



Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as a Leading Cause of Death in the United States, 2016 and 2017

Summary

In 2017, for the ninth consecutive year, motor vehicle traffic crashes were not among the top 10 causes of death in the United States. Motor vehicle crashes were the 13th leading cause of death overall among all causes in both 2016 and 2017. Motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for ages 3, 11, 12, and 17 to 21 in 2017. In 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for ages 10, 11, and 17 to 22.

When motor vehicle traffic crashes were ranked within unintentional injury deaths, they were the second leading cause of death during both 2016 and 2017. They were the leading cause of unintentional injury death for ages 3 to 21 in 2017. In 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of intentional injury death for ages 3 to 22, and 65 and 66.

Assessing by another measure, the years of life lost (i.e., the number of years people were expected to live had they not died), motor vehicle traffic crashes ranked 7th in 2016 and 2017 as it has been ranked since 2011. This reflects the toll that motor vehicle traffic crashes take on the younger population.

Background

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), publishes detailed tabulations of the leading causes of death in its annual report on mortality. In these tabulations, the fatalities due to motor vehicle traffic crashes are included in the general category of “Unintentional Injuries,” even though such fatalities comprise a large proportion of all fatalities, especially among the younger population. To highlight the contribution of motor vehicle crashes in causing fatalities, NHTSA considers them as a separate cause of death while ranking the leading causes of death. This Research Note examines the status of motor vehicle traffic crashes as a leading cause of death in the United States in 2016 and 2017. The objective is to update the relevant statistics reported in the previously published research note (DOT HS 812 499) that was based on the mortality data for 2015. The ranking is based on 68 causes of death adopted by NHTSA’s National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) to rank the leading causes of death.

The list of 68 causes of death is comprehensive in that all underlying causes are represented in this list. Fifty-one of these 68 adopted causes reflect the underlying causes based on internal morbid bodily conditions, while 16 causes reflect the underlying causes based on external factors such as crashes and acts of violence, and the remaining one cause reflects all other diseases. This 68-cause listing is not arbitrary and closely agrees with the special listing of causes of death used by the NCHS to report statistics on leading causes of death in the United States. The latter differs from the NCSA listing primarily in causal areas related to unintentional injuries (accidental death). While NCHS uses the combined cause of unintentional injuries in its reports of leading causes of death, this study separates out the various causes that comprise unintentional injuries, such as fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes, accidental falls, accidental poisoning, motor vehicle non-traffic/other crashes, etc. Accordingly, the rankings of some causes of death will differ from those reported by NCHS. The NCSA-adopted listing of causes of death also differs from the NCHS listing in terms of causes of infant mortality. For the sake of public health interest, NCHS uses a detailed 130-cause listing, but the NCSA list combines infant mortality into one major cause – conditions originating in the perinatal period.

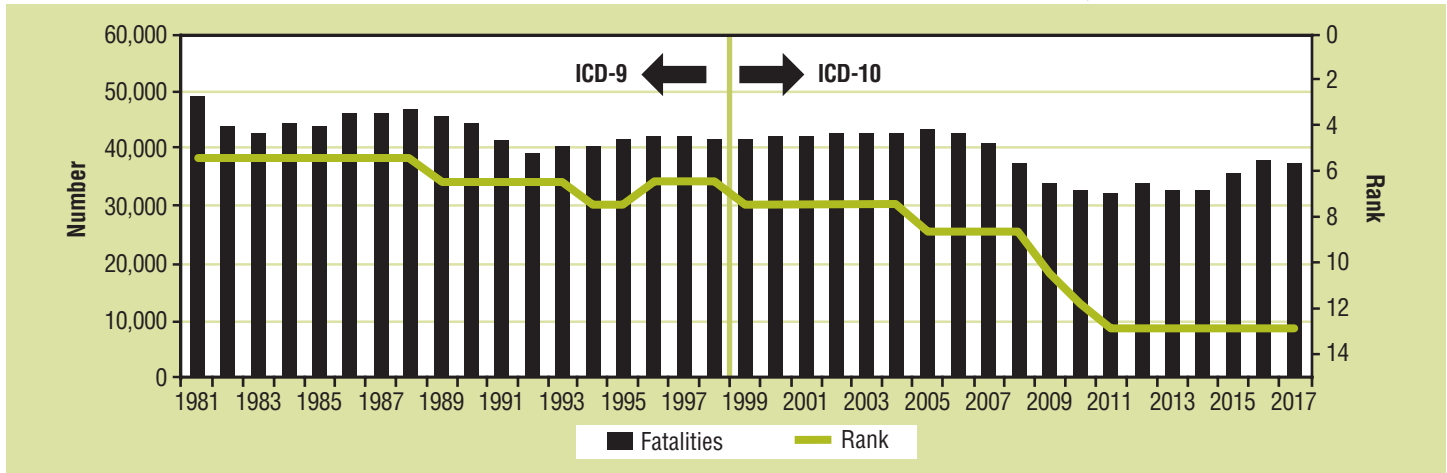
Also, the fatality totals for motor vehicle traffic crashes reported by NCHS differ marginally from those reported by NHTSA due to definitional differences. NCSA uses the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), a census of fatal traffic crashes in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to report fatality totals for each year. To be included in FARS a crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway customarily open to the public and must result in the death of at least one person (occupant of a vehicle or a nonoccupant) within 30 days of the crash. In contrast, NCHS uses information reported on death certificates as original records. The information is filed in State registration offices and then a national database is compiled through the Vital Statistics Cooperation Program. Due to these differences NHTSA underreports the fatality count and places the remaining difference in “motor vehicle nontraffic/other crashes.” An example of such a crash is any motor vehicle traffic crash where the occupant dies more than 30 days after the crash.

