

UPDATE: Community comes together to mourn Jefferson father, son

## ‘It’s a sad thing to get good at’: Jefferson community comes together to mourn

- By Daily Union staff Jan 27, 2020



The Fort Atkinson and Jefferson boys' basketball teams observed a moment of silence to honor the memory of Jefferson sophomore and junior varsity basketball player Kaden Johnson and his father, Brian, prior to their rivalry game on Monday at Jefferson High School. The Johnsons died in a three-vehicle crash on Friday night near Cambridge. Both teams wore hooded sweatshirts with Johnson's surname and his No. 5 on the back for warmups.

- Jalen Knuteson



Flowers have been left in memorial at the intersection of Hope Lake Road and U.S. Highway 18. Kaden and Brian Johnson, of Jefferson, were killed in a traffic crash involving a Kwik Trip gas tanker Friday night.

- Henry Redman

Kaden Johnson and his father, Brian Johnson, of Jefferson died Friday evening when their van collided with a semi tanker truck on U.S. Highway 18 near Cambridge. A sophomore at Jefferson High School, Kaden enjoyed sports and drama. Above, he performs the lead role in "Peter Pan" at Jefferson Middle School as an eighth-grader.

**JEFFERSON** — The community in general, and high school in particular, were grieving Monday after a Jefferson father and son lost their lives in a three-vehicle crash in the Town of Oakland on a snowy Friday evening.

Brian Johnson and his sophomore son Kaden were driving home from a junior varsity basketball game in McFarland Jan. 24. Snow and fog had moved into the area, and the roads were slick. As they traveled east of Cambridge on U.S. Highway 18, their van collided with a semi tanker at the intersection of Hope Lake Road.

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office deputies were called to the scene just north of Lake Ripley at 7:32 p.m. The initial investigation found that a Kwik Trip fuel tanker

was traveling west on Highway 18 when it began to swerve out of control, colliding with the eastbound van.

Jefferson County Chief Deputy Jeff Parker said the crash caused the tanker to spill 1,000 gallons of fuel, with some leaking into a nearby ditch. The state Department of Natural Resources was notified.

The Johnsons both were pronounced dead at the scene. The tanker driver was transported to St. Mary's Hospital in Madison with minor injuries. A third vehicle, a Kia, was involved in the crash, but the driver was uninjured, according to Parker.

The road was closed in both directions for several hours. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office was assisted with traffic control by Jefferson County Emergency Communications.

The crash remains under investigation by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Crash Investigation team.

But as law enforcement dealt with the immediate concerns and began its investigation, administrators at the School District of Jefferson began confronting how to handle the long-term impacts on the community.

District Administrator Mark Rollefson said that for hours on Saturday, the district's Pupil Services team made up of administrators, staff, guidance counselors and school psychologists met to discuss how they would work together to help their students deal with their grief.

The district quickly put a plan in place and distributed guidance to teachers in how to discuss the tragedy with students of all ages.

"I can say that any time when we've had tragedy and strife in our community, I've always been impressed by the outpouring of support from parents and kids and staff," Rollefson said. "I'm really proud of our Pupil Services Department and our administrative team in what they've got prepared to make sure kids are taken care of over the next several days. It's a sad thing to get good at, but we certainly have learned from past experiences."

With classes already cancelled Monday for a scheduled teacher in-service day, the district opened its high school doors to students for grief counseling from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Rollefson said he was not certain how many students used the services, but that some did come in. He added that it was important for young people to have the opportunity to discuss and work through their grief, especially because it can be so confusing for them.

"The kids that came in needed to talk to somebody," Rollefson said. "Kids grieve differently; it's all OK. Teenagers grieve very differently than adults do. It's certainly not simple on anybody. It can be confusing for a youngster."

Word of the Johnsons' tragedy came through an email to students and staff from Jefferson High School Principal Steve Dinkel.

"It is with deep sadness and a very heavy heart that I share with you of the death of one of our students, Kaden Johnson," he wrote. "Kaden and his dad, Brian Johnson, passed away in a car accident Friday evening. Kaden was a sophomore at JHS and played on the JV boys basketball team. Kaden's sister, Kennedy, is a fifth-grade student at West Elementary."

Dinkel asked that people respect the family's grief.

