U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NHTSA

DOT HS 813 492 August 2023

Young Drivers

In this fact sheet for 2021 the information is presented as follows.

The term *young driver* refers to a person 15 to 20 years old operating a motor vehicle. People in this age group generally obtain their licenses for the first time and many are under graduated driver licensing (GDL) programs as they learn driving skills.

Key Findings

- In 2021 there were 2,116 young drivers who died in traffic crashes, an 11-percent increase from 1,899 in 2020.
- The number of licensed young drivers increased by 1.3 percent from 2020 to 2021.
- In 2021 there were an estimated 203,256 young drivers injured in traffic crashes, an increase of 7 percent from 189,959 in 2020.
- Young drivers accounted for 8.4 percent of all drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021. However, young drivers were only 5.0 percent of all licensed drivers in 2021.
- Young drivers involved in police-reported traffic crashes increased by 22 percent from 1,105,498 in 2020 to 1,349,626 in 2021. However, young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes increased by 11 percent from 4,588 in 2020 to 5,088 in 2021.
- The rate of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers for young female drivers was 25.51 in 2021. For young male drivers in 2021 the involvement rate was 60.28, more than twice that of young female drivers.
- Of the young drivers of passenger vehicles killed with known restraint use, 52 percent were unrestrained at the time of the traffic crashes in 2021, which is slightly higher than the percentage of all drivers of passenger vehicles killed (50%).
- Although people under 21 are legally prohibited from drinking alcohol, 27 percent of young drivers 15 to 20 years old who were killed in traffic crashes in 2021 had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .01 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher; 22 percent had BACs of .08 g/dL or higher.
- During 2021 there were 277 motorcycle riders 15 to 20 years old killed in traffic crashes, and an additional estimated 4,818 in that age group were injured.

This fact sheet contains information on fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes based on data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and non-fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes from the Crash Report Sampling System (CRSS). A change instituted with the release of 2020 data is rounding estimates to the nearest whole number instead of the nearest thousand for all police-reported crashes, including injury estimates. Refer to the end of this publication for more information on FARS and CRSS.

Due to a vehicle classification change, the 2020 and later-year vehicle type classifications are not comparable to 2019 and earlier-year vehicle type classifications. This change affects any analysis with a vehicle component to it. Refer to the end of this publication for more information on Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC).

A motor vehicle traffic crash is defined as an incident that involved one or more motor vehicles in-transport that originated on or had a harmful event (injury or damage) on a public trafficway, such as a road or highway. Crashes that occurred on private property not regularly used by the public for transport, including some parts of parking lots and driveways, are excluded. The terms "motor vehicle traffic crash" and "traffic crash" are used interchangeably in this document.

Overview

There were 232.8 million licensed drivers in the United States in 2021. Young drivers accounted for 11.7 million (5.0%) of all licensed drivers in 2021, a 2.8-percent decrease from the 12.1 million young licensed drivers in 2012, but a 1.3-percent increase from 2020. Population for this age group stayed roughly the same from 2012 to 2021.[1]

Motor vehicle traffic crashes are a leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds.[2] In 2021 there were 2,116 young drivers who died in traffic crashes, an 11-percent increase from the 1,899 young drivers who died in 2020. Additionally, an estimated 203,256 young drivers were injured in traffic crashes in 2021, an increase of 7 percent from 189,959 in 2020.

Fatalities in traffic crashes involving young drivers increased over the 10-year period from 4,672 in 2012 to 5,565 in 2021, as seen in Table 1. The 5,565 fatalities in 2021 is the highest number of fatalities in traffic crashes involving young drivers over that 10-year period.

In fatal traffic crashes involving young drivers for the 10-year period from 2012 to 2021:

- Fatalities among young drivers increased by 13 percent.
- Fatalities among the passengers of young drivers increased by 0.5 percent.
- Occupant fatalities of other vehicles increased by 35 percent.
- Nonoccupant (pedestrians, pedalcyclists, or other nonoccupants) fatalities increased by 43 percent.
- Total traffic fatalities in crashes involving young drivers increased by 19 percent.

In fatal traffic crashes involving young drivers in the most recent year from 2020 to 2021:

- Fatalities among young drivers increased by 11 percent.
- Fatalities among the passengers of young drivers decreased by 2 percent.
- Occupant fatalities of other vehicles increased by 12 percent.
- Nonoccupant fatalities increased by 21 percent.
- Total traffic fatalities in crashes involving young drivers increased by 10 percent.

[1] Licensed Drivers – Federal Highway Administration; Population – Census Bureau.

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), Mortality Multiple Cause-of-Death, FARS

Table 1. Fatalities in Traffic Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by Person Type, 2012-2021

Year	Young Drivers (15–20)	Passengers of Young Drivers by Age				Occupants of Other Vehicles	Nonoccupants	Total*
		<15	15–20	21+	Total*			
2012	1,880	88	682	286	1,060	1,230	502	4,672
2013	1,696	120	633	313	1,069	1,133	469	4,367
2014	1,723	75	671	268	1,015	1,093	454	4,285
2015	1,903	101	622	258	982	1,326	533	4,744
2016	1,916	94	665	270	1,033	1,348	598	4,895
2017	1,844	97	651	237	986	1,396	574	4,800
2018	1,729	70	586	261	919	1,318	562	4,528
2019	1,616	87	574	226	888	1,373	514	4,391
2020	1,899	114	689	284	1,090	1,489	591	5,069
2021	2,116	102	707	247	1,065	1,666	718	5,565

