

# AIRBAGS

## 1998

### National Statistics

Nearly 94 million (46.3%) of the 202 million cars and light trucks on U.S. roads have driver airbags. More than 66 million (32.9%) of these also have passenger airbags. Another 1 million new vehicles with airbags are being sold each month. (*IIHS*)

Airbags mounted in the steering wheel (driver) and the right front instrument panel (passenger) are designed to protect people in serious frontal crashes – the kind that account for more than half of all occupant crash deaths. (*IIHS*)

Most airbags are designed to inflate in crashes equivalent to hitting a solid barrier at 10-12 mph. (*IIHS*)

In 1998, 60% of passenger vehicle occupant fatalities occurred in frontal impact crashes. (*NHTSA*)

Through December 1998, driver airbags have inflated in over 3.3 million vehicles in crashes. Additionally, more than 600,000 passenger airbags inflated when a passenger was occupying the right front seat. (*IIHS*)

### **Adults:**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 1,043 lives were saved by airbags in 1998.

Deaths in frontal crashes are reduced about 26% among drivers using safety belts and about 32% among drivers without belts. (*IIHS*)

Deaths in frontal crashes are reduced about 14% among right front passengers with belts and about 23% among passengers without belts. (*IIHS*)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that the combination of an airbag plus a lap/shoulder belt reduces the risk of moderate and serious head injury by 81% compared with a 60% reduction for belts alone.

An airbag plus a lap/shoulder belt doubles the protection from head injury of a safety belt alone. (*IIHS*)

Airbags have been blamed for the deaths of at least 121 people – mostly children and

small-statured women – in lower speed accidents they otherwise should have survived. (*NHTSA*)

Of the 56 drivers killed by airbags (42 females, 14 males), 36 are believed to have been unbelted, 19 are believed to have been using lap/shoulder belts (5 of these may have misused their belts; 1 used the shoulder belt only; 1 used the lap belt only). (*IIHS*)

**Children:**

Of the 66 children killed by passenger airbags in 1998, 53 are believed to have been unbelted; 6 are believed to have been using lap belts only; 4 were thought to be using lap/shoulder belts; 2 were in forward-facing child restraints that were not properly secured to the vehicle. Belt use is unknown for the other child. (*IIHS*)

The back seat is the safest seat for kids of any age. Kids riding in the back are 36% less likely to be killed. (*IIHS*)