



Facts About Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Traumatic spinal cord injuries, by definition, are sustained as a result of blunt or penetrative trauma or acceleration-deceleration forces. SCI causes paraplegia or quadriplegia/tetraplegia, and can indicate a partial or total loss of physical function; it does not refer to degenerative or congenital conditions.

- In Georgia, 1,656 individuals were treated for SCI at hospitals in 2004 and 2005, according to the Central Registry for Traumatic Brain & Spinal Injuries, administered by the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission. The prevalence rates by region are:

Region 1 (Northwest corner)	159	Region 6 (Augusta area)	101
Region 2 (North central)	125	Region 7 (Columbus area)	54
Region 3 (Atlanta area)	507	Region 8 (Valdosta area)	124
Region 4 (Carrollton area)	446	Region 9 (Savannah area)	196
Region 5 (Central Georgia)	168	Region 10 (Athens area)	100

- The leading causes of SCI in Georgia are:

- Motor vehicle crashes (44%)
- Violence (24%)
- Falls (22%)

- Yearly costs (health care and living expenses directly attributable to SCI) can range from \$218,000 to over \$741,000 in the first year and \$15,000 to over \$132,000 each subsequent year, depending on the severity of the injury. This does not include indirect costs such as losses in wage and fringe benefits for the injured person. (*National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, 2006*).

National Average Yearly Injury-Related Expenses For Persons With Spinal Cord Injury

Note: Per the US Census, the 2005 median annual income in Georgia was \$44,439.

Severity of Injury	First Year	Each Subsequent Year
High Tetraplegia (C1-C4)	\$741,425	\$132,807
Low Tetraplegia (C5-C8)	\$478,782	\$54,400
Paraplegia	\$270,913	\$27,568
Incomplete Motor Function at any Level	\$218,504	\$15,313

- In Georgia, males sustained 70% of all SCIs in 2005. Estimates from the National Spinal Injury Database (2000) indicate that the percentage is even higher nation-wide at 78%.
- Nationally, more than half of all spinal cord injuries are sustained between the ages of 16 and 30. (*National Spinal Injury Database, 2000*)

- Average estimated lifetime costs for an injured person range from \$472,392 to over \$2.9 million, depending on the severity of the injury and the age at which the injury was sustained. (*National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, 2006*)

Most-Requested Areas of Assistance From the Commission:

Based on requests from Trust Fund applicants in FY2006, people with SCI most frequently applied for assistance with:

1. Transportation
2. Durable Medical Equipment
3. Home Modifications

SCI Resources:

- National Spinal Cord Injury Association, www.spinalcord.org - (800) 962-9629
- Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia, www.silcga.org - (770) 270-6860
- Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Center, www.paralysis.org - (800) 539-7309
- Christopher Reeve Foundation, www.ChristopherReeve.org - (800) 225-0292
- Agewise/Gateway Connection, www.agewiseconnection.com - (404) 463-3333, (800) 676-2433
- Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, www.bsitf.state.ga.us - (404) 651-5112, (888) 233-5760

The Trust Fund

The mission of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries, the Commission supports lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. We:

- Administer the Central Registry to identify and contact those who are injured
- Distribute resources through the Trust Fund, and
- Advocate for improvements in statewide services.

The Trust Fund has provided over \$7 million to more than 2,000 Georgians with brain and/or spinal injuries since 2002.

To learn more about the Trust Fund, or to find additional information on SCI and read about important legislative issues and upcoming initiatives for people with traumatic injuries, visit the Commission's Web site at www.bsitf.state.ga.us.