

VEHICLE SAFETY

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among youth aged 15 to 19 in the United States⁽¹⁾ and alcohol use is associated with 18% of all traffic fatalities among drivers 16 to 20 years of age.⁽²⁾ In 2008, drivers aged 16 to 29 accounted for almost 40% of distracted driving crashes.⁽³⁾ Safety belts, when used appropriately, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45%.⁽⁴⁾

2013 New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS) Highlights

- **Drinking and Driving:** During the past 30 days, 20% rode with a driver who had been drinking and 9% drove after drinking.
- **Distracted Driving:** During the past 30 days, 38% of those who drove talked on a cell phone while driving and 36% texted or emailed while driving.
- **Seat Belts:** 10% “never” or “rarely” wore a seat belt when riding in a car.

Vehicle Safety by Demographic Subgroups

By gender, male students were slightly more likely than females (22% vs. 18%) to ride with someone who had been drinking during the past 30 days. By race/ethnicity, among students who drove, White students were the most likely to talk on a cell phone (44%) or text (41%) while driving. Hispanic (17%) and Black (13%) students were the most likely to say that they “never” or “rarely” wore a seat belt. (Due to small sample sizes, conclusions in terms of race/ethnicity should be made with caution.)

NJSHS Trend Analysis: 2001-2013 Vehicle Safety

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who:	2001	2005	2009	2011	2013	Trend Analysis	
Rode with a Driver who was Drinking <i>rode with someone who was drinking and driving (past 30 days)</i>	30%	28%	23%	21%	20%		
Drove after Drinking <i>drove a vehicle after drinking (past 30 days)</i>	13%	10%	8%	6%	9%	--	
Seatbelt Use <i>“never” or “rarely” wore a seatbelt while riding in a car</i>	15%	8%	8%	11%	10%		
Talked on Cellphone While Driving <i>talked on a cellphone while driving (past 30 days)</i>	--	--	--	46%	38%		
Texted/Emailed While Driving <i>texted or emailed while driving (past 30 days)</i>	--	--	--	48%	36%	--	
Increase in a negative behavior	Decrease in a negative behavior		Increase in a positive behavior	Decrease in a positive behavior		No change in behavior	Trend not reported by CDC
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Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2001 to 2013 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2013 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

Summary of Trend: The rates of both riding with a driver who had been drinking and of “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt have exhibited positive trends over the years. Riding with a driver who had been drinking dropped to 20% in 2013 from 30% in 2001. The percentage of people who “never” or “rarely” wore a seatbelt fell to 10% in 2013 from 15% in 2001. Both of these relationships were confirmed as statistically significant by CDC analysis. The percentage of students who drove after drinking has fluctuated over this period and thus was deemed to have no overall linear change. In 2013, rates fell for both talking on a cell phone (46% vs. 38%) and texting or emailing (48% vs. 36%) while driving in the past 30 days. (The decrease in talking on a cell phone while driving was not considered statistically significant, likely due to the small number of high school students who drive.)