

# News Release

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## **Are Americans worrying too much about the wrong things? National Safety Council uses National Safety Month to highlight a top killer: Unintended injuries**

Itasca, IL – June is [National Safety Month](#), and the [National Safety Council](#) is calling on Americans to take notice of the fifth\* leading cause of death – unintentional injuries. Every four minutes someone in the U.S dies from an unintentional injury. That’s 120,000 people a year. Sixty-seven percent† of all injury-related deaths in the U.S. are due to unintentional causes, compared to just 9% to homicide.

“Dramatic events like homicides and natural disasters headline the news every night,” said Deborah Hersman, NSC president and CEO. “Highlighting that hundreds of people are dying each day from completely preventable causes – that is what National Safety Month is all about.”

The top three causes of unintentional injury in the U.S. are poisoning, motor vehicle crashes and falls. An estimated 36,900† deaths in 2012 were due to poisoning, with a large majority of these attributed to the recent epidemic of prescription drug abuse; 45 people die every day from unintentional overdoses on prescription pain relievers. According to 2012 estimates, motor vehicle crashes resulted in 36,300† deaths, with 26% of all crashes estimated to involve cell phone use while driving. Finally, approximately 27,800† deaths in 2012 can be attributed to falls, with seven out of ten of these deaths affecting adults over 74 years of age.

“These statistics are not just numbers, they are our family members,” said Hersman. “This year’s National Safety Month theme, *Safety: it takes all of us*, is a call for everyone to make simple changes to prevent tragedy in your home or car. Properly store your medications, put down your phone when you drive and use slip-resistant mats on your floors. These small changes can make a huge difference.”

The cost of unintentional injuries to Americans and their employers exceeds \$793 billion nationally and are paid in the form of taxes, insurance premiums, medical costs, property damage, lost wages and productivity. The emotional toll causes great suffering for families and loved ones.

The purpose of National Safety Month is to encourage safe behaviors to prevent the leading causes of injuries and deaths. The Council’s National Safety Month campaign includes free downloadable materials to help spread important safety messages. Visit [nsc.org/nsm](http://nsc.org/nsm) to get involved.

*\*Unintentional injuries are the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death, exceeded by heart disease, cancer, stroke and chronic lower respiratory diseases.*

*†According to Injury Facts® 2014 edition*

### **About the National Safety Council**

Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, the National Safety Council, [nsc.org](http://nsc.org), is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public in areas where we can make the most impact – distracted driving, teen driving, workplace safety, prescription drug overdoses and Safe Communities. [Safety+Health](#) magazine, the Council’s flagship publication, is a leading source of occupational safety and health information.

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