Traffic Safety Facts

2015 Data

February 2017

DOT HS 812 376

NHTSA

Key Findings

- In 2015 there were an estimated 6,296,000 police-reported traffic crashes, in which 35,092 people were killed and an estimated 2,443,000 people were injured.
- An average of 96 people died each day in motor vehicle crashes in 2015, one fatality every 15 minutes.
- Fatality rates per 100,000 population (10.92) and per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT, 1.13) in 2015 have both increased compared to 2014 (10.27 and 1.08, respectively).
- In 2015 there were 10,265 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities, representing an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 51 minutes.
- Thirty-three percent of all motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes were speeding in 2015, the highest of any vehicle type.
- NHTSA estimates that 13,941 lives were saved on the roadways in 2015 by the use of seat belts.
- On average, a pedestrian is killed in a motor vehicle crash every 1.6 hours, and one is injured about every 7.5 minutes.
- Drivers 15 to 20 years old made up 9 percent of drivers in fatal crashes, and 12 percent of those in all police-reported crashes.
- Of the 181 children 14 and younger who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes, 51 percent were passengers of vehicles where the drivers had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 g/dL or higher.
- Fifteen percent of the U.S. population was 65 or older in 2015. They accounted for 18 percent of all those killed and 10 percent of all those injured in traffic crashes.

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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Summary of Motor Vehicle Crashes

(Early Edition)

In this fact sheet, the overview of 2015 data is presented as follows:

- Overview
- Trends: 2006 to 2015
- Economic Cost for All Traffic Crashes

This fact sheet contains information on motor vehicle fatalities and fatal crashes, based on data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). FARS is a census of fatal crashes in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (although Puerto Rico is not included in U.S. totals). Crash and injury statistics are based on data from the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES). The NASS GES is a probability-based sample of police-reported crashes from 60 locations across the country, from which estimates of national totals for injury and property-damage-only crashes are derived.

Overview

Motor vehicle travel is a major means of transportation in the United States, providing an unparalleled degree of mobility. Yet for all its advantages, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for children age 10 and young people 16 to 23 in 2015.[1] The mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is to reduce deaths, injuries, and economic losses from motor vehicle crashes.

Trends: 2006 to 2015

The number of police-reported motor vehicle crashes by crash severity is presented in Table 1 for the 10-year period 2006 to 2015. A downward trend is most pronounced with respect to highest-severity crashes, which declined 16.8 percent over that decade. However, the number of fatal crashes have increased 7.0 percent from 2014 to 2015. There was also a 4.1-percent increase in non-fatal injury crashes, a 3.7-percent increase in property-damage-only crashes, and a 3.8 overall increase in the total police-reported crashes. This was a statistically significant increase in the number of non-fatal crashes from 2014 to 2015.

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.a.) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) database. (Web page). Atlanta: Author. Retrieved from the CDC web site at www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html

Table 1
Police-Reported Crashes by Crash Severity and Year, 2006–2015

Year	Crash Severity							
	Fatal		Injury		Property Damage Only		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2006	38,648	0.6%	1,746,000	29.2%	4,189,000	70.1%	5,973,000	100.0%
2007	37,435	0.6%	1,711,000	28.4%	4,275,000	71.0%	6,024,000	100.0%
2008	34,172	0.6%	1,630,000	28.1%	4,146,000	71.4%	5,811,000	100.0%
2009	30,862	0.6%	1,517,000	27.6%	3,957,000	71.9%	5,505,000	100.0%
2010	30,296	0.6%	1,542,000	28.5%	3,847,000	71.0%	5,419,000	100.0%
2011	29,867	0.6%	1,530,000	28.7%	3,778,000	70.8%	5,338,000	100.0%
2012	31,006	0.6%	1,634,000	29.1%	3,950,000	70.3%	5,615,000	100.0%
2013	30,202	0.5%	1,591,000	28.0%	4,066,000	71.5%	5,687,000	100.0%
2014	30,056	0.5%	1,648,000	27.2%	4,387,000	72.3%	6,064,000	100.0%
2015	32,166	0.5%	1,715,000	27.2%	4,548,000	72.2%	6,296,000	100.0%

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2006–2014 (Final File) and 2015 Annual Report File (ARF); National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) 2006–2015

While Table 1 presents data on crashes, Table 2 presents data on people killed and injured in motor vehicle crashes for the 10-year period for which the most recent data is available. Also presented are the fatality and injury rates based on population, licensed drivers, registered vehicles, and VMT.