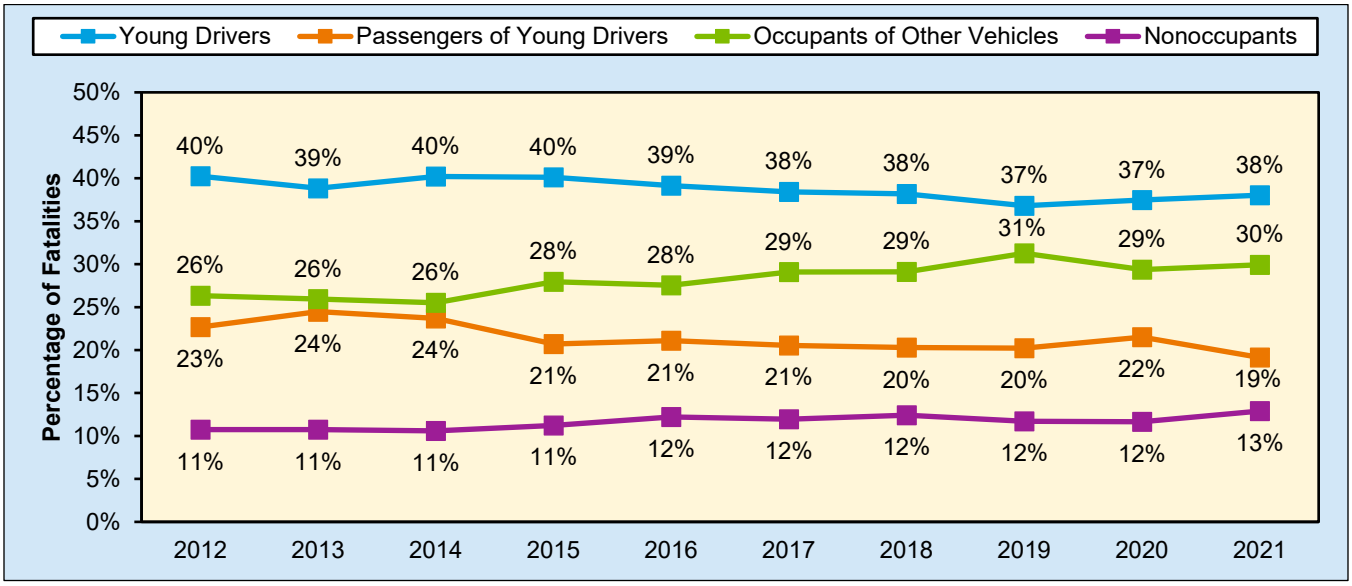
Source: FARS 2012-2020 Final File, 2021 Annual Report File (ARF)
*Includes passengers of young drivers with unknown ages.

Figure 1 displays the percentage of fatalities in traffic crashes involving young drivers by person type and year.

In 2021:

- Young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes made up 38 percent of the fatalities in those crashes.
- Fatalities for occupants of other vehicles increased from 26 percent in 2012 to 30 percent in 2021.
- Of the passengers of young drivers who died in traffic crashes, 66 percent (707 of 1,065 from Table 1) were also 15 to 20 years old.
- The percentage of nonoccupants has been gradually increasing over the years.

Figure 1. Percentages of Fatalities in Traffic Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by Person Type, 2012-2021



Source: FARS 2012-2020 Final File, 2021 ARF

Drivers

There were 5,088 young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021 – an 18-percent increase from the 4,313 involved in 2012. However, drivers of all ages involved in fatal traffic crashes increased by 33 percent in the same time period. Table 2 shows both involvement of young drivers in fatal traffic crashes as well as young driver fatalities in traffic crashes in 2012 and 2021.

In 2021:

- Young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes increased by 20 percent for males and increased by 13 percent for females from 2012.
- The 2-year comparison of total driver involvement in fatal traffic crashes increased by 12 percent from 54,165 in 2020 to 60,904 in 2021. During this same period, young driver involvement increased by 11 percent from 4,588 in 2020 to 5,088 in 2021.
- Total drivers involved in police-reported traffic crashes increased by 19 percent from 9,125,731 in 2020 to 10,821,027 in 2021. Young drivers involved in police-reported traffic crashes increased by 22 percent from 1,105,498 in 2020 to 1,349,626 in 2021.
- Twelve percent of all drivers involved in police-reported traffic crashes and 8.4 percent of all drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes were young drivers. However, young drivers were only 5.0 percent of all licensed drivers in 2021.

