

Young driver deaths – it's not all about the driver

Thursday 5 June, 2014

The number of drivers aged 17-24 killed in an accident has decreased by 10 per cent since 2010, according to the latest analysis by road safety charity Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

In the same time frame, the number of 17 – 24 year old passengers killed in a car with a young driver (aged 17-24) has decreased by 24 per cent. The difference in figure could be due to the general improvement in safety on our roads, fewer young people passing the test, ongoing campaigns and enforcement and the recession.

Younger drivers are more likely to travel with passengers of a similar age but the risk goes up with every extra passenger. A study from the USA showed that a young driver's chances of being killed went up 44 per cent with one passenger, 90 per cent with two and 300 per cent with three or more.¹

In 2012, 133 drivers aged 17-24 were killed alongside 71 young passengers. The previous year (2011), there 148 drivers aged 17-24 killed as well as 93 young passengers.

These figures are still completely unacceptable with new drivers far more likely to cause their passengers' death than any other age group. New drivers and their passengers also have far more life changing catastrophic crashes with lifelong injuries than any other age group.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "Road safety has been improving for everyone in the UK in recent years and that is reflected in the improved situation for new drivers. But, it's worrying that our younger people are still at such high risk of causing death and injury to themselves. These figures show an urgent need to improve awareness of the risks for younger drivers and their passengers."

"We know that inexperience and overconfidence are significant factors in crashes among the younger age group and addressing this issue must be a top priority. By delaying its Green paper the government has missed a great opportunity to provide better training, more support and learning from a younger age. In the meantime parents and young people should follow the IAM's tips for young passengers to maximise the chances of survival."

The IAM's top tips for young passengers:

More passengers equals more risk so don't overload the car as it will handle differently and the driver may not know how to deal with that
Don't distract the driver by trying to show him or her stuff on your phone
Don't give in to peer pressure – if others are being stupid don't get involved
Never get in a car with a young driver who has been drinking
Agree with parents you can call them up or they will pay for a taxi if you have worries about your lift
Risk is highest at night and on country roads - make sure your mate knows where they are going and has put in the hours learning how to cope with a wide variety of roads
ENDS

Notes to editors

Improving the safety of young drivers:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/~media/Files/Documents/Publications/Public/Migrated/Motor/Improving the safety of young drivers.ashx>.

The IAM is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 200 local volunteer groups and over 100,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving, motorcycling and cycling courses. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.

ENDS ALL

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