

SAFER

SAFER ACCESS FOR EVERYONE ON THE ROADWAYS



SAFER FOR
CHILDREN

SAFER FOR
TEENS

SAFER FOR
HIGHWAY WORKERS

SAFER FOR YOU



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“ In 2023, the General Assembly passed the Siddens Bening Hands-Free Law, banning the use of handheld electronic devices while operating a vehicle. This was a huge step in the right direction to eliminate the thousands of distracted driving crashes on Missouri roads each year... but it’s only the start. ”

Missouri is facing unprecedented safety challenges.

With 1,057 deaths, Missouri traffic fatalities reached a 15-year high in 2022, the second year in a row of a simply unacceptable record. Of that number, 382 were unbuckled.

This figure only scratches the surface of our problem as speed, distraction and impairment also contribute significantly to traffic fatalities in Missouri.

While these behaviors reflect actions of individuals, public policy can help create a culture in which dangerous behaviors are considered unacceptable. Missouri is falling short on the majority of transportation safety legislation based on recommendations from the National Safety Council and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. Addressing these issues could save hundreds of lives on roadways every year.

We’re pleased to see the recent progress on this front in the realm of public policy. In 2023, the General Assembly passed the Siddens Bening Hands-Free Law, banning the use of handheld electronic devices while operating a vehicle. This was a huge step in the right direction to eliminate the thousands of distracted driving crashes on Missouri roads each year. Additionally, legislation was filed addressing eight more of the recommendations outlined in this document. This is a welcome progression toward safer roads, but it’s only the start.

As an advocate and defender of public safety, MoDOT is stepping forward again this legislative session to be the voice for change. It is our duty to educate policy makers and the public on these issues. Coupled with the renewed investments by policy makers at the state and federal levels, safety policy improvements can create a safer system for all.

We are targeting four areas of safety that can be improved – or even resolved – by changes in our current statutes. These areas include making our roads Safer for Our Children, Safer for Our Teens, Safer for Our Highway Workers, and Safer for You.

By tackling these issues in the legislative arena, we hope not only to bring awareness to these topics but produce tangible results in the form of new laws that will make sure our kids make it to graduation, our workers make it home from their shift, and you arrive at your destination safely. Every time.

Please join us to provide safer access for everyone on Missouri’s roadways.



Terry Ecker
Chairman, Missouri Highways and
Transportation Commission



Patrick K. McKenna
Director, MoDOT

EXISTING POLICIES

- ✓ BAC License Revocation
- ✓ Good Samaritan
- ✓ In-Person License Renewal
- ✓ Medical Review Board
- ✓ GDL Holding Period
- ✓ Child Endangerment
- ✓ Hands-Free for All Drivers
- ✗ Rear Facing Through Age 2 *
- ✗ Booster Seat *
- ✗ Children Left in Hot Cars *
- ✗ Bicycle Helmets for Young Riders
- ✗ Cell Phone Ban for Teens and Novice Drivers *
- ✗ GDL Young Passenger Restriction
- ✗ GDL Nighttime Restriction
- ✗ GDL Stronger Supervised Driving Requirement
- ✗ GDL Minimum Age 16 for Learner's Permit
- ✗ GDL Age 18 for Unrestricted License
- ✗ Automated Enforcement
- ✗ Endangerment of a Highway Worker *
- ✗ Ignition Interlock *
- ✗ Open Container *
- ✗ Primary Seat Belt *
- ✗ Motorcycle Helmets
- ✗ Electric Bicycles

** Legislation filed in 2023*

A photograph of a young child sitting in a car seat, secured with a harness. The child is wearing a light-colored shirt with green stripes. The car seat is dark with red accents.

SAFER FOR CHILDREN

Rear Facing Through Age 2

- Infants and toddlers should remain in a rear facing child restraint system in the rear seat from birth through age 2 or longer. After the child reaches the maximum weight and height limit for the rear facing safety seat, the child may be placed in a forward-facing safety seat.
- In the past 5 years, 15 children under the age of 2 were killed in Missouri traffic crashes. Another 62 children under the age of 2 were seriously injured.
- When used properly, car seats reduce fatal injury by 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers in passenger cars.¹

Booster Seat

- Children who have outgrown the height and weight limit of a forward-facing safety seat should be placed in a booster seat until the child can properly use the vehicle's seat belt when the child reaches 57 inches in height and age 8.
- In the past 5 years, there were 32 fatalities and 252 serious injuries of children ages 4-7 in Missouri.