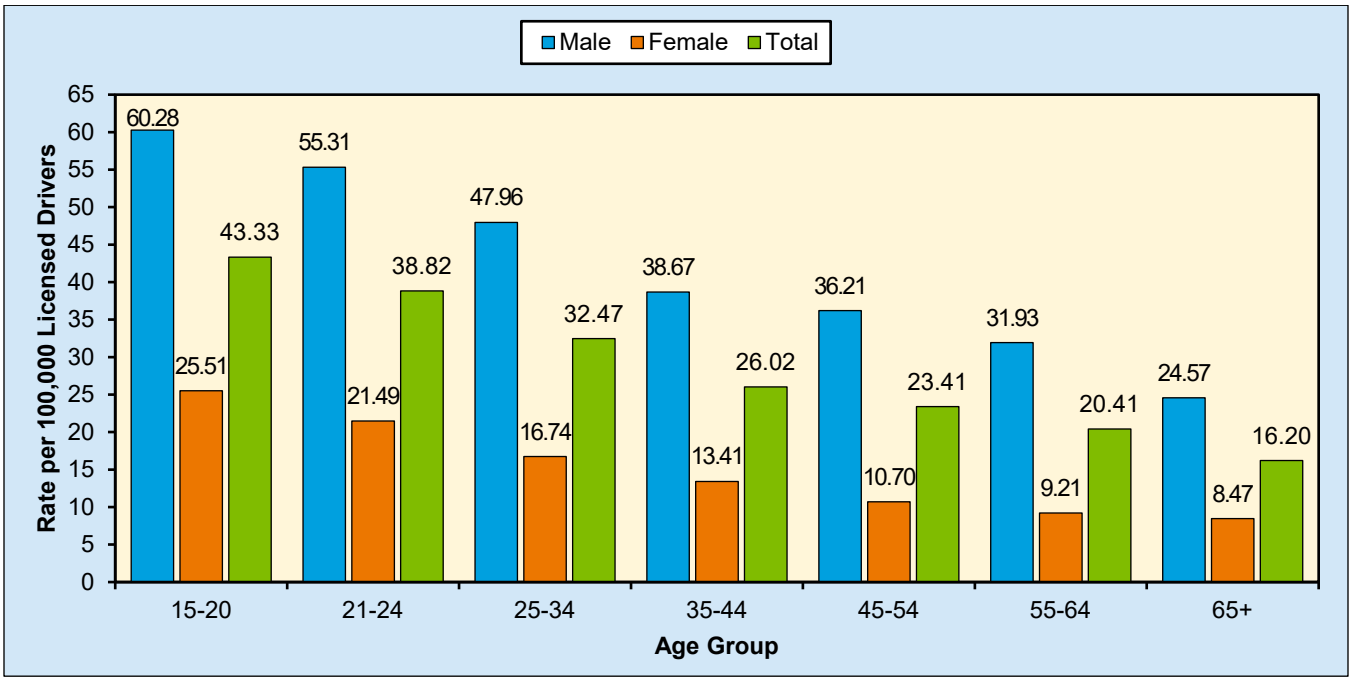
Table 2. Involvement of Young and All Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Sex, 2012 and 2021

Sex	2012			2021			Percentage Change, 2012 to 2021	
	Total (All Drivers)	Ages 15–20	Percentage of Total	Total (All Drivers)	Ages 15–20	Percentage of Total	Total (All Drivers)	Ages 15–20
Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes								
Male	33,351	3,013	9.0%	44,036	3,603	8.2%	+32%	+20%
Female	11,604	1,299	11.2%	15,130	1,471	9.7%	+30%	+13%
Total*	**45,664**	**4,313**	**9.4%**	**60,904**	**5,088**	**8.4%**	**+33%**	**+18%**
Driver Fatalities								
Male	16,604	1,373	8.3%	21,329	1,599	7.5%	+28%	+16%
Female	4,885	507	10.4%	6,049	512	8.5%	+24%	+1%
Total*	**21,490**	**1,880**	**8.7%**	**27,422**	**2,116**	**7.7%**	**+28%**	**+13%**

Source: FARS 2012 Final File, 2021 ARF
*Includes unknown sex.

The rate of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers was higher for young drivers compared to older drivers, as seen in Figure 2. For young male drivers 15 to 20 years old, the driver involvement rate in 2021 was 60.28 per 100,000 licensed drivers. For young female drivers 15 to 20 years old, the driver involvement rate in 2021 was 25.51 per 100,000 licensed drivers.

Figure 2. Driver Involvement Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Sex, 2021



Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Licensed Drivers – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

The 15- to 20-year-old age group accounted for 9.8 percent of all drivers involved in single-vehicle fatal crashes in 2021, compared to 8.0 percent in multiple-vehicle fatal crashes, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentages of Population, Licensed Drivers, and Drivers Involved in Traffic Crashes, By Age Group, 2021

	Age Group								
	<15	**15–20**	**21–24**	**25–34**	**35–44**	**45–54**	**55–64**	**65–69**	**70+**
Population	18.2%	7.8%	5.2%	13.7%	13.1%	12.3%	12.9%	5.5%	11.3%
Licensed Drivers	—	5.0%	6.1%	17.5%	17.0%	16.1%	17.0%	7.3%	14.0%
Drivers Involved in Property-Damage-Only Crashes	0.1%	12.7%	10.7%	22.6%	17.3%	14.2%	11.9%	4.1%	6.4%
Drivers Involved in Injury Crashes	0.1%	12.1%	10.7%	22.6%	17.7%	14.0%	12.1%	3.9%	6.8%
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	0.2%	8.6%	9.3%	22.3%	17.4%	14.8%	13.7%	4.6%	9.0%
— Single-Vehicle	*0.3%*	*9.8%*	*10.3%*	*23.1%*	*17.3%*	*14.4%*	*13.0%*	*4.2%*	*7.7%*
— Multiple-Vehicle	*0.1%*	*8.0%*	*8.8%*	*22.0%*	*17.5%*	*15.1%*	*14.1%*	*4.9%*	*9.6%*

Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; CRSS 2021; Population – Census Bureau; Licensed Drivers – FHWA
Notes: Percentages are based on known values. Licensed drivers age 15 to 20 may include drivers under 15, because individual age data are not available for under 16.