In 2015 there were 35,092 people killed and an estimated 2,443,000 people injured in police-reported motor vehicle traffic crashes. Compared to 2014, this is a 7.2-percent increase in the number of fatalities and a 4.5-percent increase in the number of people injured. The increase of an estimated 106,000 injured people between 2014 and 2015 represent a statistically significant increase in the numbers. Over the decade, there has been a 17.8-percent decrease in the number of those killed in motor vehicle crashes, and a 5.1-percent decrease in those injured. On average, 96 people died each day and one person was killed every 15 minutes in motor vehicle crashes in 2015.

Unfortunately, there has been an across-the-board increase in the number of deaths and injuries on our Nation's highways in 2015. In 2015 the fatality rate per 100 million VMT increased to 1.13, although it is still a 20.4-percent decline from 2006, when the rate was 1.42 per 100 million VMT. The fatality rates based on population and VMT are the highest they have been in the last several years.

The injury rate per 100 million VMT was 79 in 2015, an increase from 77 in 2014. The injury rate increased from 733 per 100,000 population in 2014 to 760 in 2015 as did the injury rate based on licensed drivers. The injury rate based on registered vehicles also increased from 2014.

Table 2

People Killed and Injured, and Fatality and Injury Rates, 2006–2015

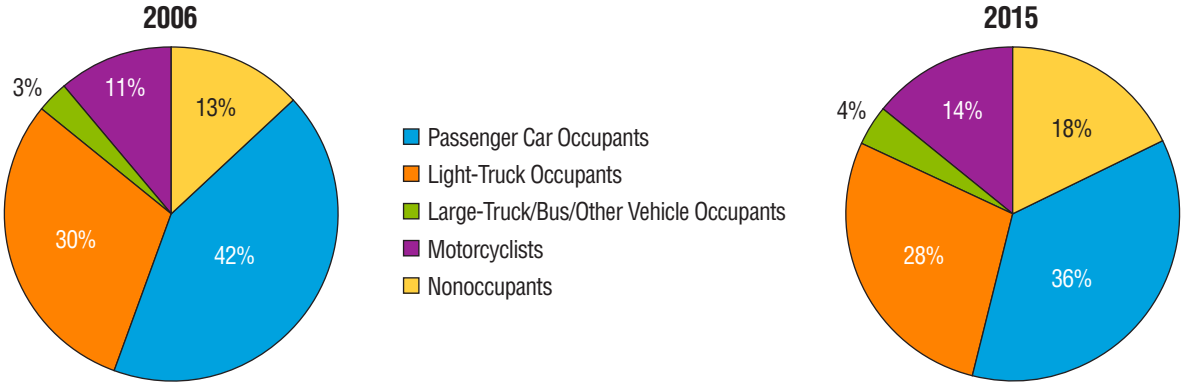
Year	Killed	Resident Population (Thousands)	Fatality Rate per 100,000 Population	Licensed Drivers (Thousands)	Fatality Rate per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Registered Motor Vehicles (Thousands)	Fatality Rate per 100,000 Registered Vehicles	Vehicle Miles Traveled (Billions)	Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT
					Killed				
2006	42,708	298,380	14.31	202,810	21.06	251,415	16.99	3,014	1.42
2007	41,259	301,231	13.70	205,742	20.05	257,472	16.02	3,031	1.36
2008	37,423	304,094	12.31	208,321	17.96	259,360	14.43	2,977	1.26
2009	33,883	306,772	11.05	209,618	16.16	258,958	13.08	2,957	1.15
2010	32,999	309,347	10.67	210,115	15.71	257,312	12.82	2,967	1.11
2011	32,479	311,719	10.42	211,875	15.33	265,043	12.25	2,950	1.10
2012	33,782	314,103	10.76	211,815	15.95	265,647	12.72	2,969	1.14
2013	32,893	316,427	10.40	212,160	15.50	269,294	12.21	2,988	1.10
2014	32,744	318,907	10.27	214,092	15.29	274,805	11.92	3,026	1.08
2015	35,092	321,419	10.92	218,084	16.09	281,312	12.47	3,095	1.13

