace than the nation's rate.³ Significant improvements in 2006 to Kentucky's graduated driver's license and seat belt laws have saved teen lives. The 2007 rate for teen deaths resulting from motor vehicle crashes was the lowest since 2000.⁴

Of counties with rates calculated, Boone, Fayette, and Madison Counties had the lowest rates of teen deaths between 2005 and 2007. Death rates were more than double the state rate in Butler, Casey, Crittenden, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mercer, Morgan, Russell, and Whitley Counties.

In Kentucky, teen death rates for White youth are higher than those for Black youth (75 per 100,000 and 67 per 100,000, respectively). Though the number of deaths among Hispanic youth accounts for only 3 percent of all Kentucky teen deaths, the rate of 110 per 100,000 is notably higher than the state rate, primarily due to a high rate of unintentional injuries. Among all races, the majority of teen deaths result from unintentional injuries, with motor vehicle crashes accounting for 69 percent of these unintentional injury fatalities in Kentucky between 2005 and 2007.⁵ The rates for motor vehicle crash fatalities vary greatly between races and ethnicities.⁶ While the disparities in the data are not fully understood, encouraging safe driving practices among all teens is important. Seat belt usage, avoidance of multi-tasking while driving, and not driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol must be taught and modeled by the adults in teens' lives.⁷

Suicide was the second leading cause of death among teens in Kentucky between 2005 and 2007, with factors such as family history of suicide, depression or other mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, and access to lethal methods increasing the risk of suicide.^{8,9} The suicide rate for Kentucky's teens is at its highest since 2000, with suicide accounting for 13 percent of Kentucky

Injury Deaths among Teens Ages 15-19 by Cause



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

teen deaths from 2005 to 2007. Suicide was more prevalent among White youth than youth of color in Kentucky, accounting for 13 percent of all deaths among White youth in 2005-2007, as compared to 11 percent of deaths among Hispanic youth and 9 percent of deaths among Black youth.¹⁰ This data points to the need for targeted prevention efforts and increased access to mental health services for adolescents.

Youth violence is a significant cause of death among older youth and young adults in the United States.¹¹ Exposure to domestic violence in the home, school disengagement, social alienation, and lack of employment opportunities are among the leading predictors for youth violence.¹² Homicide was the third leading cause of teen deaths in Kentucky between 2005 and 2007, and these deaths can be prevented by providing youth with safe environments and positive connections to their community.¹³ In Kentucky, 8 percent of teen deaths resulted from homicide. The higher proportion of Black youth living in under-resourced neighborhoods contributes to higher rates of death due to homicide for Black youth compared to youth of other races and ethnicities. Successful prevention strategies include parent- and family-based programs to reduce violence in the home, teaching conflict resolution skills to youth, and mentoring programs to provide adult role models for at-risk youth.¹⁴

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 2006 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 2005-2007. Data for 2007 is preliminary. 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 2005-2007 * 100,000) / (number of youth ages 15-19 in 2006)

TEEN DEATHS

(number & rate per 100,000 youth ages 15-19)

	1999-2001		2005-2007	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Kentucky	655	76	628	75
Adair	3	*	1	*
Allen	3	*	2	*
Anderson	4	*	0	*
Ballard	2	*	2	*
Barren	3	*	8	111
Bath	3	*	2	*
Bell	3	*	7	125
Boone	9	49	7	32
Bourbon	1	*	2	*
Boyd	7	70	5	*
Boyle	4	*	2	*
Bracken	0	*	1	*
Breathitt	5	*	3	*
Breckinridge	3	*	1	*
Bullitt	7	53	9	63
Butler	2	*	6	214
Caldwell	2	*	3	*
Calloway	6	66	5	*
Campbell	8	41	10	53
Carlisle	2	*	1	*
Carroll	2	*	1	*
Carter	3	*	5	*
Casey	4	*	9	306
Christian	15	97	9	53
Clark	10	152	3	*
Clay	3	*	5	*
Clinton	3	*	2	*
Crittenden	1	*	6	338
Cumberland	2	*	1	*
Daviess	10	48	9	47
Edmonson	1	*	1	*
Elliott	2	*	1	*
Estill	5	*	3	*
Fayette	36	65	23	42
Fleming	3	*	3	*
Floyd	8	86	5	*
Franklin	6	61	3	*
Fulton	3	*	0	*
Gallatin	1	*	2	*
Garrard	2	*	3	*
Grant	5	*	6	122
Graves	14	185	6	82
Grayson	7	140	3	*
Green	0	*	3	*
Greenup	5	*	5	*
Hancock	1	*	3	*
Hardin	25	106	13	57
Harlan	2	*	9	145
Harrison	7	182	4	*
Hart	3	*	4	*
Henderson	4	*	6	71
Henry	1	*	3	*
Hickman	2	*	1	*
Hopkins	3	*	8	92
Jackson	1	*	5	*
Jefferson	96	71	78	59
Jessamine	9	101	11	112
Johnson	3	*	5	*
Kenton	11	36	14	45
Knott	4	*	4	*

	1999-2001		2005-2007	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Knox	4	*	4	*
LaRue	3	*	2	*
Laurel	11	100	15	148
Lawrence	8	227	4	*
Lee	2	*	4	*
Leslie	5	*	2	*
Letcher	6	104	4	*
Lewis	4	*	3	*
Lincoln	4	*	8	175
Livingston	2	*	5	*
Logan	3	*	8	159
Lyon	2	*	0	*
McCracken	8	63	4	*
McCreary	8	186	4	*
McLean	1	*	1	*
Madison	6	32	8	41
Magoffin	1	*	3	*
Marion	5	*	2	*
Marshall	3	*	9	161
Martin	2	*	4	*
Mason	3	*	3	*
Meade	10	174	3	*
Menifee	0	*	0	*
Mercer	7	180	6	157
Metcalfe	2	*	3	*
Monroe	4	*	1	*
Montgomery	2	*	4	*
Morgan	0	*	7	269
Muhlenberg	6	91	3	*
Nelson	7	84	8	96
Nicholas	5	*	2	*
Ohio	4	*	0	*
Oldham	9	94	3	*
Owen	3	*	1	*
Owsley	1	*	3	*
Pendleton	2	*	3	*
Perry	10	152	8	135
Pike	12	82	13	104
Powell	5	*	3	*
Pulaski	10	90	10	91
Robertson	0	*	0	*
Rockcastle	2	*	3	*
Rowan	6	82	5	*
Russell	1	*	7	222
Scott	6	78	5	*
Shelby	4	*	6	80
Simpson	3	*	2	*
Spencer	1	*	3	*
Taylor	3	*	6	119
Todd	1	*	4	*
Trigg	2	*	2	*
Trimble	3	*	2	*
Union	5	*	0	*
Warren	7	28	13	55
Washington	2	*	5	*
Wayne	5	*	5	*
Webster	2	*	2	*
Whitley	6	70	13	152
Wolfe	1	*	1	*
Woodford	5	*	4	*

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