To highlight the tremendous toll that motor vehicle traffic crashes take on the younger population, NCSA also included the ranking based on the years of life lost. Accordingly, this study found that while motor vehicle traffic crashes ranked 13th overall as causes of death in 2016 and 2017, they ranked 7th in terms of the years of life lost. These ranks follow the ranking of other major causes of death such as heart diseases, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, accidental poisoning and suicide.

Trends

Figure 1 shows the trend in the number of fatalities, as well as the rank of motor vehicle traffic crashes as a cause of death from 1981 to 2017. For the ninth consecutive year, motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2017 were not among the top 10 causes of death in the United States.

Figure 1
Number and Rank of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as a Cause of Death in the United States, 1981–2017*



*Please refer to the *Methodology* section in this note about making year-to-year comparisons of ranking.
Data Source: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 1981–2017; FARS 1981–2017 Final File

Leading Cause of Death by Age and Sex

Figure 2 shows the trend of the rank of motor vehicle traffic crashes as a leading cause of death by sex. The rank of motor vehicle traffic crashes as a leading cause of death differed between males and females. While ranked 13th overall, in 2016 and 2017 motor vehicle traffic crashes ranked 9th among males and 15th among females as cause of death. Motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2017 were the leading cause of death for ages 3, 11, 12, and 17 to 21. In 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for ages 10, 11, and 17 to 22.

When ranked by specific ages in 2017, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death among males for each age 6, 8, 11, 12, 18, and 21. Among females in 2017, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for each age 3 and 16 to 21. When ranked by specific ages in 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death among males for each age 10, 11, and 17 to 22. Among females in 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for each age 3, 8, 10, 11, and 16 to 23.