Children Left in Hot Cars

- This proposal would prohibit drivers from leaving a child under the age of 8 unattended in a vehicle when the conditions result in injury or death to the child.
- In 2022, 33 children have died from pediatric vehicular heatstroke in the USA, below the national yearly average of 38. Missouri has had 27 children die in hot cars from 1998 to 2022.²

Bicycle Helmets for Young Riders

- Enact legislation to require all bicycle riders under the age of 18 to wear a helmet.
- Over the past 10 years, Missouri has experienced an 167% increase in bicyclist fatalities.
- Bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by 60% and brain injury by 58%.³

1 DOT HS 809 823 ([nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov))

2 No Heat Stroke (noheatstroke.org)

3 State-Report.PDF (nsc.org)

4 Distracted Driving | Missouri Department of Transportation (savemolives.com)

5 FINAL-2022-Roadmap-of-State-Highway-Safety-Laws.pdf (saferoads.org)

6 Graduated Licensing Calculator (iihs.org)

7 Teen Safe Driving: How Teens Can Be Safer Drivers | NHTSA

8 Graduated Licensing Calculator (iihs.org)

9 FINAL-2022-Roadmap-of-State-Highway-Safety-Laws.pdf (saferoads.org)

10 BUPD Distracted Driving Infographic.pdf (modot.org)



SAFER FOR TEENS

Cell Phone Ban for Teens & Novice Drivers

- This proposal would prohibit all drivers under the age of 18 or any driver operating under an instruction permit or an intermediate license from using a cellular device for any purpose except for communications in an emergency.
- Distraction contributes to many Missouri crashes and cell phone use is a leading cause of distraction. Someone other than the distracted driver is killed over 50% of the time.⁴
- 6% of drivers 15- to 20-years-old involved in a fatal crash were reported distracted at the time of the crash in 2022.⁵

GDL Young Passenger Restriction

- This proposal would restrict drivers operating under a graduated driver license (GDL) from having more than one passenger under the age of 21 in their vehicle who is not part of their immediate household.
- Teen driver-involved fatalities increased 30% from 2020 to 2022 in Missouri.
- For 16- and 17-year-old drivers, research shows a 15% reduction in fatal crash rates associated with a limit of no more than one teen passenger when compared to no limit.⁶

GDL Nighttime Restriction

- This proposal would expand current law in Missouri to restrict drivers operating under a GDL from operating between the

hours of 10:00 pm and 5:00 am without adult supervision unless traveling to or from a school activity, job, or emergency.

- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that Missouri could see a 7% reduction in fatal crashes for teens 15-17 if this measure is adopted.⁷
- Over the last 5 years, 26% of fatal teen crashes in Missouri occurred between 8:00 pm and 11:59 pm.

GDL Stronger Supervised Driving Requirement

- This proposal would expand the current requirement for those operating under a GDL to require an additional 10 hours of instruction from an adult licensed driver to obtain an unrestricted driver's license.
- Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, largely due to immaturity and lack of driving skills and experience.⁸

GDL Minimum Age 16 for Learner's Permit

- This proposal would increase the minimum age a person may qualify for a temporary instruction permit from 15 to 16 years old.
- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that Missouri could see a 13% reduction in fatal crashes for teens 15-17 if this measure is adopted.⁹

GDL Age 18 for Unrestricted License

- This proposal would extend the passenger restrictions and nighttime driving restrictions for individuals operating under a GDL until the age of 18. At that time, an unrestricted license could be obtained.
- In states that have adopted GDL programs, studies have found overall crash reductions among teen drivers of about 10% to 30%.¹⁰



SAFER FOR WORKERS

Hands-Free for All Drivers

This proposal would prohibit all hand-held use of cell phones while driving for all drivers except for instances of making emergency phone calls, starting navigation services with a single touch, or activating a hands-free phone call with a single touch.

