

Traffic Safety Facts

Crash•Stats

Young Drivers (15-20) Involved in Fatal Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) released the latest annual crash statistics for the year 2003. A total of 42,643 people died on the Nation's highways. The numbers were made available from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), which annually collects crash statistics from 50 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20 year olds (based on 2001 figures, which are the latest mortality data currently available from the National Center for Health Statistics). This Crash•Stats looks at young drivers (15-20) involved in fatal crashes, their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level and involvement rate per 100,000 licensed young drivers.

All states and the District of Columbia have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws, yet there were 1,861 young drivers involved in alcohol related fatal crashes in 2003. Table 1 shows five-year trend data of young drivers involved in fatal crashes by their BAC level and rate per 100,000 licensed young drivers. Young drivers in fatal crashes with any alcohol (BAC 0.01 +) levels, increased by 5 percent, (from 1,772 in 1999 to 1,861 in 2003), whereas the driver involvement rate for young drivers increased by 7 percent, (from 14.01 in 1999 to 14.96 in 2003). Table 2 (overleaf) shows young drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2003 by state, their BAC level and involvement rate per 100,000 licensed young drivers.

Table 1
Young Drivers (15-20) Involved in Fatal Crashes by Year and BAC Level

Calendar Year	Total Young Drivers Involved		Drivers Involved by their BAC Level			
			Any Alcohol (BAC 0.01+)		High Alcohol (BAC 0.08+)	
	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*
1999	8,187	64.71	1,772	14.01	1,368	10.81
2000	8,224	63.83	1,932	15.00	1,496	11.61
2001	8,166	64.84	1,885	14.97	1,444	11.47
2002	8,325	66.39	1,913	15.25	1,460	11.64
2003	7,884	63.37	1,861	14.96	1,466	11.78

Source: FARS 1999-2002 (Final), 2003 (ARF), Driver Licensing – FHWA, *Per 100,000 Licensed Young Drivers

Definitions

A motor vehicle crash is considered to be *alcohol-related* if at least one driver or nonoccupant (such as a pedestrian or pedalcyclist) involved in the crash is determined to have had a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.01 gram per deciliter (g/dl) or higher. Thus, any fatality that occurs in an alcohol-related crash is considered an alcohol-related fatality. The term "alcohol-related" does not indicate that a crash or fatality was caused by the presence of alcohol.

For questions regarding the data reported in this note, contact Umesh G. Shankar [202-366-5558] or Cherian Varghese [202-366-1114]. Some of the findings in this note were obtained from the following NCSA publication: DOT HS 809 774. This crash stats and other general information on highway traffic safety may be accessed by internet users at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/AvailInf.html>

Table 2

Young Drivers (15-20) Involved in Fatal Crashes by State and BAC Level - 2003

State	Total Young Drivers Involved		Drivers Involved by their BAC Level			
			Any Alcohol (BAC 0.01+)		High Alcohol (BAC 0.08+)	
	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*
Alabama	195	71.11	51	18.60	41	14.95
Alaska	19	54.06	2	5.69	2	5.69
Arizona	168	85.96	40	20.47	35	17.91
Arkansas	110	76.79	30	20.94	17	11.87
California	719	55.54	150	11.59	116	8.96
Colorado	135	72.35	28	15.01	23	12.33
Connecticut	48	35.16	15	10.99	13	9.52
Delaware	37	98.70	8	21.34	5	13.34
Dist of Columbia	11	139.75	3	38.11	3	38.11
Florida	570	90.20	106	16.77	79	12.50
Georgia	293	83.96	41	11.75	35	10.03
Hawaii	25	59.12	14	33.11	9	21.28
Idaho	47	59.54	11	13.93	8	10.13
Illinois	302	51.48	71	12.10	53	9.04
Indiana	184	59.93	30	9.77	20	6.51
Iowa	88	54.53	20	12.39	17	10.53
Kansas	100	56.33	32	18.02	28	15.77
Kentucky	149	84.65	21	11.93	17	9.66
Louisiana	162	85.23	41	21.57	35	18.41
Maine	33	56.03	5	8.49	5	8.49
Maryland	118	56.61	38	18.23	25	11.99
Massachusetts	94	35.71	39	14.81	33	12.54
Michigan	248	49.41	43	8.57	34	6.77
Minnesota	136	56.45	25	10.38	18	7.47
Mississippi	146	87.68	30	18.02	27	16.21
Missouri	249	81.88	62	20.39	48	15.78
Montana	53	84.62	18	28.74	12	19.16
Nebraska	57	48.85	16	13.71	14	12.00
Nevada	65	83.04	15	19.16	12	15.33
New Hampshire	21	31.30	4	5.96	1	1.49
New Jersey	114	37.35	25	8.19	22	7.21
New Mexico	79	66.97	23	19.50	18	15.26
New York	236	39.53	55	9.21	46	7.71
North Carolina	286	97.11	64	21.73	49	16.64
North Dakota	28	58.99	14	29.50	13	27.39
Ohio	283	55.22	56	10.93	41	8.00
Oklahoma	122	61.13	26	13.03	19	9.52
Oregon	84	56.13	17	11.36	11	7.35
Pennsylvania	307	67.30	67	14.69	56	12.28
Rhode Island	25	68.14	10	27.25	10	27.25
South Carolina	167	74.03	49	21.72	37	16.40
South Dakota	28	57.14	13	26.53	11	22.45
Tennessee	208	72.30	46	15.99	40	13.90
Texas	714	75.67	227	24.06	187	19.82
Utah	70	43.27	8	4.95	6	3.71
Vermont	16	49.72	4	12.43	4	12.43
Virginia	163	56.39	41	14.19	31	10.73
Washington	123	48.26	37	14.52	27	10.59
West Virginia	62	78.42	15	18.97	11	13.91
Wisconsin	166	57.69	55	19.11	45	15.64
Wyoming	21	61.94	3	8.85	3	8.85
National	7,884	63.37	1,861	14.96	1,466	11.78

Source: FARS 2003 (ARF), Driver Licensing – FHWA

* Per 100,000 Licensed Young Drivers