Leading Cause of Unintentional Injury Death by Age and Sex

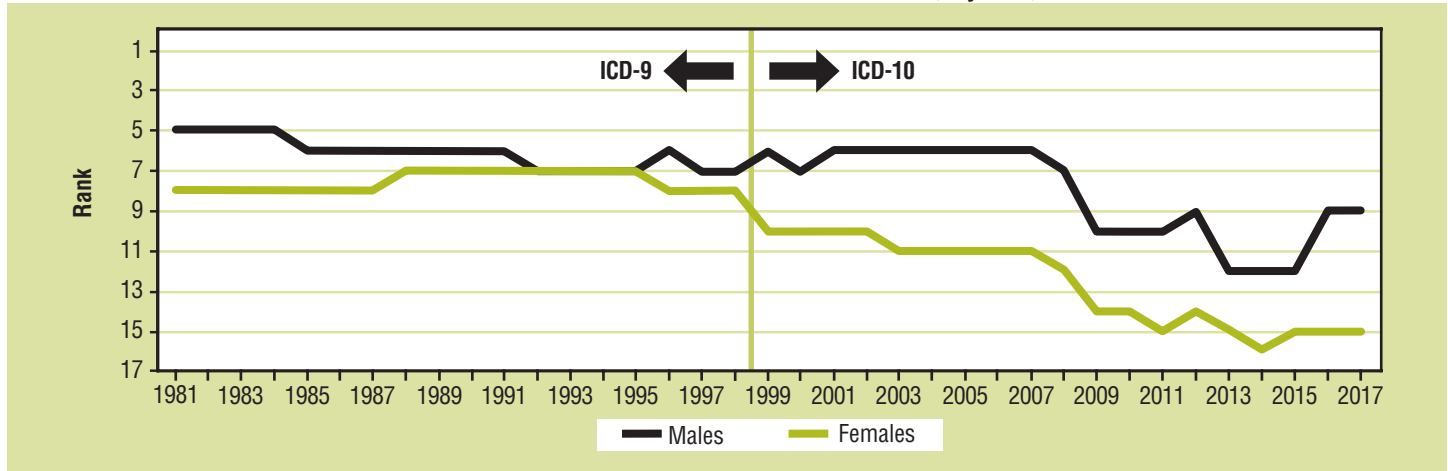
For 2016 and 2017 NCHS lists unintentional injury as the third leading cause of death. Unintentional injuries accounted for 5.9 and 6.0 percent of all deaths in 2016 and 2017 while motor

vehicle traffic crashes accounted for 23.4 and 22.1 percent of these deaths in 2016 and 2017. While ranked second overall, in 2016 and 2017 the rank of motor vehicle traffic crashes as a leading cause of unintentional injury death varied little between males and females. When considering only unintentional injury deaths, motor vehicle traffic crashes were ranked second among males and third among females as a cause in both years.

When ranked by specific ages in 2017, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death for every age 3 to 21. In 2016 motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death for every age 3 to 22, and 65 and 66.

When ranked by specific ages in 2017, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death among males for every age 4 to 21. Among females in 2017, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death for each age 3 to 21. When ranked by specific ages in 2016, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death among males for every age 5 to 22 and 65 to 68. Among females in 2016, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of unintentional injury death for each age 3 to 23.

Figure 2
Rank of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as a Cause of Death in the United States, by Sex, 1981–2017*



*Please refer to the *Methodology* section in this note about making year-to-year comparisons of ranking.
 Data Source: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 1981–2017; FARS 1981–2017 Final File

Methodology

Years of Life Lost: This is the expected number of years someone would have lived had the person not died. The number of years of life lost due to a cause is the aggregate of years of expected life lost for all people who died due to that cause. The expected number of years of the remaining life of a person is calculated using tables of life expectancy by age for each year from the CDC (Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2016 & 2017, NCHS).

The tables on the following page show the top 10 leading causes of death and unintentional injury death by age group in the years 2016 and 2017. The age groups used to rank causes in this research note reflect categories of interest to NHTSA in terms of child-restraint programs (toddlers, infants, and young children), new drivers (youth and young adults), other adults, and older people.

Year-to-Year Comparisons: The coding of mortality data changed meaningfully in 1999. Therefore, the comparisons of the number of deaths and death rates from 1998 and earlier years with the statistics for 1999 and later years is not advisable. Also, cause-of-injury groups were updated in 2003, which may affect some WISQARS mortality reports. Since 1999 mortality data has been coded using International Classification of Disease-10th Revision (ICD-10). Mechanism and cause of injury are based on ICD-10 external cause of injury codes.

In 2015 NHTSA began using FARS numbers rather than CDC reported motor vehicle traffic crash numbers. This led to changes in the historical rankings of motor vehicle traffic crashes, overall and across sex and specific ages. In 2019 NHTSA began using each year's CDC life tables with each year's fatality counts, rather than always using the most recently available estimates. This led to new, more precise years of potential life lost estimates.

The CDC maintains a web portal called WISQARS (Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) that presents the leading causes of fatal injury in the United States going back to 1981. The rank order for some of the earlier years shown in Figure 1 was excerpted from the WISQARS website at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcause.html>.

The trend of rankings presented in Figures 1 and 2 should be viewed in the context of the coding changes and categorizations of causes of death over the time periods outlined above.

For More Information

For questions regarding the information in this research note, please contact NCSAWEBSITE@dot.gov.

