

A fatality report recently released by the Nebraska Department of Roads shows an alarming 84 percent increase in fatalities on county roads in rural areas of our state, says AAA.

From Jan. 1 through July 10, 35 people have lost their lives on county roads in Nebraska. In comparison, 19 deaths were reported in 2011 for the same period.

The best defense to preventing crash fatalities is to always use safety belts every time getting behind the wheel, says AAA. Make certain all passengers are buckled-up, as well.

During the past seven years, more than 1,100 unrestrained vehicle occupants have died on Nebraska roadways. Many of them were ejected or partially ejected during a rollover incident.

It is especially important to buckle-up if driving a pick-up truck or sport utility vehicle, warns AAA. They are more susceptible to being involved in a rollover crash since they have a higher center of gravity.

Restricted vision may be a problem in rural areas. Mature crops may block the view of other approaching vehicles. For that reason, it is extremely important to stay alert at all times and avoid distractions that may take your mind off of the road.