"We have honored the request of the Johnson family for privacy while they grieve and this is why we have held this message until today (Sunday)," Dinkel wrote. "We thank you for your patience. The family has asked us to inform you to respect their need for privacy and refrain from drop-in visits to their home."

He continued: "As parents and caregivers, you probably never thought you might have to share news of this kind with your children, and we honor your preferred way of doing so. Students will have varied reactions to the death of a peer. Any reaction is normal in the grief process and can range from withdrawal to crying and anger."

Rollefson said this time can be tough on teachers and staff as they attempt to cope with the loss while trying to help their students get through it.

"I think, obviously, adults are grieving too, especially staff members that have had a connection with the Johnson family," Rollefson said. "We need those folks to be strong for the kids tomorrow (Tuesday). It'll be a tough day tomorrow and a tough next few weeks ahead. We'll be strong for the family, and we want to coach our kids up to honor the same thing."

Meanwhile, in the wake of Friday's tragedy, the Jefferson and Fort Atkinson student sections wore navy blue, Kaden's favorite color, during the nonconference boys basketball game at 7:15 p.m. Monday. They also observed a moment of silence.

Kaden Johnson was a member of the JV 1 basketball team for the Eagles. The JV 1, JV 2 and varsity teams gathered on Sunday at Jefferson High School to discuss grief and how the teams wanted to go forward. Among the topics discussed were whether the teams wanted to play on Monday — a quick consensus was to honor Kaden by playing, according to varsity head coach Greg Jefferies.

"I was proud of the way those JV guys were supporting each other and the way they worked together for almost four hours, making T-shirts to wear as warmups to honor Kaden," Jefferies said. "It was really good to have everyone together (on Sunday) and to be together to talk about this."

"The quote that sticks out from Sunday came from one of our assistant coaches, Jim Altermatt," he added. "Jim told them however they were feeling was OK and that it

was OK to cry. I thought that was important for them to hear and to know that there is no right way to feel because most of them have never been through something like this. However they're feeling is OK."

Rollefson, speaking Monday afternoon before the game, said he would be in attendance and that he expected the mood in the gym to be somber. He added that the support from Fort Atkinson shows how the two communities' friendly rivalry turns into a lending a hand and a shoulder to cry on when tragedy strikes.

Fort Atkinson coach Mike Hintz and Fort Atkinson athletic director Steve Mahoney were in contact with their Jefferson equivalents to discuss Monday night's game. On Monday, Hintz was able to secure warmups for both teams to wear to honor Johnson and Jefferies was able to get blue shoelaces to continue the theme of blue as Johnson's favorite color.

"So many of their players and our players have played together and against each other growing up that they were already texting each other on Sunday about the game," Jefferies said.

"It's really cool the way we've come together because you know we're rivals, but there's a respect and a connection between the communities."

"Jefferson and Fort Atkinson have a longstanding tradition of a healthy rivalry and really supporting each other," Rollefson said. "I've seen the best come out of both high schools and school districts in terms of lending support. I'm confident that's how that will feel."

All of this week, the school will be accepting donations and organizing a 50/50 raffle to raise money for the Johnson family. Checks should be written to Jefferson High School.

A separate GoFundMe account was set up by Josh Saenz to raise money, as well, with a goal of \$10,000. As of 3 p.m. Monday, 143 contributors had given a total \$6,543.

In addition to basketball, Kaden was involved in music and drama. Two years ago, he had the lead role in the Jefferson Middle School play, "Peter Pan Jr."

"The Jefferson Middle School choirs and Jefferson Drama Club is saddened to learn of the passing of one of our former members, Kaden Johnson, and his father this past Friday due to a car accident," said a post on the Music and Drama departments' Facebook page.

"Kaden was actively involved in choir and drama in middle school. He was a natural actor, singer and showman, and nothing, I mean nothing, could stop him, even a broken leg.

“He will always be remembered as our Nicely Nicely Johnson in ‘Guys and Dolls Jr.,’ delivering the show-stopping song, ‘Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ the Boat,’ and the lead role of Peter Pan in ‘Peter Pan Jr.’ Kaden, I will be looking for you amongst the stars.”

The Facebook post concluded with “Second star to the right and straight on ‘til morning,” a line written by J.M. Barrie in “Peter Pan.”

The School District of Jefferson will continue to offer grief counseling services throughout the week.