The suggested APA format citation for this document is:

Webb, C. N. (2020, July). *Motor vehicle traffic crashes as a leading cause of death in the United States, 2016 and 2017* (Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. Report No. DOT HS 812 927). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



U.S. Department
 of Transportation
**National Highway
 Traffic Safety
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This research note and other general information on highway traffic safety may be accessed by Internet users at: www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CATS/index.aspx

Top 10 Leading Causes of Death in the United States in 2016, by Age Group¹

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis

RANK	Cause and Number of Deaths										Years of Life Lost ²	
	Infants Under 1	Toddlers 1-3	Young Children 4-7	Children 8-15	Youth 16-20	Young Adults 21-24	Other Adults			Elderly 65+		All Ages
							25-34	35-44	45-64			
1	Perinatal Period 11,365	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 383	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 373	MV Traffic Crashes 806	MV Traffic Crashes 3,225	Accidental Poisoning 3,707	Accidental Poisoning 14,631	Accidental Poisoning 13,278	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 157,655	Heart Disease 507,118	Heart Disease 635,260	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 22% (9,393,052)
2	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 4,816	Accidental Drowning 365	MV Traffic Crashes 316	Suicide 751	Suicide 2,415	MV Traffic Crashes 3,629	Suicide 7,366	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 10,903	Heart Disease 112,637	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 422,927	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 598,038	Heart Disease 18% (7,727,234)
3	Heart Disease 294	Homicide 283	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 180	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 708	Homicide 2,271	Suicide 3,000	MV Traffic Crashes 6,941	Heart Disease 10,477	Accidental Poisoning 22,877	CLRD ⁵ 131,002	CLRD ⁵ 154,596	Accidental Poisoning 5% (2,236,141)
4	Homicide 276	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 275	Accidental Drowning 173	Homicide 331	Accidental Poisoning 1,269	Homicide 2,762	Homicide 5,376	Suicide 7,030	CLRD ⁵ 22,117	Stroke 121,630	Stroke 142,142	CLRD ⁵ 4% (1,895,132)
5	Septicemia 192	MV Traffic Crashes 249	Homicide 150	Congenital Anomalies 251	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 628	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 704	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 3,791	MV Traffic Crashes 5,021	Chronic Liver Disease 21,812	Alzheimer's 114,883	Alzheimer's 116,103	Stroke 4% (1,557,046)
6	Influenza/Pneumonia 166	Heart Disease 98	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 86	Heart Disease 190	Heart Disease 343	Heart Disease 565	Heart Disease 3,445	Homicide 3,369	Diabetes 20,518	Diabetes 56,452	Diabetes 80,058	Suicide 4% (1,546,330)
7	Stroke 124	Influenza/Pneumonia 84	Heart Disease 59	Accidental Drowning 169	Accidental Drowning 288	Accidental Drowning 210	CLRD ⁵ 925	Chronic Liver Disease 2,851	Stroke 17,663	Influenza/Pneumonia 42,479	Accidental Poisoning 58,335	MV Traffic Crashes 3% (1,415,593)
8	MV Traffic Crashes 72	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 83	Influenza/Pneumonia 45	CLRD ⁵ 124	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 196	Congenital Anomalies 160	Diabetes 792	Diabetes 2,049	Suicide 16,196	Nephritis/Nephrosis 41,095	Influenza/Pneumonia 51,537	Diabetes 3% (1,238,760)
9	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 67	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 76	CLRD ⁵ 38	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 86	Accidental Falls 90	Complicated Pregnancy 147	Stroke 575	Stroke 1,851	MV Traffic Crashes 10,582	Septicemia 30,405	Nephritis/Nephrosis 50,046	Chronic Liver Disease 2% (952,264)
10	Nephritis/Nephrosis 63	Septicemia 62	Stroke 34	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 77	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 84	Diabetes 133	HIV 546	HIV 971	Septicemia 8,413	Accidental Falls 29,668	Suicide 44,965	Perinatal Period 2% (898,663)
ALL ³	23,161	3,405	2,185	5,128	13,145	18,260	57,616	77,792	539,961	2,003,458	2,744,248	All Causes 100% (42,121,092)

¹Overall, motor vehicle crashes are the 13th leading cause of death. When ranked by specific ages, they are the leading cause of death for each age 10, 11, and 17 to 22.

²Number of years calculated based on remaining life expectancy (2016 data from CDC) at time of death; percentages calculated as a proportion of total years of life lost due to all causes of death.

