The consequences of injuries can be extensive and wide-ranging. Injuries have physical, emotional, and financial consequences that can impact the lives of individuals, their families, and society. Some injuries can result in temporary or long-term disability. Injuries also place an enormous burden on hospital emergency departments and trauma care systems, accounting for approximately one-third of all emergency department visits and eight percent of all hospital stays.

### Deaths and injuries from unintentional injury
- Unintentional injuries caused 172 deaths in Dakota County residents in 2017.
- Unintentional injuries caused an average of 17,312 emergency room visits or hospitalizations per year in Dakota County residents from 2014 to 2016.
- The rate of non-fatal, unintentional injuries for Dakota County residents increased by 17 percent from 2007 to 2016.

### Injury demographics
- Unintentional injuries caused 168 deaths in Dakota County adults 20 and older in 2017. The rate decreased from 2013 to 2017 and was below the state for 2017.
- Unintentional injuries were tied with suicides for the leading cause of death in Dakota County 15–24 year olds from 2013 to 2017.
- The highest rates of non-fatal, unintentional injuries are in persons 80 and older. Persons 80 and older also have the highest rate of fatal unintentional injuries.
- Males have a higher rate of injury than females.

### General safety
- For Dakota County residents from 2012 to 2016,
  - there were 30 near-drowning accidents and 10 accidental drowning deaths.
  - there were 44 non-fatal accidental injuries due to firearms.
  - there were 179 non-fatal burn injuries and nine people died in fires.
  - there were 1,827 non-fatal accidental poisonings and 161 deaths due to accidental poisoning.

*Note: To protect confidentiality, data on fatal injuries is not reported when the number is small.*
Recreational injuries

- Bicycle crashes increased slightly in Minnesota from 2016 to 2017.

Falls

- Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries for Dakota County residents and the leading cause of hospitalized injury among residents over 65.
- In 2016, 50 percent of all unintentional fatal injuries and 40 percent of all unintentional non-fatal injuries were caused by falls.
- The rate of unintentional fall injuries for Dakota County residents generally increased from 2012 to 2016.
- For people 65 and older, the rate of deaths due to falls increased from 2014 to 2017 and is above the statewide rate for 2017.

Motor vehicle crashes

- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 16 deaths per year from 2013 to 2017.
- From 2013 to 2017, 57 vehicle occupants who were killed or severely injured in crashes in Dakota County were not wearing seat belts (16 percent of fatal or severe motor vehicle injuries). Fifteen percent of fatal or severe injuries involved inattentive driving and 17 percent involved speeding.
- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 2,055 non-fatal injuries per year from 2013 to 2017.
- The rate of deaths from motor vehicle crashes occurring in Dakota County declined from 2007 to 2016 and is below the state rate for 2015-2017.

Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries

- Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries may lead to long-term disability with multiple secondary conditions.
- There were 301 non-fatal, hospitalized traumatic brain injury (TBI) events for Dakota County residents in 2016. The rate of TBI injuries generally decreased by 3.5 percent from 2007 to 2016.
- The leading cause of TBI injuries is falls. Persons 75 and older are most susceptible to TBI injury from falls.

Automobile safety

- In 2014, an observational study done in Minnesota found that 73 percent of children aged 4–7 were correctly restrained in a booster seat, an increase from 2011. Seven percent of children aged 4–7 were unrestrained.
- In 2016, 84 percent of Dakota County 9th graders and 94 percent of 11th graders who drive said that they always wear a seatbelt when driving.
- Among Dakota County 11th graders who drive, 46 percent send or read text or email messages while driving and 62 percent made or answered phone calls while driving (2016).

For more information:

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)  
  www.health.state.mn.us/injury
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
  www.dps.state.mn.us/ots
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)  
  www.nhtsa.dot.gov
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
  www.cdc.gov/injury

The Dakota County Public Health Department is accredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board.
For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, email public.health@co.dakota.mn.us or call 651.554.6100.