# Teen Driver Safety

Presented by [name]

Blank to add/embed video of choice. Links in notes for video ideas. Links may or may not be active in the notes, PowerPoint doesn't seem to allow them in some cases.



# Death is an Unacceptable Risk

► The tragic reality of traffic fatalities is that more than 100 people are killed every day in the U.S.

► **37 teen drivers** died in crashes last year (2021) in Wisconsin.



# Life cycle of a crash

A crash is not an accident

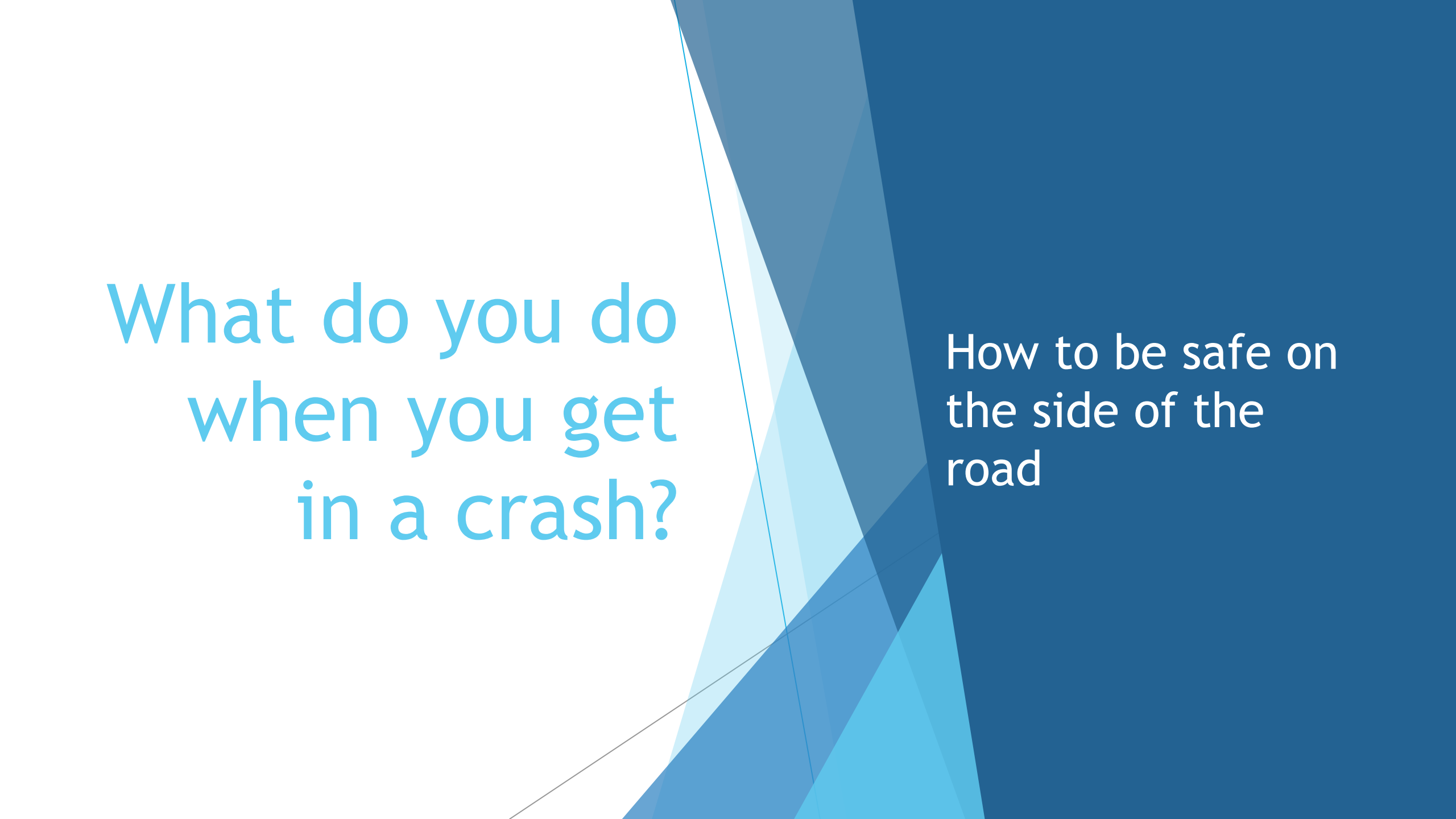


Every crash has three stages

The vehicle crash

The human crash

The internal  
(body) crash



What do you do  
when you get  
in a crash?