³Not a total of top 10 causes of death.

⁴Includes MV Traffic deaths not in FARS (e.g., deaths that occurred more than 30 days after a MV Traffic Crash). A motor vehicle non-traffic crash is any vehicle crash that occurs entirely in any place other than a public roadway.

⁵CLRD stands for chronic lower respiratory disease. "Malignant neoplasm" means cancer. "Congenital anomalies" means birth defects.

Data Sources: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 2016 & Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2016; FARS 2016 Final File

Top 10 Leading Causes of Death in the United States in 2017, By Age Group¹

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis

RANK	Cause and Number of Deaths										Years of Life Lost ²	
	Infants Under 1	Toddlers 1-3	Young Children 4-7	Children 8-15	Youth 16-20	Young Adults 21-24	Other Adults			Elderly 65+		All Ages
							25-34	35-44	45-64			
1	Perinatal Period 11,000	Congenital Anomalies ^{a,5} 371	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 346	Suicide 871	MV Traffic Crashes 3,129	Accidental Poisoning 3,852	Accidental Poisoning 16,478	Accidental Poisoning 15,032	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 154,076	Heart Disease 519,052	Heart Disease 647,457	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 22% (9,430,293)
2	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 4,580	Accidental Drowning ^a 371	MV Traffic Crashes 268	MV Traffic Crashes 742	Suicide 2,812	MV Traffic Crashes 3,345	Suicide 7,948	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 10,900	Heart Disease 112,760	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 427,896	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 599,108	Heart Disease 18% (8,016,939)
3	Heart Disease 304	MV Traffic Crashes 257	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 169	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 704	Homicide 2,284	Suicide 3,091	MV Traffic Crashes 6,822	Heart Disease 10,401	Accidental Poisoning 25,288	CLRD ⁵ 136,139	CLRD ⁵ 160,201	Accidental Poisoning 6% (2,523,995)
4	Homicide 302	Homicide 251	Homicide ^b 152	Homicide 377	Accidental Poisoning 1,160	Homicide 2,476	Homicide 5,488	Suicide 7,335	CLRD ⁵ 22,642	Stroke 125,653	Stroke 146,383	CLRD ⁵ 5% (1,958,339)
5	Influenza/Pneumonia 157	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 237	Accidental Drowning ^b 152	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 292	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 609	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 658	Heart Disease 3,681	MV Traffic Crashes 5,096	Chronic Liver Disease 22,049	Alzheimer's 120,107	Alzheimer's 121,404	Suicide 4% (1,684,955)
6	Septicemia 147	Heart Disease 112	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 88	Heart Disease 173	Heart Disease 375	Heart Disease 499	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 3,616	Homicide 3,351	Diabetes 21,313	Diabetes 59,020	Diabetes 83,564	Stroke 4% (1,605,127)
7	Stroke 100	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 110	Heart Disease 60	Accidental Drowning 171	Accidental Drowning 232	Accidental Drowning 202	CLRD ⁵ 918	Chronic Liver Disease 3,000	Stroke 17,906	Influenza/Pneumonia 46,862	Accidental Poisoning 64,795	MV Traffic Crashes 3% (1,419,930)
8	MV Traffic Crashes 80	Influenza/Pneumonia 90	Influenza/Pneumonia 56	CLRD ⁵ 121	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 176	Congenital Anomalies ⁵ 150	Diabetes 823	Diabetes 2,118	Suicide 16,543	Nephritis/Nephrosis 41,670	Influenza/Pneumonia 55,672	Diabetes 3% (1,319,549)
9	Nephritis/Nephrosis 79	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 66	Stroke 40	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 103	Accidental Falls 94	Diabetes 148	Stroke 593	Stroke 1,811	MV Traffic Crashes 10,756	Accidental Falls 31,190	Nephritis/Nephrosis 50,633	Chronic Liver Disease 2% (966,956)
10	Malignant Neoplasms ⁵ 57	Stroke 53	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 33	Exposure to Smoke/Fire 88	Diabetes 92	Complicated Pregnancy 122	HIV 513	Septicemia 854	Septicemia 8,279	Parkinson's Disease 31,177	Suicide 47,173	Homicide 2% (903,678)
ALL ³	22,335	3,282	2,050	5,338	13,204	17,602	60,215	79,796	542,148	2,067,404	2,813,503	All Causes 100% (43,470,252)

¹Overall, motor vehicle crashes are the 13th leading cause of death. When ranked by specific ages, they are the leading cause of death for each age 3, 11, 12, and 17 to 21.

