

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017

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## Kansas given an ‘F’ on preventable deaths report

Study examined three major categories

THE STATE OF SAFETY OVERALL GRADE MAP



A	B	C	D	F
No state received an overall "A" grade	8 STATES: California Connecticut District of Columbia Hawaii Maine Maryland Oregon Washington	17 STATES: Colorado Delaware Illinois Indiana Kentucky Louisiana Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota New Jersey New Mexico New York North Carolina Rhode Island Tennessee Vermont West Virginia	15 STATES: Alabama Alaska Florida Georgia Iowa Nebraska New Hampshire North Dakota Ohio Pennsylvania Texas Utah Virginia Wisconsin	11 STATES: Arkansas Arizona Idaho Kansas Mississippi Montana Oklahoma South Carolina South Dakota Wyoming

Kansas and 10 other states received an F on a National Safety Council report on preventable deaths published this week. (National Safety Council)

A report released Tuesday by the National Safety Council gives Kansas an overall grade of F based on home and community safety, workplace safety and road safety.

Kansas was one of 11 states to receive an F, and no states received an overall A.

"The state of safety in America is perilous," NSC president and CEO Deborah Hersman said in a statement. "We cannot afford to sit back while we lose more than 140,000 people because of issues we know how to prevent."

Kansas was given an F in both home and community safety, and workplace safety. Under the former, requirements for drownings, firearms, home fires and poisonings were deemed "off track," while standards were "developing" for older adult falls and youth sports-related concussions.

Last month, 6-year-old Keniya Jones died after she was [pulled out of a pool](#) at Topeka's Ramada West. In May 2013, a 12-year-old boy died from his injuries after being pulled out of the same pool.

On workplace safety, the state is considered off track in all three subcategories: prevention, preparedness and enforcement; workers' compensation; and worker health and well-being. Kansas ranks 51st in the workplace safety category.

In March, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration [investigated the death](#) of 61-year-old James Lay at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant.

In the road safety category, the state was assigned a B for addressing such aspects as distracted and impaired driving. However, it was still considered off track for child passenger safety, speeding and vulnerable road users, such as bicyclists. According to the report, there were 398 fatalities in 2015.

Jennifer Haugh, of AAA Kansas, said there have been 197 fatalities on Kansas roads up to Monday, which is about 13 percent more than this time last year.

"The likely contributor to this are speed, distraction, impaired driving and seat belt use," Haugh said.

On Tuesday afternoon, a 56-year-old man was killed in an Osage County crash after the vehicle he was driving blew a tire and he was ejected. According to the Kansas Highway Patrol's crash log, he wasn't wearing a seat belt.

**A different report released Tuesday by nonprofit research group TRIP concluded that non-interstate rural roads had a fatality rate 4.5 times higher than all other roads in Kansas. The report found causes that included a lack of roadway safety features, longer emergency response times and higher speeds on rural roads compared to urban roads.**

It also determined that 9 percent of Kansas' rural bridges are considered structurally deficient.

"Rural roads are far too often overlooked. With fatality rates rising, repairing and maintaining the nation's roads must be a top priority for legislators," Haugh said.

Kansas Department of Transportation spokeswoman Brianna Landon said the highways and bridges maintained by the agency are in good condition. There are more than 140,000 miles of public roads in Kansas and KDOT maintains approximately 10,000 miles.

"Based on KDOT's own, more comprehensive measurements, 96.7 percent of interstate pavement and 91.7 percent of state highway pavement are in good or very good condition," Landon said. "This exceeds performance targets by more than 10 percent."

Less than 1 percent of the bridges managed by the state are structurally deficient, she said.

KDOT also is working with four counties to pilot countywide local road safety plans and is engaged in several public awareness initiatives, Landon said.

### State grades

A: 0                      D: 15  
B: 8                      F: 11  
C: 17