Year	Injured	Resident Population (Thousands)	Injury Rate per 100,000 population	Licensed Drivers (Thousands)	Injury Rate per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Registered Motor Vehicles (Thousands)	Injury Rate per 100,000 Registered Vehicles	Vehicle Miles Traveled (Billions)	Injury Rate per 100 Million VMT
					Injured				
2006	2,575,000	298,380	863	202,810	1,269	251,415	1,024	3,014	85
2007	2,491,000	301,231	827	205,742	1,211	257,472	967	3,031	82
2008	2,346,000	304,094	771	208,321	1,126	259,360	904	2,977	79
2009	2,217,000	306,772	723	209,618	1,058	258,958	856	2,957	75
2010	2,239,000	309,347	724	210,115	1,066	257,312	870	2,967	75
2011	2,217,000	311,719	711	211,875	1,046	265,043	836	2,950	75
2012	2,362,000	314,103	752	211,815	1,115	265,647	889	2,969	80
2013	2,313,000	316,427	731	212,160	1,090	269,294	859	2,988	77
2014	2,338,000	318,907	733	214,092	1,092	274,805	851	3,026	77
2015	2,443,000	321,419	760	218,084	1,120	281,312	869	3,095	79

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2006–2014 (Final File) and 2015 Annual Report File (ARF); National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) 2006-2015; Vehicle Miles Traveled and Licensed Drivers — Federal Highway Administration; Registered Vehicles — R. L. Polk & Co. and Federal Highway Administration; Population — U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Fatalities by person type in 2006 and 2015 are shown in Figure 1. The most obvious shift is in the percentage of passenger car occupant fatalities—changing from 42 percent of the fatalities to 36 percent. This percentage change is the result of 5,297 fewer passenger car occupant fatalities in the 10-year period. A reduction of 2,948 light-truck occupant fatalities led to a slight decrease in that portion of the fatalities (30% to 28%). Motorcyclist fatalities now make up 14 percent of total fatalities compared to 11 percent 10 years ago. Finally, the portion of nonoccupant (pedestrian, bicyclists, and other cyclists) fatalities has increased from 13 percent to 18 percent over the 10-year period.

Figure 1
Fatalities by Person Type, 2006 and 2015



Source: FARS 2006 Final File and 2015 ARF.

Economic Cost for All Traffic Crashes

The estimated economic cost of all motor vehicle traffic crashes in the United States in 2010 (the most recent year for which cost data is available) was $242 billion. Included in the economic costs are:

- lost productivity,
- workplace losses,
- legal and court expenses,
- medical costs,
- emergency medical services (EMS),
- insurance administration costs,
- congestion costs, and
- property damage costs.

These costs represent the tangible losses that result from motor vehicle crashes. However, in cases of serious injury or death, such costs fail to capture the rather intangible value of lost quality-of-life that results from these injuries. When quality of life valuations are considered, the total value of societal harm from motor vehicle crashes in the United States in 2010 was an estimated $836 billion.

The costs related to specific types of crashes have also been estimated. Table 3 presents the economic and comprehensive costs of crash topics discussed in this fact sheet.

Table 3
Economic and Comprehensive Cost Estimates in Billions, 2010

Type of Crashes	Economic Cost	Comprehensive Cost
Total	$242.0	$835.8
Alcohol Impaired	$44.0	$201.1
Speeding	$52.0	$203.2
Motorcycle Crashes	$12.9	$65.7
Helmet Nonuse	$1.2	$7.6
Seat Belt Nonuse	$10.4	$68.6
Pedestrian Crashes	$11.5	$65.0
Bicyclist and Other Cyclist Crashes	$4.4	$21.7

Source: Blincoe, L. J., Miller, T. R., Zaloshnja, E., & Lawrence, B. A. (2015, May). The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2010 (Revised) (Report No. DOT HS 812 013). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/812013.pdf.

Each fatality resulted in an average discounted lifetime economic cost of $1.4 million, and an average comprehensive cost of $9.1 million. For further information on cost estimates, see *The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised)* at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/812013.pdf.

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For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), NSA-230, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted at 800-934-8517 or by e-mail at ncsaweb@dot.gov. General information on highway traffic safety can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/NCSA. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236.

Other fact sheets available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis are *Alcohol-Impaired Driving, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists, Children, Large Trucks, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection, Older Population, Passenger Vehicles, Pedestrians, Rural/Urban Comparisons, School Transportation-Related Crashes, Speeding, State Alcohol Estimates, State Traffic Data,* and *Young Drivers*. Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System*. The fact sheets and annual Traffic Safety Facts report can be found at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

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