²Number of years calculated based on remaining life expectancy (2017 data from CDC) at time of death; percentages calculated as a proportion of total years of life lost due to all causes of death.

³The difference between congenital anomalies and accidental drowning for leading cause of death among toddlers.

⁴The difference between homicide and accidental drowning for 4th leading cause of death among young children.

⁵Not a total of top 10 causes of death.

⁶Includes MV traffic deaths not in FARS (e.g., deaths that occurred more than 30 days after an MV traffic crash). A motor vehicle non-traffic crash is any vehicle crash that occurs entirely in any place other than a public roadway.

⁷CLRD stands for chronic lower respiratory disease. "Malignant neoplasm" means cancer. "Congenital anomalies" means birth defects.

Data Sources: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 2017 & Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2017; FARS 2017 Final File



Top 10 Leading Causes of Unintentional Injury Death in the United States in 2016, by Age Group¹

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis

RANK	Cause and Number of Deaths										Years of Life Lost ²			
	Infants Under 1	Toddlers 1-3	Young Children 4-7	Children 8-15	Youth 16-20	Young Adults 21-24	Other Adults			Elderly 65+		All Ages		
							25-34	35-44	45-64					
1	Unintentional Suffocation 1,023	Unintentional Drowning 365	MV Traffic Crashes 316	MV Traffic Crashes 806	MV Traffic Crashes 3,225	Unintentional Poisoning 3,707	Unintentional Poisoning 14,631	Unintentional Poisoning 13,278	Unintentional Poisoning 22,877	Unintentional Fall 29,668	Unintentional Poisoning 58,335	Unintentional Fall 29,668	Unintentional Poisoning 58,335	Unintentional Poisoning 46% (2,236,141)
2	MV Traffic Crashes 72	MV Traffic Crashes 249	Unintentional Drowning 173	Unintentional Drowning 169	Unintentional Poisoning 1,269	MV Traffic Crashes 3,629	MV Traffic Crashes 6,941	MV Traffic Crashes 5,021	MV Traffic Crashes 10,582	MV Traffic Crashes 6,846	MV Traffic Crashes 37,806	MV Traffic Crashes 6,846	MV Traffic Crashes 37,806	MV Traffic Crashes 29% (1,415,593)
3	Unintentional Drowning 38	Unintentional Suffocation 110	Unintentional Fire/Burn 86	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 86	Unintentional Drowning 288	Unintentional Drowning 210	Unintentional Drowning 463	Unintentional Fall 515	Unintentional Fall 3,917	Unintentional Unspecified 5,021	Unintentional Fall 34,673	Unintentional Unspecified 5,021	Unintentional Fall 34,673	Unintentional Fall 8% (373,432)
4	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 19	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 83	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 33	Unintentional Fire/Burn 77	Unintentional Fall 90	Unintentional Fall 103	Unintentional Fall 326	Unintentional Drowning 396	Unintentional Suffocation 1,211	Unintentional Suffocation 3,631	Unintentional Suffocation 6,610	Unintentional Suffocation 3,631	Unintentional Suffocation 6,610	Unintentional Suffocation 4% (183,831)
5	Unin. Natural/ Environment 18	Unintentional Fire/Burn 79	Unintentional Suffocation 26	Unintentional Suffocation 60	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 84	Unintentional Unspecified 63	Unin. MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 239	Unintentional Suffocation 258	Unintentional Unspecified 994	Unintentional Poisoning 2,458	Unintentional Unspecified 6,507	Unintentional Poisoning 2,458	Unintentional Unspecified 6,507	Unintentional Drowning 3% (156,542)
6	Unintentional Fire/Burn 13	Unin. Natural/ Environment 31	Unintentional Firearm 19	Unintentional Poisoning 57	Unintentional Other Land Transport 82	Unintentional Firearm ^b 58	Unintentional Suffocation 186	Unintentional Fire/Burn 222	Unintentional Drowning 976	Unintentional Fire/Burn 1,150	Unintentional Drowning 3,786	Unintentional Fire/Burn 1,150	Unintentional Drowning 3,786	Unintentional Unspecified 2% (88,210)
7	Undetermined Unspecified 11	Unintentional Poisoning 29	Unin. Struck By or Against 11	Unintentional Firearm 35	Unintentional Firearm 56	Unintentional Suffocation ^b 58	Unin. Other Spec/Class 184	Unintentional Unspecified 212	Unintentional Fire/Burn 928	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 1,053	Unintentional Fire/Burn 2,803	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 1,053	Unintentional Fire/Burn 2,803	Unintentional Fire/Burn 2% (78,386)
8	Unintentional Poisoning 9	Unintentional Firearm 26	Unintentional Poisoning 10	Unin. Other Land Transport: 34	Unintentional Other Transport: 49	Unin. Other Land Transport: 57	Unintentional Fire/Burn 154	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 211	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 773	Unintentional Drowning 700	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 2,521	Unintentional Drowning 700	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 2,521	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 2% (76,270)
9	Unintentional Fall 7	Unintentional Struck by or Against: 20	Unintentional Fall ^a 7	Unin. Other Transport 27	Unintentional Suffocation 47	MV Other/ Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 56	Unin. Other Transport 145	Unin. Other Spec/Class 194	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 596	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 690	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 1,678	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 690	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 1,678	Unin. Natural/ Environmental 1% (43,291)
10	Unintentional Machinery 3	Unintentional Fall 16	Unintentional Other Transport ³ : 7	Unintentional Fall 21	Unintentional Fire/Burn 38	Unintentional Fire/Burn 54	Unintentional Unspecified 139	Unin. Natural/ Environment 124	Unin. Other Spec/Class 595	Unin. Other Spec., NEC 677	Unin. Other Spec/Class 1,385	Unin. Other Spec., NEC 677	Unin. Other Spec/Class 1,385	Unintentional Other Spec/Class 1% (43,260)
ALL ³	1,219	1,045	719	1,447	5,373	8,206	23,984	20,975	45,237	53,141	161,374	53,141	161,374	All Causes 100% (4,855,345)