How to be safe on  
the side of the  
road

# Post-crash care response



Rural vs. urban risk



How fast can EMS arrive to the scene?



How fast can they get you to the nearest hospital with a trauma center?



We all share  
responsibility  
for the safety  
of roads

There are consequences  
for mistakes.

Traffic safety is about  
minimizing those  
consequences.

Teen drivers make up 8%  
of licensed drivers, but  
16% of drivers involved in  
an injury crash.

## Consequences of mistakes

Death to self or others

Injury to self or others

Criminal charges

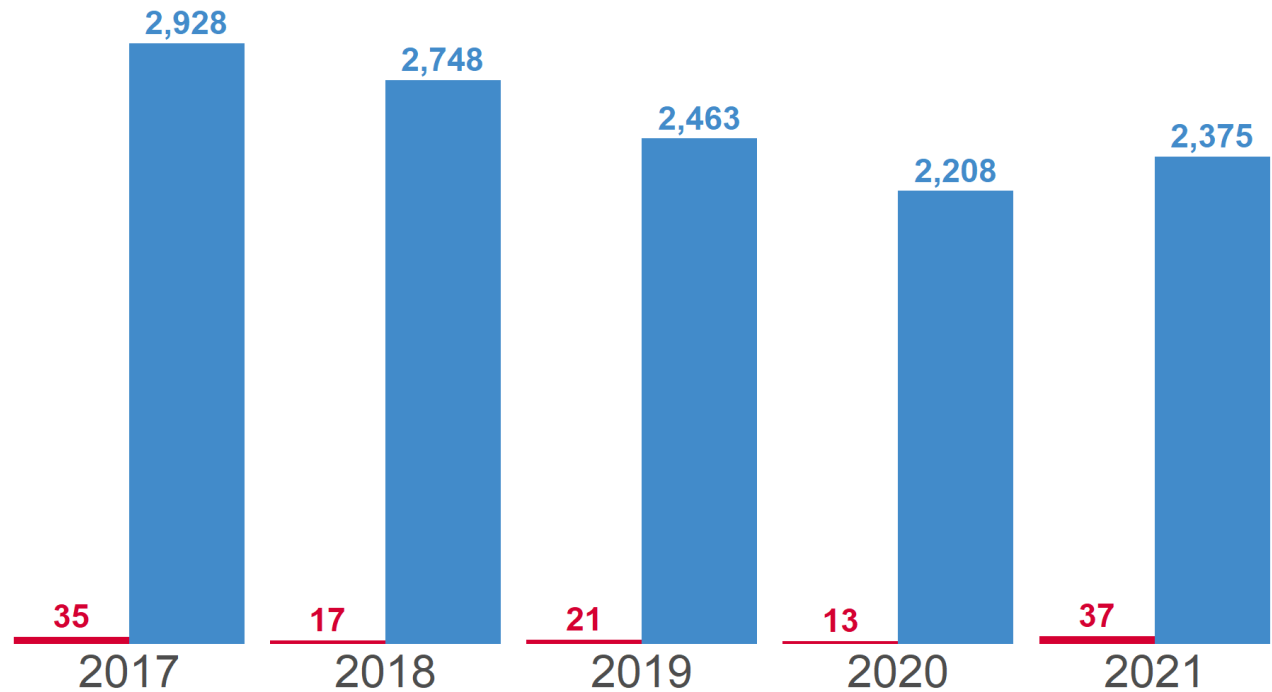
Citations

GDL consequences

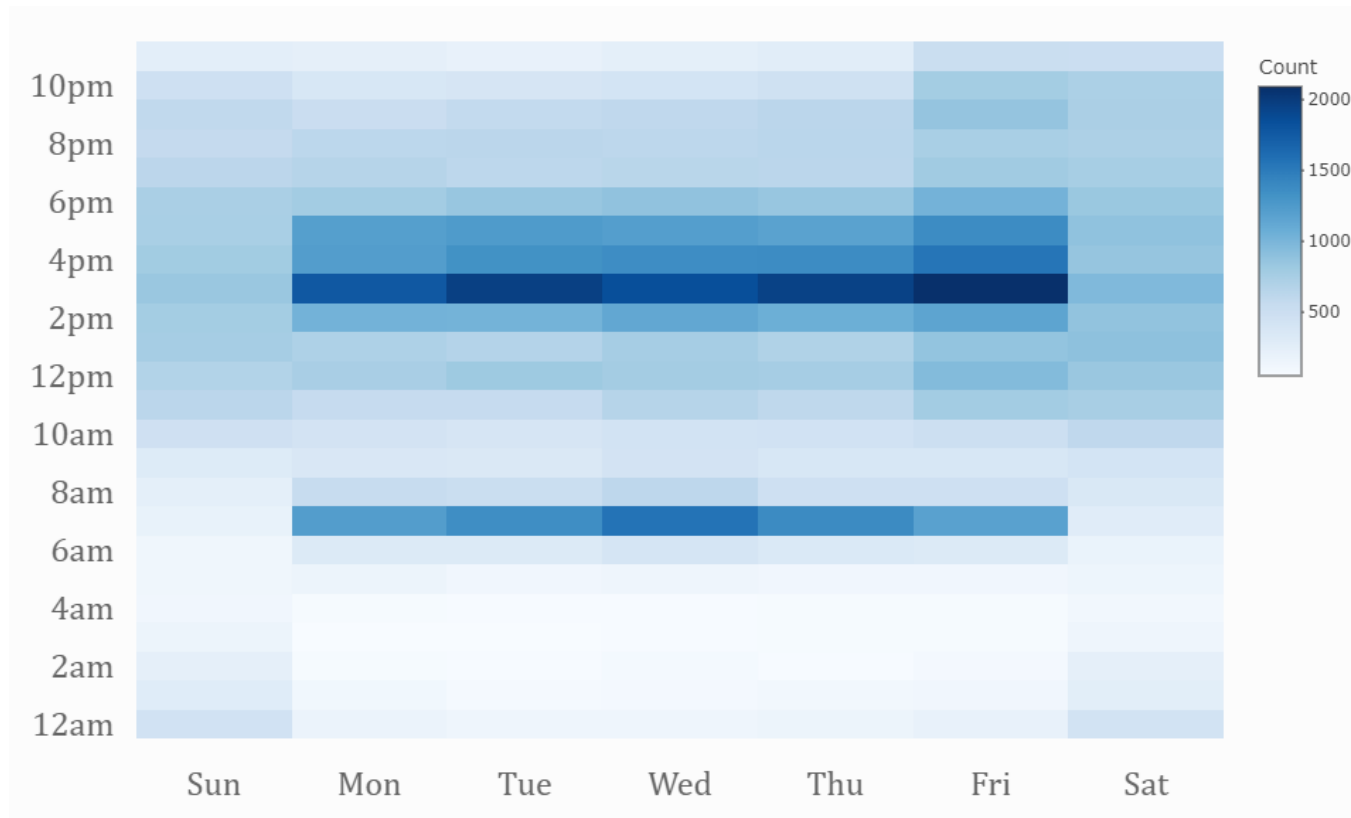


How many  
teen drivers  
are killed or  
injured every  
year?

