

Injuries and violence in rural areas: Facts and resources from CSN

The Children's Safety Network (CSN) Rural Injury and Violence Prevention Center provides a wide range of services and expertise to assist maternal and child health and public health professionals meet the unique challenges of preventing injuries and violence in rural areas.

Rural areas face special challenges that complicate efforts to prevent injuries and violence. These challenges include:

- Socioeconomic conditions associated with risks for injury and violence including poverty, low levels of educational attainment, and social isolation
- Cultural values that can conflict with efforts to promote safe behaviors including a high regard for privacy and independence, a resistance to government regulation of individual behavior, and a tolerance for risky behavior
- Sociogeographic conditions including limited transportation options and low population density which have implications for access to health care, emergency response time, and the cost of providing prevention and health service
- Health care service issues, including limited access to health care – especially hospital trauma centers, a shortage of medical and mental health professionals, and volunteer emergency medical services that can lack the resources and training available to commercial and government-funded systems
- Limited data, which can make assessing needs and evaluating programs difficult

Rural areas face higher levels of exposures to hazards for injury and violence than do urban and suburban areas. These include:

- off road recreation including riding of horses, snowmobiles, all terrain vehicles, boating, and hunting
- children living, working, and playing in agricultural production sites
- several factors related to poisoning, including type of medications, storage practices, and a lack of access to the poison control system
- firearm ownership and more-relaxed storage practices, which increases the likelihood of unintentional injuries and the seriousness of injuries resulting from domestic violence and suicide

Rural areas face some higher injury and fatality rates than other areas. Compared to urban and suburban areas:

- Traffic fatality rates are higher - more than double the rate per vehicle-mile traveled than in other areas. Sixty percent of all traffic fatalities occur in rural areas ^{1,2}
- Drowning rates are three times higher ³
- Death rates from house fires are one-third higher ¹
- Suicide rates are one-third higher ¹
- Children less than six years old face an elevated risk of homicide ⁴
- Toddlers face an increased likelihood of poisoning ⁵
- Children face an increased risk of agricultural injuries. An estimated 104 children under 20 years of age die from agricultural injuries on U.S. farms and ranches each year. Half of these children are under five years old ⁶

CSN can help you address the injury and violence in rural areas.

Some of the resources available from CSN that address rural injuries and violence include:

- Topic-specific publications including ATV Safety *Horses and Children *Snowmobile Safety *Drowning Prevention *Agricultural Safety and Children. *Rural Youth Pedestrian Fact Sheet *Youth Riding in Pickup Truck Cargo Areas Fact Sheet
- Finding Funding for Injury and Violence Prevention (<http://notes.edc.org/HHD/CSN/csnpubs.nsf/Title?OpenView&Start=30>) which discusses topics including maximizing state public health resources, approaching foundations, and accessing resources unique to your state.
- The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/pages/default.aspx?page=nccrahs_welcome)

CSN offers in-person, telephone, or email technical assistance to help state health department and injury prevention staff:

- Examine injury and violence mortality and morbidity data
- Understand risk factors for injury and violence
- Identify effective strategies for preventing injuries and violence
- Overcome barriers associated with distance
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and funding
- Identify and implement injury and violence prevention policies

CSN connects you with other professionals by providing:

- Case studies of rural injury and violence prevention programs
- Contacts for and referrals to injury and violence prevention and other public health professionals at the state and national levels
- Information about training opportunities on topics of interest to injury and violence prevention professionals serving rural areas

For more information, resources and assistance, contact:

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www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org

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