¹Overall, motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of unintentional death. When ranked by specific ages, they are the leading cause of death for each age 3 to 22, and 65 and 66.

²Number of years calculated based on remaining life expectancy (2016 data from CDC) at time of death; percentages calculated as a proportion of total years of life lost due to all unintentional causes of death.

³Fire between firearm and suffocation for 9th leading cause of unintentional injury death among young children.

⁴Not a total of top 10 causes of death.

⁵Includes MV traffic deaths not in FARS (e.g., deaths that occurred more than 30 days after an MV traffic crash). A motor vehicle non-traffic crash is any vehicle crash that occurs entirely in any place other than a public roadway.

Data Sources: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 2016 & Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2016; FARS 2016 Final File



Top 10 Leading Causes of Unintentional Injury Death in the United States in 2017, by Age Group¹

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis

RANK	Cause and Number of Deaths										Years of Life Lost ²	
	Infants Under 1	Toddlers 1-3	Young Children 4-7	Children 8-15	Youth 16-20	Young Adults 21-24	Other Adults			Elderly 65+		All Ages
							25-34	35-44	45-64			
1	Unintentional Suffocation 1,106 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 371 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 152 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 171 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Poisoning 3,129 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Poisoning 3,852	Unintentional Poisoning 16,478	Unintentional Poisoning 15,032	Unintentional Poisoning 25,288	Unintentional Fall 31,190	Unintentional Poisoning 64,795	Unintentional Poisoning 49% (2,523,995)
2	Unintentional Drowning 80 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 257 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 152 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 171 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Poisoning 1,160	Unintentional Drowning 202 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 479 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Drowning 522 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Fall 4,008 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Unspecified 5,125 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Fall 36,338 MV Traffic Crashes	Unintentional Fall 8% (397,937)
3	Unintentional Drowning 43	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ³ : 110	Unintentional Fire/Burn 88	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ³ : 103	Unintentional Drowning 232	Unintentional Drowning 202	Unintentional Drowning 479	Unintentional Fall 522	Unintentional Fall 4,008	Unintentional Unspecified 5,125	Unintentional Fall 36,338	Unintentional Fall 8% (397,937)
4	Unin. Natural/Environment 18	Unintentional Suffocation 96	Unintentional Suffocation 34	Unintentional Fire/Burn 89	Unintentional Fall 94	Unintentional Fall 111	Unintentional Fall 351	Unintentional Drowning 397	Unintentional Suffocation 1,252	Unintentional Suffocation 3,920	Unintentional Suffocation 6,946	Unintentional Suffocation 4% (193,135)
5	Unintentional Fire/Burn ^a 16	Unintentional Fire/Burn 72	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ³ : 33	Unintentional Poisoning 59	Unintentional Other Land Transport 83	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 105	Unin. MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 202	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 228	Unintentional Unspecified 1,036	Unintentional Poisoning 2,871	Unintentional Unspecified 6,606	Unintentional Drowning 3% (156,716)