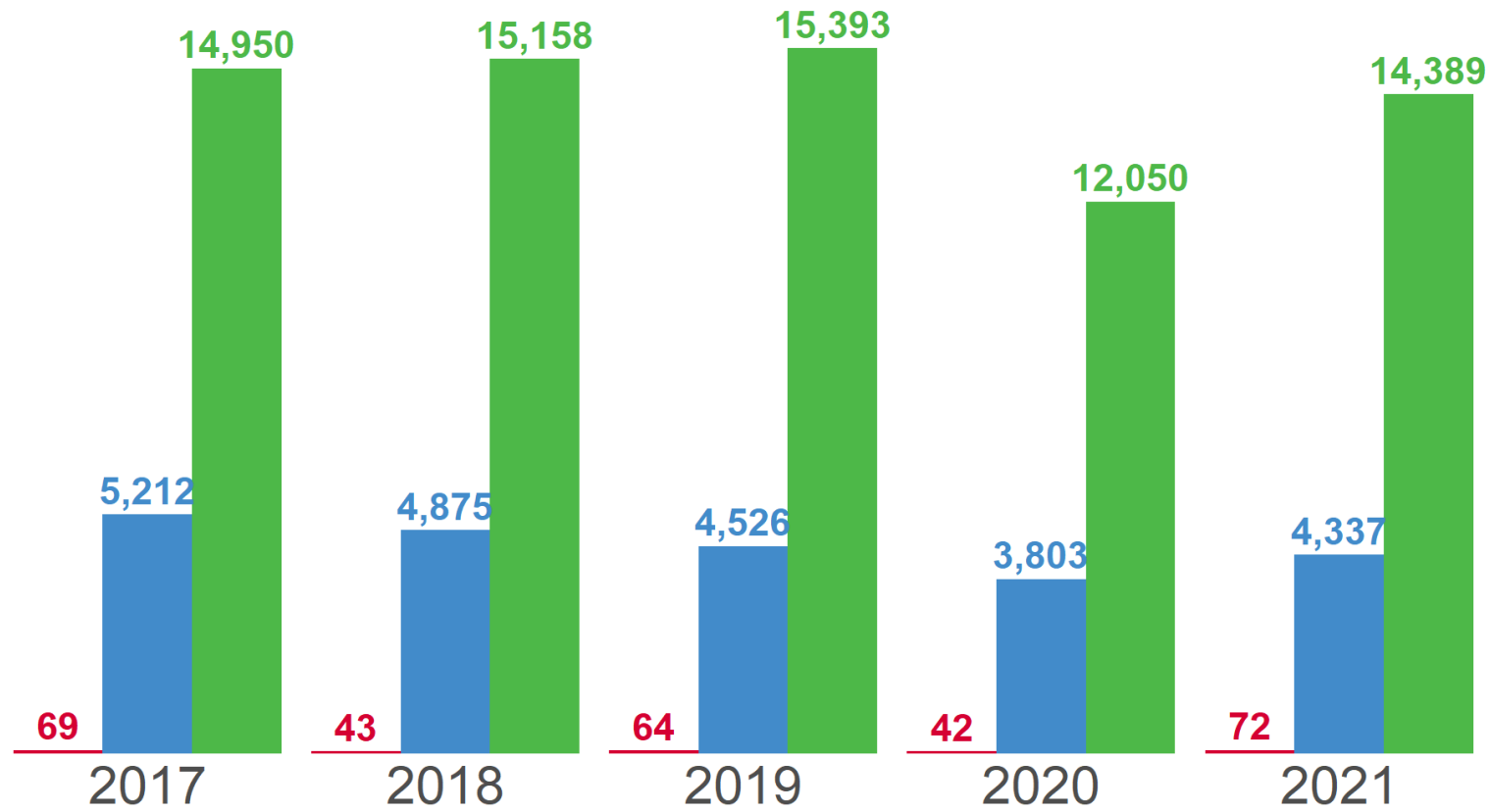
**Injured** and **Killed** Teen Drivers in Wisconsin