- States that have enacted a hands-free law have experienced an average decrease in the fatality rate of 15% within 2 years of enactment.¹¹
- Last year, distracted driving contributed to 415 work zone crashes in Missouri.
- In the past 5 years, at least 387 people have been killed and another 2,668 people were seriously injured in Missouri traffic crashes involving a distracted driver.

Automated Enforcement

- This proposal would authorize the use of automated speed enforcement on Missouri roadways. The equipment could be used, alongside tradition traffic enforcement, to identify drivers who are speeding excessively and issue citations accordingly.

- Approximately 30% of all traffic fatalities in Missouri involve excessive speed, the most common factor in Missouri fatal crashes.¹² Over 1,700 fatalities in Missouri involved a speeding driver in the last 5 years.
- Speeding remains one of the top contributors to work zone crashes, involved in 13% last year.
- Speed cameras have been shown to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes up to 44%.¹³

Endangerment of a Highway Worker

- This proposal would require a mandatory minimum fine of \$1000 for endangerment of a highway worker, \$5000 for aggravated endangerment of a highway worker if a worker is injured, and \$10,000 if a worker is killed. The proposal also ensures that striking a truck- or trailer-mounted attenuator (TMA) constitutes endangerment of a highway worker.
- In 2022, 15 people were killed, 95 people were seriously injured and 36 TMAs were struck in Missouri work zones.

11 BUPD Distracted Driving Infographic.pdf (modot.org)
12 Speed and Aggressive Driving | Missouri Department of Transportation (savemolives.com)
13 Speed cameras for the prevention of road traffic injuries and deaths - PubMed (nih.gov)



SAFER FOR YOU

Ignition Interlock

- Current Missouri law requires the installation of an ignition interlock device for second or subsequent offenders. This proposal would strengthen that requirement to all convictions for intoxication-related offenses, including first offenses.
- Impaired driving accounts for 17% of the traffic fatalities in Missouri.
- States requiring interlocks for all drunk drivers have experienced a 7% decrease in fatal crashes involving a driver over the legal blood alcohol concentration limit.¹⁴

Open Container

- This proposal would prohibit open containers in the entire passenger area of motor vehicles, for both drivers and passengers.
- In 3 of the past 5 years, the state of Missouri has experienced at least 200 traffic fatalities per year as the result of impaired driving.

Primary Seat Belt

- This proposal would require the use of a seat belt for all occupants of a vehicle and allow law enforcement officers to stop a

vehicle and issue a ticket for a violation with no other violation needing to occur first.

- On average, 3 people are killed on Missouri roadways every day. 2 out of 3 people killed in vehicles are unbuckled.
- If everyone in Missouri buckled up, an estimated 230 lives would be saved each year.¹⁵

Motorcycle Helmets

- This proposal would reinstate Missouri's all-rider helmet law requiring all motorcycle riders, regardless of age, to wear a helmet that meets or exceeds U.S. DOT standards.
- Missouri has experienced a 724% increase in unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities following the helmet repeal in August 2020. Two years before and after the repeal, the number has grown from 21 unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities to 173.
- Motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 69% and reduce the risk of death by 42%.¹⁶

Electric Bicycles

- This proposal would ensure Class 2 electric bicycles are defined as motor vehicles and license requirements are updated to return to compliance with 23 U.S.C. § 164.
- An unintended consequence of SB 176 (2021) allows a rider whose license is suspended or revoked due to intoxication-related offenses to operate a (federally defined) motor vehicle on Missouri roads without an operator's license.

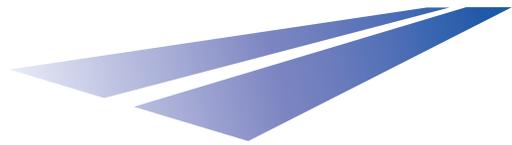
14 Ignition Interlock Laws: Effects on Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes, 1982-2013 - PubMed (nih.gov)

15 Occupant Protection: Seat Belts, Car Seats, and Helmets | Missouri Department of Transportation (savemolives.com)

16 FINAL-2022-Roadmap-of-State-Highway-Safety-Laws.pdf (saferoads.org)



*Missouri Coalition
for Roadway Safety*



www.modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown

— SHOW - ME —
ZERO 

Driving Missouri Toward Safer Roads



MoDOT.org

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