Among young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021, there were 12.8 percent (146 out of 1,141) of those who did not have valid driver licenses who also had previous license suspensions or revocations within 5 years from the date of the traffic crashes, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Previous 5-Year Driving Record and License Compliance, 2021

Driving Records of Young Drivers (Ages 15–20)	License Compliance				Total*	
	Valid		Invalid			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Drivers Involved**	**3,882**	**100.0%**	**1,141**	**100.0%**	**5,088**	**100.0%**
No Previous Driving Record	2,519	64.9%	737	64.6%	3,260	64.1%
Previous Recorded Crashes	535	13.8%	113	9.9%	649	12.8%
Previous Recorded Suspensions or Revocations	126	3.2%	146	12.8%	273	5.4%
Previous DWI Convictions	12	0.3%	21	1.8%	33	0.6%
Previous Speeding Convictions	591	15.2%	109	9.6%	702	13.8%
Previous Other Harmful or Moving Convictions	433	11.2%	140	12.3%	575	11.3%

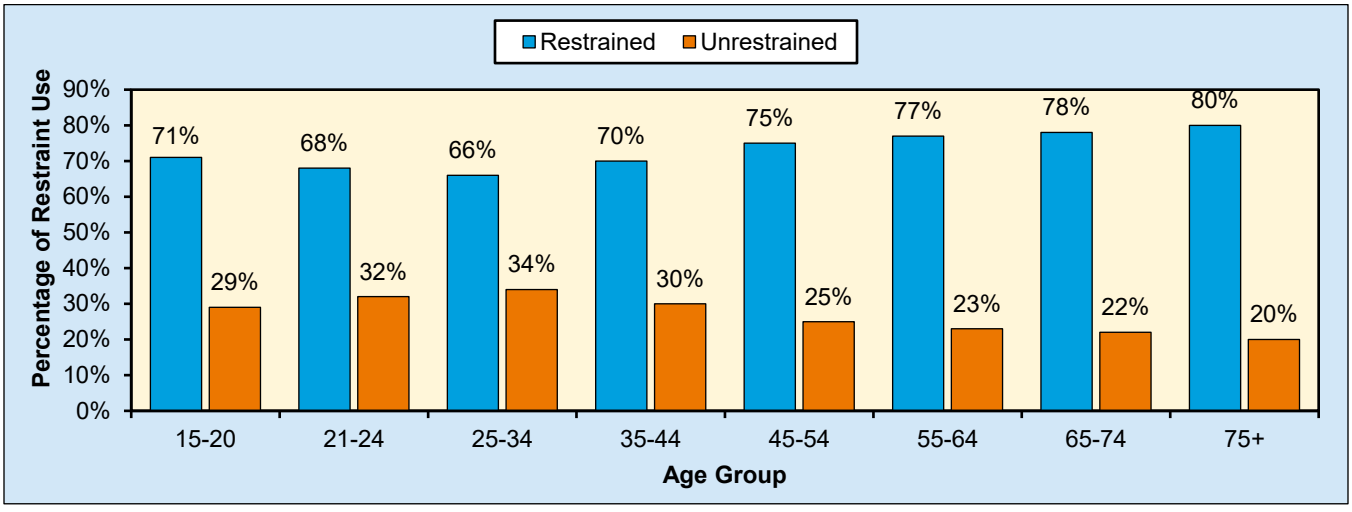
Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Includes drivers with unknown license compliance.
**Includes drivers with unknown previous records.
Note: Sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent as drivers can have multiple driving records of different types.

Restraint Use

Of the 4,584 young drivers of passenger vehicles (passenger cars and light trucks) involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021, the restraint use of those drivers is known for all but 454 drivers. Figure 3 shows passenger vehicle drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes by age group and known restraint use. Of the young drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021 with known restraint use:

- Fifty-two percent of those who died were unrestrained, which is higher than the percentage of all drivers of passenger vehicles who died (50%).
- Sixteen percent of those who survived were unrestrained compared to 11 percent of all drivers who survived fatal traffic crashes.
- Twenty-nine percent of those involved were unrestrained, which is slightly higher than the percentage of all passenger vehicles drivers involved (28%).

Figure 3. Passenger Vehicle Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Restraint Use,* 2021

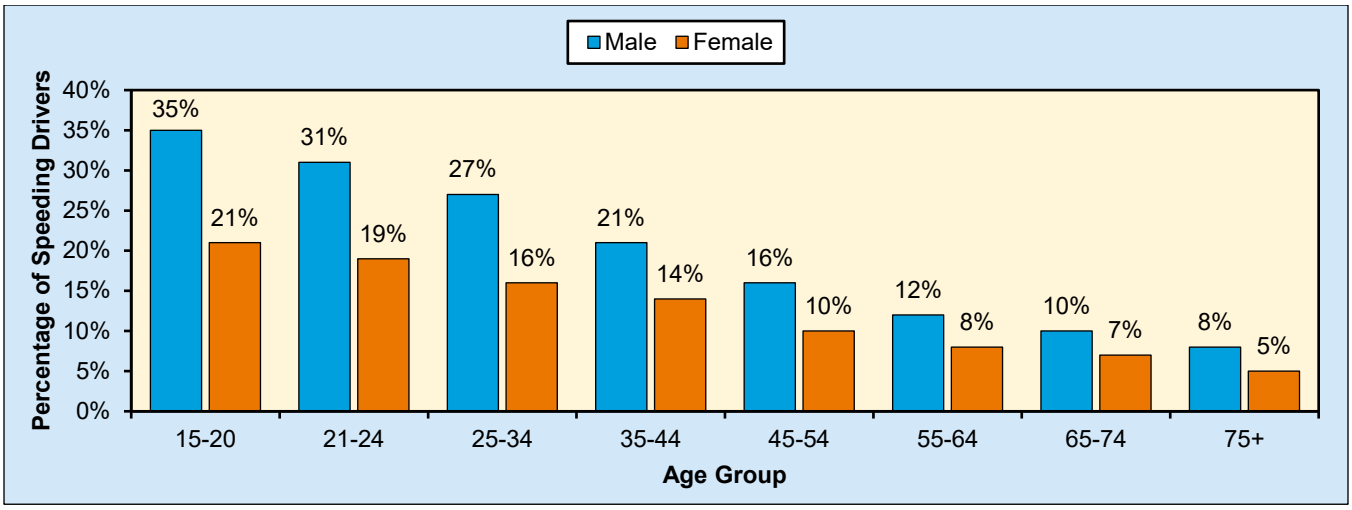


Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Based on known restraint use.

