

Summer Travel Safety: Preventing Injuries on the Road

Summer is one of the busiest travel seasons of the year. Families head to vacation destinations, teens begin summer jobs, and holiday weekends bring increased traffic to Pennsylvania roadways. While summer travel creates opportunities for adventure and connection, it also increases the risk of motor vehicle crashes.

Traffic injuries remain one of the leading causes of preventable death and injury in the United States. Fortunately, many crashes can be prevented through safe driving habits and proper preparation.

Plan Before You Go

A few minutes of preparation can prevent breakdowns and dangerous roadside situations.

Before any trip:

- Check tire pressure and tread.
- Test brakes and lights.
- Ensure windshield wipers are functioning properly.
- Verify that child passengers are secured in appropriate car seats or booster seats.
- Pack an emergency kit that includes water, a flashlight, and basic first-aid supplies.

Eliminate Distractions

Distracted driving remains a major contributor to crashes. Common distractions include:

- Texting or using a phone.
- Programming GPS systems while driving.
- Eating behind the wheel.
- Interacting with passengers.

If you need to send a message, make a call, or adjust navigation, pull over safely first.

Watch for Vulnerable Road Users

Summer roads include more than just cars.

Drivers should remain alert for:

- Bicyclists.

- Motorcyclists.
- Pedestrians.
- Road construction crews.
- Children playing near neighborhoods and parks.

Slowing down and increasing following distance can provide critical reaction time.

Prevent Fatigued Driving

Long summer road trips often lead to fatigue.

Warning signs include:

- Frequent yawning.
- Difficulty keeping eyes open.
- Missing traffic signs or exits.
- Drifting between lanes.

If you become tired, stop and rest. Sharing driving responsibilities or planning regular breaks can reduce fatigue-related risks.

Buckle Up Every Trip

Seat belts remain one of the most effective injury prevention measures available. Everyone in the vehicle—regardless of seating position—should wear a seat belt every time.

Parents should verify that children are using age- and size-appropriate restraints and that older children have not moved out of booster seats too soon.

Making Summer Travel Safer

Most people remember their summer vacations for the places they visit and the memories they create—not for the drive itself. By focusing on safe driving practices, eliminating distractions, and ensuring everyone is properly restrained, families can reduce the risk of injury and arrive safely at their destinations.

This summer, make safety part of your travel plans and help ensure every trip ends with a safe return home.