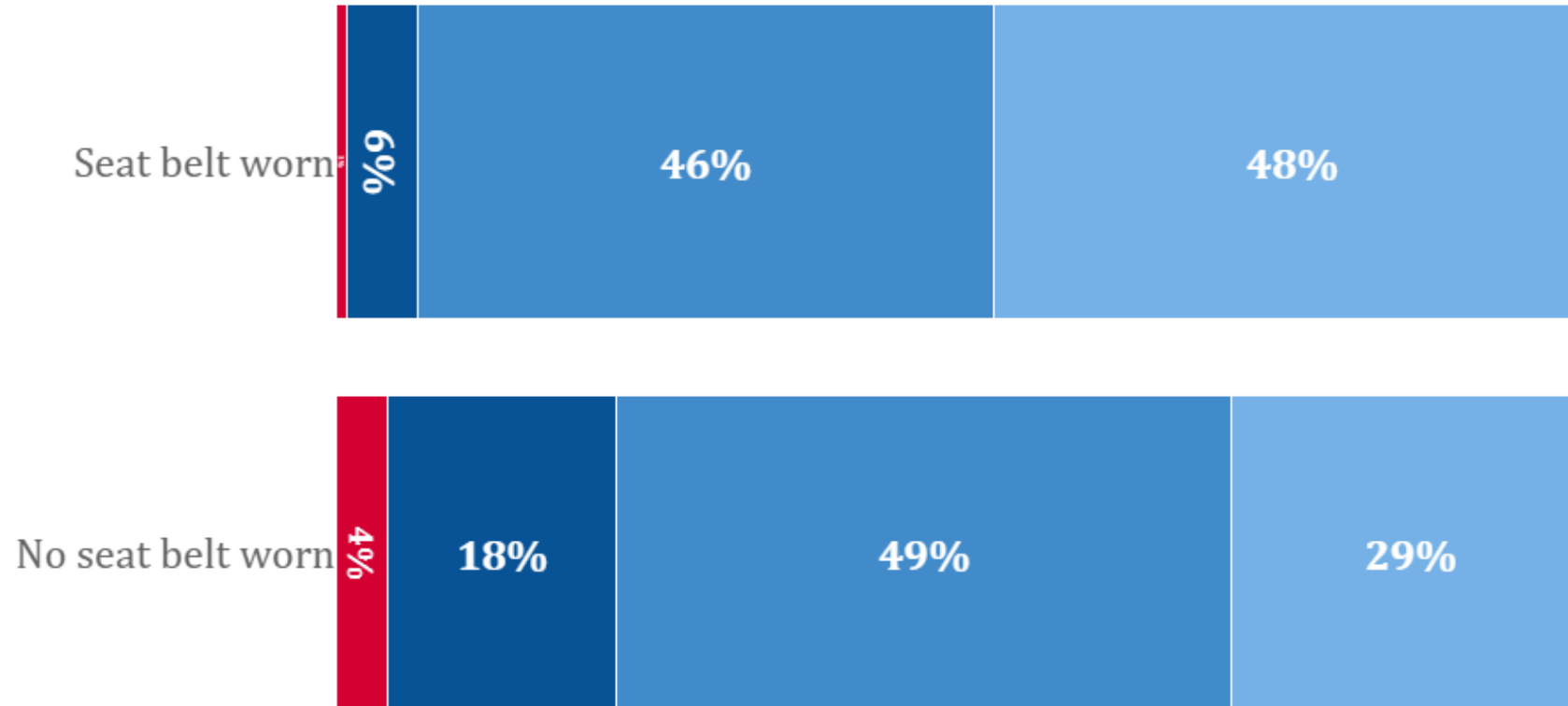
# When do Teen Drivers in WI Crash?



**Property damage**, **injury**, and **fatal** crashes involving a teen driver in Wisconsin



- Fatal Injury
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Suspected Minor Injury
- Possible Injury



How often are Wisconsin teen drivers injured by not wearing a seat belt?

# Perspective

Judging stopping distance

Blind spots

Inattention blindness (didn't "see" the motorcycle)

Sight lines

Not driving predictably

Left hand turns

# What you might encounter on the road







Move Over  
and  
Slow Down

# Construction Zone and Emergency Response Area Safety



# Weather conditions



By law, drivers are required to have control over their vehicle at all times, regardless of road conditions



Preparation for adverse weather



Wipers on, lights on

# Rural vs urban driving

Highway

Interstate

Local roads

# Basic vehicle maintenance and safety

- ▶ Functioning lights
- ▶ Keeping windows and windshield clear
- ▶ Understanding vehicle technology
  - ▶ Can you always rely on it?
  - ▶ Are there limitations?

# Peer pressure (silent peer pressure)

- ▶ Passengers
  - ▶ Obligation for their safety
    - ▶ Legal and moral
    - ▶ Obligation to be a safe passenger





# Respecting other road users



PEDESTRIANS



OTHER  
DRIVERS



BICYCLE



MOTORCYCLE



HORSE AND  
BUGGY

# Respecting Other Road Users



# Driving at safe speeds



Obeying and respecting speed limits



Setting speed limits



Consequences

Speeding negatively affects reaction time, perception time, and stopping distance



Using discretion to travel at a safe speed

Feel safe at the speed you are driving, don't feel pressure to "keep up with traffic"



# Drunk and Drugged Driving

## Zero Tolerance

# How to make safety proactive



Defensive Driving



Distracted Driving



Teen driving  
crash in [your  
community]

- ▶ Your own  
pictures/media  
from crash