Speeding

NHTSA considers a crash to be speeding-related if any driver in the crash was charged with a speeding-related offense or if a police officer indicated that racing, driving too fast for conditions, or exceeding the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in the crash. In 2021 young male and female drivers were speeding at the time of the fatal traffic crashes more than any other age group, as shown in Figure 4. Males in general were more likely to be speeding than females in these crashes.

Figure 4. Percentages of Speeding Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Sex, 2021



Source: FARS 2021 ARF

Alcohol

All 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have set a threshold making it illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher. Note: Utah set a lower threshold of .05 g/dL or higher that went into effect on December 30, 2018. In addition, people under 21 are legally prohibited from drinking alcohol. Alcohol involvement includes a fatal crash in which a driver had a BAC of .01 g/dL or higher. A driver is considered to be alcohol-impaired when the driver's BAC is .08 g/dL or higher.

In 2021:

- Twenty-seven percent of the young drivers who were killed in traffic crashes had BACs of .01 g/dL or higher; 22 percent had BACs of .08 g/dL or higher, as shown in Table 5.
- Of the 564 young drivers killed who had alcohol in their systems, 471 (84%) were at .08 g/dL or higher.

Table 5. Alcohol Involvement Among Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Survival Status, 2012 and 2021

Survival Status	Total Drivers	No Alcohol (BAC=.00 g/dL)		BAC=.01+ g/dL		Alcohol-Impaired (BAC=.08+ g/dL)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2012							
Survived	2,433	2,047	84%	387	16%	290	12%
Killed	1,880	1,338	71%	542	29%	463	25%
Total	**4,313**	**3,385**	**78%**	**928**	**22%**	**753**	**17%**
2021							
Survived	2,972	2,456	83%	516	17%	413	14%
Killed	2,116	1,552	73%	564	27%	471	22%
Total	**5,088**	**4,008**	**79%**	**1,080**	**21%**	**884**	**17%**

Source: FARS 2012 Final File, 2021 ARF
Notes: Percentages are computed based on unrounded estimates. NHTSA estimates BACs when alcohol test results are unknown.

The number of young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes who had BACs of .01 g/dL or higher increased by 16 percent, from 928 in 2012 to 1,080 in 2021. Twenty-one percent of these drivers had alcohol in their systems in 2021 as compared to 22 percent in 2012.

Table 6 shows alcohol involvement for young drivers who were killed, by their age in 2021. Among young drivers killed in traffic crashes in 2021, there were 554 killed at the age of 19 – highest among the young drivers; 27 percent of these drivers had alcohol in their systems at the time of the crash. Young drivers age 20 who were killed in traffic crashes had the highest percentage of alcohol in their systems at the time of the crash at 33 percent in 2021. The table also shows that of those young drivers killed, the percentage that involved alcohol generally increases as age increases.

Table 6. Young Drivers Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Age and Alcohol Involvement, 2021

Age	Total Drivers Killed	Drivers With BAC=.01+ g/dL	
		Number	Percent
15	47	7	15%
16	156	25	16%
17	319	79	25%
18	497	121	24%
19	554	151	27%
20	543	180	33%

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
Notes: Percentages are computed based on unrounded estimates. NHTSA estimates BACs when alcohol test results are unknown.

For young drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes, alcohol involvement is higher among males than among females. Twenty-three percent of the young male drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021 had some alcohol at the time of the crash, compared with 17 percent of the young female drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes.

Drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes are less likely to use restraints when they have been drinking. Forty-six percent of the young drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021 who had been drinking were unrestrained (based on known restraint use). Of the young drivers who had been drinking and were killed in traffic crashes, 65 percent were unrestrained (based on known restraint use). In comparison, of the non-drinking young drivers killed, 47 percent were unrestrained, as seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Young Drivers of Passenger Vehicles in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Restraint Use and Alcohol Involvement, 2021

Restraint Use	No Alcohol (BAC=.00 g/dL)		BAC=.01+ g/dL	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes				
Restrained	2,449	75%	468	54%
Unrestrained	813	25%	401	46%
Driver Fatalities				
Restrained	588	53%	154	35%
Unrestrained	521	47%	283	65%

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
Notes: Based on known restraint use. Percentages are computed based on unrounded estimates. NHTSA estimates BACs when alcohol test results are unknown.

