Seat Belt Use, Drinking and Driving

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 16- to 20-year-olds.[1] Lack of driving experience and a tendency to take risks are the two main reasons why this age group is more vulnerable. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety states that teenagers are less likely to wear safety belts and belt use among male teens was significantly less than among females.

Drinking alcohol under the age of 21 is illegal. Driving while drunk is a serious offense with significant legal and financial consequences. Reducing drinking and driving or riding with someone who has been drinking alcohol can help reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes among teens.

- Lap/shoulder safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent.[2]
- Motor vehicle occupants 13 to15 years old involved in fatal crashes have the lowest restraint use rate (27 percent); 21- to 24-year olds have the second-lowest restraint use rate (31 percent).[2]
- Motor vehicle crash injuries, approximately 31 percent of which involve alcohol, are the leading cause of death among youth 15 to 20 years of age in the United States.[3]

HP 2010 Objectives:

15-15: Reduce deaths caused by motor vehicle crashes to no more than 9.2 per 100,000 people and no more than 0.8 per million vehicle miles traveled.
15-19: Increase use of safety belts to 92 percent.
16-3: Reduce deaths of adolescents and young adults to no more than 16.8 per 100,000 10-14-year-olds, 39.8 per 100,000 15-19-year-olds and 49.0 per 100,000 20-24-year-olds.
26-01a: Reduce deaths caused by alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes to no more than four per 100,000 people.
26-01b: Reduce injuries caused by alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes to no more than 65 per 100,000 people.
26-06: Reduce the proportion of adolescents who report that they rode, during the previous 30 days, with a driver who had been drinking alcohol to no more than 30 percent.