

Data Shows Drinking Age Saves Lives

From: *The Bulletin* February 2009

Minimum 21-year-old drinking age laws prevented an estimated 4,441 drunken driving deaths in the last five years alone, according to a new report released recently by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (NHTSA)

NHTSA Acting Administrator David Kelly, who presented the report at a symposium on the subject led by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) said, "Turning our back on these laws would be a deadly mistake. Minimum drinking age laws are among the most effective measures ever used to reduce drunken driving deaths among America's young people."

In addition to estimating lives saved due to 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws, the new NHTSA study shows the number of lives saved by motorcycle helmets has risen sharply in recent years, paralleling an increase in motorcycle use. Agency estimates indicate that lives saved by helmets rose from 1,173 in 2003 to 1,784 in 2007. For the five year period ending last year, fully 7,502 lives were spared because motorcyclists used helmets.

The news statistical report examined a series of additional safety issues, and showed that in 2007 alone: frontal air bags saved 2,788 passengers age 13 and older; child safety seats saved 358 lives of children age 4 and under; seat belts saved 15,147 and could have saved another 5,024 lives had they been worn by all vehicle occupants involved in fatal crashes.

Borrowed from: Southeast ACTS Newsletter, January 2009