Motorcycles

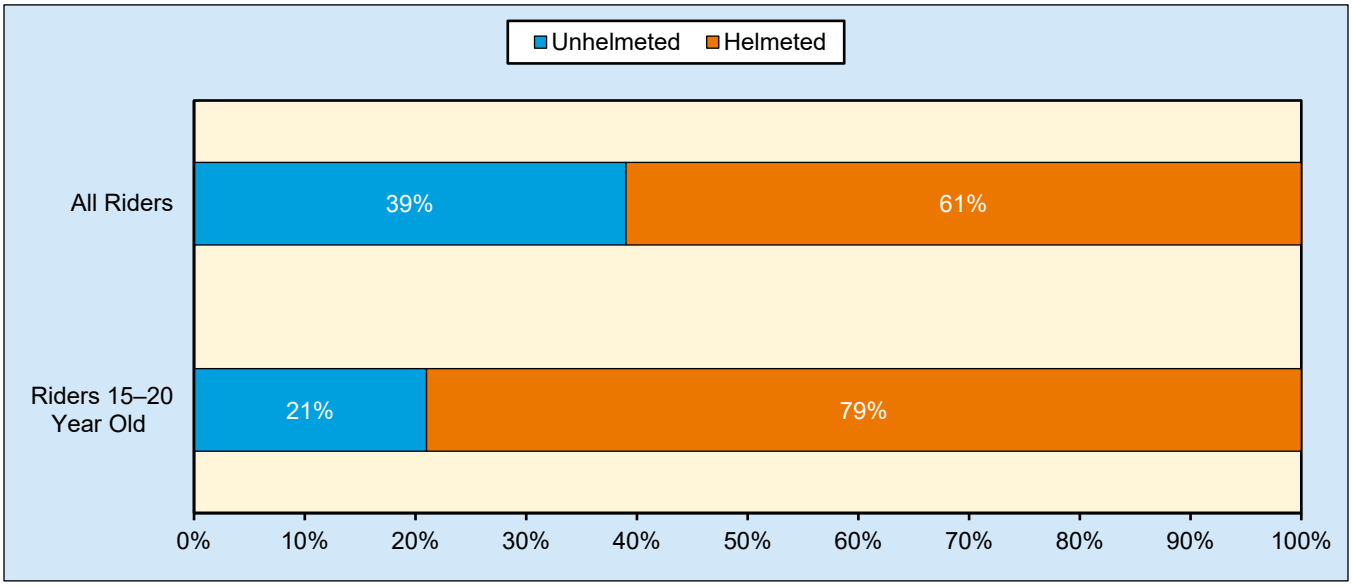
The term motorcycle rider refers to the operator of the motorcycle only and the term passenger refers to any occupant not including the rider. The term motorcyclist refers to any occupant of a motorcycle, either the rider or the passenger.

In 2021 there were 277 young motorcycle riders killed in traffic crashes, an increase of 41 percent from 197 young motorcycle riders killed in 2020. An additional estimated 4,818 young riders were injured in 2021, a 14-percent decrease from an estimated 5,582 in 2020.

Helmets are estimated to be 37-percent effective in preventing fatalities among motorcycle riders and 41-percent effective among motorcycle passengers. NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,872 motorcyclists of all ages in 2017 (latest data available), and that if all motorcyclists had worn helmets, an additional 749 lives could have been saved.[3]

Twenty-one percent of the motorcycle riders 15 to 20 years old who were killed in traffic crashes were not wearing helmets (based on known helmet use) compared to 39 percent of all motorcycle riders who were killed in 2021 as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Helmet Use of Motorcycle Riders Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Age Group, 2021



Source: FARS 2021 ARF
Note: Based on known helmet use.

Of the young motorcycle riders involved in fatal traffic crashes, 52 percent were either unlicensed or operating with invalid licenses compared to 36 percent of all motorcycle riders involved in 2021.

Additional Resources

For information on distracted driving please see NHTSA's research note *Distracted Driving in 2021*[4] and *Teens and Distracted Driving 2021*.[5]

[3] National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2019, December). *Lives and costs saved by motorcycle helmets, 2017* (Traffic Safety Facts Crash•Stats Report No. DOT HS 812 867). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812867

[4] National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, May). *Distracted driving in 2021* (Research Note. Report No. DOT HS 813 443). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813443

[5] National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, May). *Teens and distracted driving 2021* (Report No. DOT HS 813 453). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813453