6	Undetermined Unspecified ^a 16	Unin. Natural/Environment 32	Unintentional Firearm 16	Unintentional Suffocation 58	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ³ : 80	Unin. Other Land Transport: 54	Unin. Other Spec/Class 184	Unin. Other Spec/Class 216	Unintentional Drowning 961	Unintentional Fire/Burn 1,278	Unintentional Drowning 3,709	Unintentional Unspecified 2% (90,378)
7	Undetermined Fall 13	Unintentional Poisoning 25	Unin. Other Spec/Class 12	Unintentional Firearm 33	Unintentional Firearm 58	Unintentional Suffocation 52	Unintentional Suffocation 175	Unintentional Suffocation 211	Unintentional Fire/Burn 922	Unintentional Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 1,277	Unintentional Fire/Burn 2,902	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ 2% (83,036)
8	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ³ : 11	Unintentional Firearm 21	Unin. Other Land Transport: 11	Unintentional Fall ^b 31	Unintentional Fire/Burn 46	Unintentional Firearm ^c 50	Unintentional Fire/Burn 154	Unintentional Fire/Burn 203	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 732	Unin. Natural/Environment 714	MV Other/Non-Traffic Crashes ⁴ : 2,758	Unintentional Fire/Burn 2% (79,362)
9	Unintentional Poisoning 9	Unintentional Struck by or Against ^b : 16	Unintentional Machinery ^c 9	Unintentional Other Land Transport ^d 31	Unintentional Suffocation ^e 42	Unin. Other Transport ^f 50	Unin. Other Transport 145	Unintentional Unspecified 178	Unin. Natural/Environmental 632	Unintentional Drowning 700	Unin. Natural/Environment 1,750	Unintentional Other Spec/Class 1% (46,317)
10	Unin. Other Spec/Class 2	Unintentional Unspecified ^b 16	Unintentional Struck by or Against ^c : 9	Unintentional Other Transport: 30	Unintentional Unspecified ^e 42	Unin. Other Spec/Class 42	Unintentional Unspecified 136	Unin. Natural/Environment 165	Unin. Other Spec/Class 589	Unin. Other Spec., NEC 691	Unin. Other Spec/Class 1,440	Unin. Natural/Environment 1% (45,983)
ALL ³	1,317	1,056	670	1,428	5,103	8,029	25,669	22,828	47,869	55,951	169,936	All Causes 100% (5,199,305)

¹Overall, motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of unintentional death. When ranked by specific ages, they are the leading cause of death for each age 3 to 21.
²Number of years calculated based on remaining life expectancy (2017 data from CDC) at time of death; percentages calculated as a proportion of total years of life lost due to all unintentional causes of death.
³Includes MV Traffic deaths not in FARS (e.g., deaths that occurred more than 30 days after a MV Traffic Crash). A motor vehicle non-traffic crash is any vehicle crash that occurs entirely in any place other than a public roadway.
⁴Data Sources: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 2017 & Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2017; FARS 2017 Final File

⁵The between machinery and struck by or against for 9th leading cause of unintentional injury death in young children.
⁶The between fall and other land transport for 8th leading cause of unintentional injury death in children
⁷The between suffocation and unspecified for 9th leading cause of unintentional injury death in youth.
⁸The between firearm and other transport for 8th leading cause of unintentional injury death in young adults.
⁹Not a total of top 10 causes of death.

¹⁰Includes MV Traffic deaths not in FARS (e.g., deaths that occurred more than 30 days after a MV Traffic Crash). A motor vehicle non-traffic crash is any vehicle crash that occurs entirely in any place other than a public roadway.
 Data Sources: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data 2017 & Life Table for the Total Population: United States, 2017; FARS 2017 Final File