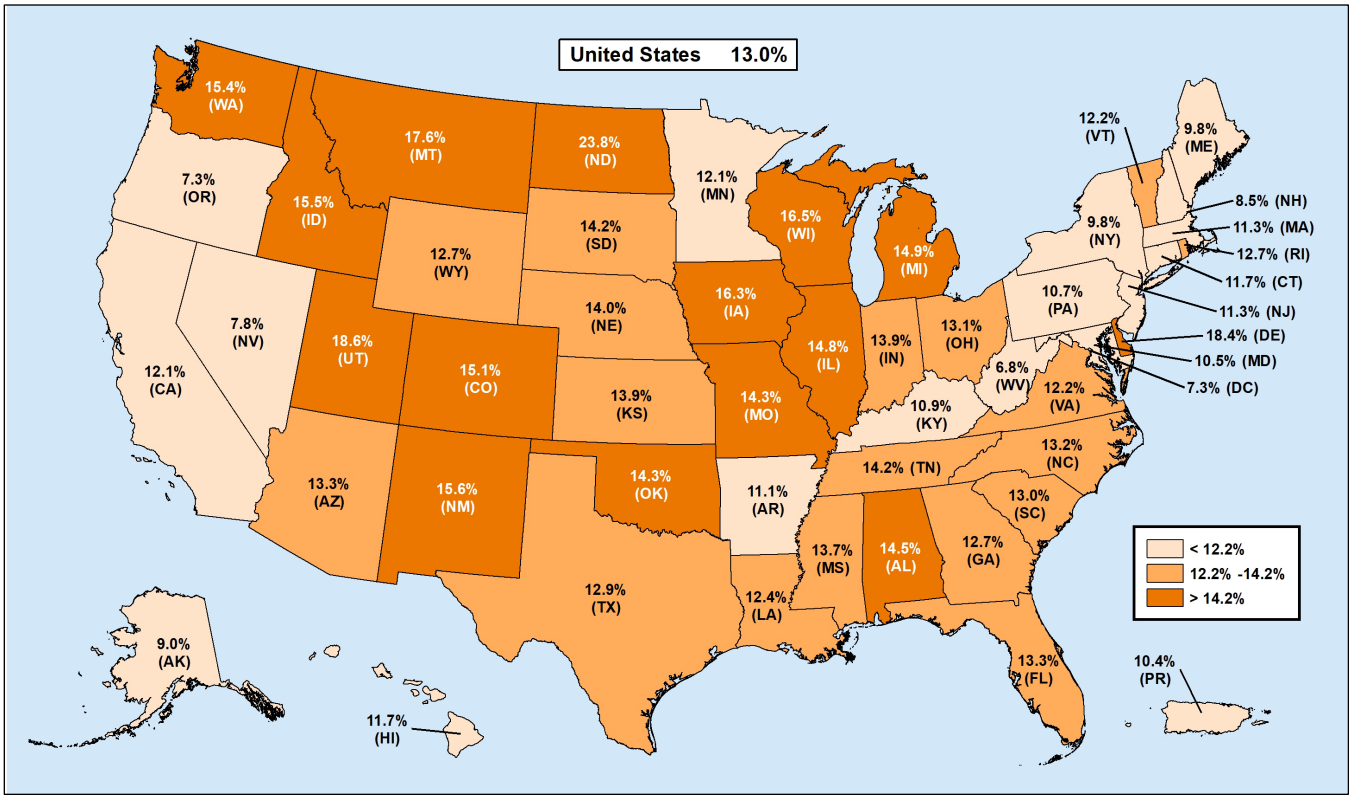
State

Figure 6 shows a heat map of the traffic fatalities in crashes involving young drivers as a percentage of total fatalities within the State. Table 8 presents the number of young drivers killed, as well as the numbers of passengers of young drivers, occupants of other vehicles, and nonoccupants killed in young-driver crashes for each State and the District of Columbia in 2021. Also included in Table 8 is Puerto Rico, which is not included in the U.S. total.

In 2021:

- Traffic fatalities in crashes involving young drivers ranged from 3 (District of Columbia) to 580 (Texas).
- The number of young drivers who died in traffic crashes ranged from 1 (Alaska) to 219 (Texas).
- The percentages of traffic fatalities in crashes involving young drivers ranged from a low of 6.8 percent (West Virginia) to 23.8 percent (North Dakota), compared to 13.0 percent nationwide.

Figure 6. Percentages of Traffic Fatalities in Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by State, 2021



Source: FARS 2021 ARF

Table 8. Total Fatalities and Fatalities in Traffic Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by State and Person Type, 2021

State	Total Fatalities	Fatalities in Traffic Crashes Involving Young Drivers		Fatalities Involving Young Drivers by Person Type			
		Number	Percentage of Total	Young Drivers	Passengers in Young Drivers' Vehicles	Occupants of Other Vehicles	Nonoccupants
Alabama	983	143	14.5%	58	27	46	12
Alaska	67	6	9.0%	1	4	0	1
Arizona	1,180	157	13.3%	46	34	51	26
Arkansas	693	77	11.1%	25	13	32	7
California	4,285	518	12.1%	188	109	126	95
Colorado	691	104	15.1%	42	27	22	13
Connecticut	298	35	11.7%	23	4	5	3
Delaware	136	25	18.4%	6	5	9	5
District of Columbia	41	3	7.3%	2	0	0	1
Florida	3,738	497	13.3%	152	69	180	96
Georgia	1,797	229	12.7%	93	38	76	22
Hawaii	94	11	11.7%	3	2	2	4
Idaho	271	42	15.5%	22	8	8	4
Illinois	1,334	197	14.8%	75	43	52	27
Indiana	932	130	13.9%	60	22	35	13
Iowa	356	58	16.3%	22	13	15	8
Kansas	424	59	13.9%	23	15	17	4
Kentucky	806	88	10.9%	35	16	31	6
Louisiana	972	121	12.4%	45	27	36	13
Maine	153	15	9.8%	5	6	4	0
Maryland	561	59	10.5%	23	7	13	16
Massachusetts	417	47	11.3%	19	6	12	10
Michigan	1,136	169	14.9%	65	25	59	20
Minnesota	488	59	12.1%	23	12	20	4
Mississippi	772	106	13.7%	44	17	36	9
Missouri	1,016	145	14.3%	57	28	46	14
Montana	239	42	17.6%	23	13	5	1
Nebraska	221	31	14.0%	14	9	6	2
Nevada	385	30	7.8%	6	5	11	8
New Hampshire	118	10	8.5%	4	1	4	1
New Jersey	699	79	11.3%	30	15	19	15
New Mexico	481	75	15.6%	20	17	26	12
New York	1,157	113	9.8%	33	29	27	24
North Carolina	1,663	219	13.2%	90	43	64	22
North Dakota	101	24	23.8%	9	7	7	1
Ohio	1,354	178	13.1%	71	34	50	23
Oklahoma	762	109	14.3%	35	22	37	15
Oregon	599	44	7.3%	17	10	9	8
Pennsylvania	1,230	131	10.7%	63	18	30	20
Rhode Island	63	8	12.7%	6	1	1	0
South Carolina	1,198	156	13.0%	71	19	47	19
South Dakota	148	21	14.2%	7	4	9	1
Tennessee	1,327	188	14.2%	70	37	69	12
Texas	4,498	580	12.9%	219	112	180	69
Utah	328	61	18.6%	22	14	24	1
Vermont	74	9	12.2%	8	1	0	0
Virginia	973	119	12.2%	53	26	32	8
Washington	670	103	15.4%	27	25	37	14
West Virginia	280	19	6.8%	11	5	2	1
Wisconsin	620	102	16.5%	44	19	34	5
Wyoming	110	14	12.7%	6	2	3	3
U.S. Total	**42,939**	**5,565**	**13.0%**	**2,116**	**1,065**	**1,666**	**718**
Puerto Rico	337	35	10.4%	19	2	8	6

Source: FARS 2021 ARF

Important Safety Reminders

For Young Drivers:

- Always wear a seat belt and make sure all passengers do as well.
- Underage drinking is illegal. It is never safe to ride in a vehicle with someone who has been drinking or using drugs. Call a parent/guardian or other trusted adult if you need a ride.
- Speeding is against the law and unsafe for everyone.
- Put your phone and other electronic devices away and don't use them while driving.
- Understand the components of your State's graduated driver licensing (GDL) system and laws.
  - No speeding
  - No distractions
  - No extra passengers
  - No alcohol
  - No drugs
  - No driving during restricted hours, which are different from State to State
- Like anything else, a variety of practice improves your performance behind the wheel.
- Know what to do in the event of an emergency or a crash.
- Study the functions of your vehicle. Know what technologies are included and how they work.
- Do not be reliant on in-vehicle technologies. Be engaged in the task of driving and in control of your vehicle at all times.

For Parents/Guardians of Young Drivers:

- Your teen is in the driver seat, but you're in control.
- Create a parent/guardian/teen contract and talk about your expectations often.
- Establish the rules of the road. Share the rules. Enforce the rules.
  - Make sure your teen knows speeding is unacceptable.
  - Teens driving other teens can be a dangerous combination and is restricted in many States. Know the laws in your State and enforce them with your teen driver
  - Underage drinking is not only illegal for those under 21, it is dangerous for anyone to drive after drinking alcohol or to ride in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking.
  - Driving while impaired by any substance, legal or illegal, prescribed or over-the-counter, can affect driving skills and abilities. Know the side-effects of any medication before getting behind the wheel.
- Know the risk factors associated with teen driving.
- Take an active role with your teen's driver education program and drive with them after they complete driver education.
- Know your State's GDLs and the consequences if your teen fails to abide by these laws.
- Be a good role model by displaying good driving habits.

For more information see www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving. Additional Teen Driver Safety Ads are available on www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov.

— NHTSA's Research and Program Development

Fatality Analysis Reporting System

FARS contains data on every fatal motor vehicle traffic crash within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To be included in FARS, a traffic crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway customarily open to the public, and must result in the death of a vehicle occupant or a nonoccupant within 30 days of the crash. The Annual Report File (ARF) is the FARS data file associated with the most recent available year, which is subject to change when it is finalized the following year to the final version known as the Final File. The additional time between the ARF and the Final File provides the opportunity for submission of important variable data requiring outside sources, which may lead to changes in the final counts. More information on FARS can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/crash-data-systems/fatality-analysis-reporting-system.

The updated final counts for the previous data year will be reflected with the release of the recent year's ARF. For example, along with the release of the 2021 ARF, the 2020 Final File was released to replace the 2020 ARF. The final fatality count in motor vehicle traffic crashes for 2020 was 39,007, which was updated from 38,824 in the 2020 ARF. The number of young driver fatalities from the 2020 Final File was 1,899, which was updated from 1,885 from the 2020 ARF.

Crash Report Sampling System

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) redesigned the nationally representative sample of police-reported traffic crashes, which estimates the number of police-reported injury and property-damage-only crashes in the United States. CRSS replaced the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) in 2016. More information on CRSS can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/crash-data-systems/crash-report-sampling-system-crss.

Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC) Vehicle Classification

Historically, vehicle type classifications (e.g., passenger cars, light trucks, large trucks, motorcycles, buses) from FARS, NASS GES, and CRSS used for analysis and data reporting were based on analyst-coded vehicle body type. NHTSA did not have manufacturer authoritative data to assist in vehicle body type coding. NCSA has developed a Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC) dataset that is being used to decode VINs (Vehicle Identification Numbers) and extract vehicle information. Details of vehicles (make, model, body class, etc.) involved in crashes are obtained from vPIC via VIN-linkage. The VIN-derived information from vPIC uses the manufacturer's classification of body class, which allows for more accurate vehicle type analysis.

The vPIC-based analysis data are available beginning with 2020 FARS and CRSS data files. Starting with the release of 2021 FARS and CRSS data, all vehicle-related analysis for 2020 and later years will be based on vPIC vehicle classification. As a result, the 2020 and later-year vehicle type classifications are not comparable to 2019 and earlier-year vehicle type classifications. This change affects any analysis with a vehicle component to it. More information on vPIC can be found at https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

The suggested APA format citation for this document is:

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, August). *Young drivers: 2021 data* (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 492). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For More Information:

Motor vehicle traffic crash data are available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), NSA-230. NCSA can be contacted at NCSARequests@dot.gov or 800-934-8517. NCSA programs can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/data. To report a motor vehicle safety-related problem or to inquire about safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem.

The following data tools and resources can be found at https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/.

- Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data Visualizations
- Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Databook
- Fatality and Injury Reporting System Tool (FIRST)
- State Traffic Safety Information (STSI)
- Traffic Safety Facts Annual Report Tables
- FARS Data Tables (FARS Encyclopedia)
- Crash Viewer
- Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC)
- FARS, NASS GES, CRSS, NASS Crashworthiness Data System (CDS), and Crash Investigation Sampling System (CISS) data can be downloaded for further analysis.

Other fact sheets available from NCSA:

- Alcohol-Impaired Driving
- Bicyclists and Other Cyclists
- Children
- Large Trucks
- Motorcycles
- Occupant Protection in Passenger Vehicles
- Older Population
- Passenger Vehicles
- Pedestrians
- Rural/Urban Comparison of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities
- School-Transportation-Related Crashes
- Speeding
- State Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Estimates
- State Traffic Data
- Summary of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes

Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data*. The fact sheets and Traffic Safety Facts annual report can be found at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration