Traffic Safety Facts
2008 Data

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DOT HS 811 155

Alcohol-Impaired Driving

"In 2008, there were 11,773 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher—32 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year."

Fatal Crashes and Fatalities Involving Alcohol-Impaired Drivers

Drivers are considered to be alcohol-impaired when their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Thus, any fatality occurring in a crash involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher is considered to be an alcohol-impaired-driving fatality. The term "driver" refers to the operator of any motor vehicle, including a motorcycle.

In 2008, 11,773 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 32 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States.

Traffic fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes decreased nearly 10 percent from 13,041 in 2007 to 11,773 in 2008. The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate per 100 million VMT decreased to 0.40 in 2008 from 0.43 in 2007.

Estimates of alcohol-impaired driving are generated using BAC values reported to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and imputed BAC values when they are not reported. The term "alcohol-impaired" does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was caused by alcohol impairment.

The 11,773 fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes during 2008 represent an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 45 minutes.

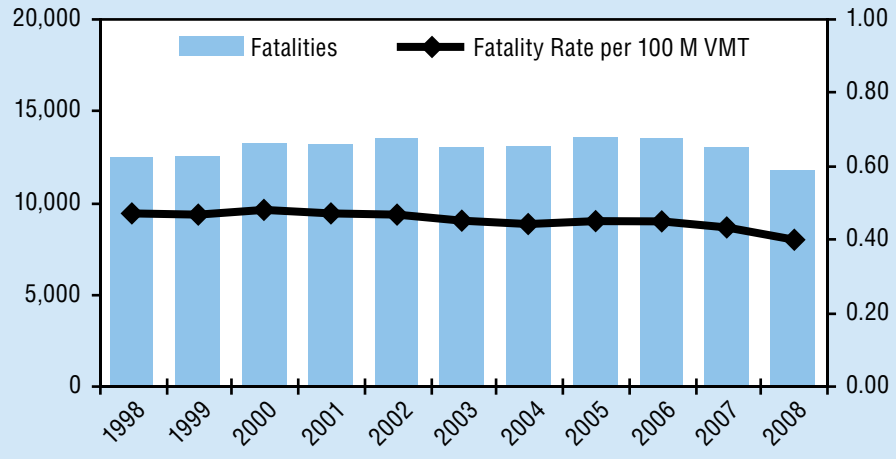
In 2008, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had by law created a threshold making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. Of the 11,773 people who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2008, 8,027 (68%) were drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher. The remaining fatalities consisted of 3,054 (26%) motor vehicle occupants and 692 (6%) nonoccupants.

Table 1
Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08 Or Higher, 2008

Role	Number	Percent of Total
Driver With BAC=.08+	8,027	68%
Passenger Riding w/Driver With BAC=.08+	1,875	16%
Subtotal	9,902	84%
Occupants of Other Vehicles	1,179	10%
Nonoccupants	692	6%
Total Fatalities	**11,773**	**100%**

Figure 1

Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Crashes, 1998–2008



The national rate of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in 2008 was 0.40 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel.

"In 2008, 16 percent of child (age 14 and younger) traffic fatalities occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes."

Children

In 2008, a total of 1,347 children age 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those 1,347 fatalities, 216 (16%) occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Out of those 216 deaths, 99 (46%) were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a BAC level of .08 or higher.

Another 34 children age 14 and younger who were killed in traffic crashes in 2008 were pedestrians or pedalcyclists who were struck by drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher.

For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NVS-424, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted on 800-934-8517. Fax messages should be sent to 202-366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/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 *Overview, African American, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists, Children, Hispanic, Large Trucks, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection, Older Population, Pedestrians, Race and Ethnicity, 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 accessed online at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CATS/index.aspx.

Time of Day and Day of Week

The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night than during the day (36% versus 9%).

In 2008, 15 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-impaired, compared to 32 percent on weekends.

Table 2

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .08 or Higher, by Crash Type, Time of Day and Day of Week, 1998 and 2008

Total Drivers							
	1998			2008			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 1998-2008
Drivers Involved In Fatal Crashes	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+ Number	BAC=.08+ Percent of Total	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+ Number	BAC=.08+ Percent of Total	
Total	56,604	11,561	20%	50,186	10,946	22%	+10%
Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day							
Single-Vehicle Crash							
Total	20,805	7,495	36%	20,472	7,625	37%	+3%
Daytime*	8,117	1,310	16%	7,960	1,461	18%	+13%
Nighttime**	12,386	6,008	49%	12,281	6,039	49%	0%
Multiple-Vehicle Crash							
Total	35,799	4,066	11%	29,714	3,321	11%	0%
Daytime*	23,272	1,168	5%	18,302	856	5%	0%
Nighttime**	12,493	2,895	23%	11,360	2,460	22%	-4%
Drivers by Time of Day							
Daytime*	31,389	2,478	8%	26,262	2,317	9%	+13%
Nighttime**	24,879	8,903	36%	23,641	8,499	36%	0%
Drivers by Day of Week and Time of Day							
Weekday***	34,796	4,930	14%	30,148	4,559	15%	+7%
Daytime*	23,253	1,436	6%	19,135	1,290	7%	+17%
Nighttime**	11,425	3,440	30%	10,908	3,230	30%	0%
Weekend****	21,727	6,590	30%	19,958	6,355	32%	+7%
Daytime*	8,135	1,043	13%	7,127	1,028	14%	+8%
Nighttime**	13,453	5,462	41%	12,733	5,269	41%	0%

*6 a.m. to 6 p.m. **6 p.m. to 6 a.m. ***Monday 6 a.m. to Friday 6 p.m.

****Friday 6 p.m. to Monday 6 a.m.

"The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night than during the day."

"The highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes who had BAC levels of .08 or higher was for drivers ages 21 to 24."

"The percentage of drivers with BAC of .08 or above in fatal crashes was highest for motorcycle riders."

Table 3

Drivers in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .08 or Higher, by Age, Gender, and Vehicle Type, 1998 and 2008

Total Drivers							
	1998			2008			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 1998-2008
Drivers Involved In Fatal Crashes	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+ Number	BAC=.08+ Percent of Total	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+ Number	BAC=.08+ Percent of Total	
Total	56,604	11,561	20%	50,186	10,946	22%	+10%
Drivers by Age Group (Years)							
16-20	7,767	1,295	17%	5,729	996	17%	0%
21-24	5,613	1,776	32%	5,312	1,829	34%	+6%
25-34	11,925	3,285	28%	9,745	2,997	31%	+11%
35-44	11,241	2,717	24%	8,762	2,221	25%	+4%
45-54	7,690	1,355	18%	8,313	1,724	21%	+17%
55-64	4,478	494	11%	5,695	708	12%	+9%
65-74	3,399	236	7%	2,913	198	7%	0%
75+	3,291	132	4%	2,656	106	4%	0%
Drivers by Gender							
Male	40,816	9,548	23%	36,881	9,175	25%	+2%
Female	15,089	1,822	12%	12,568	1,650	13%	+1%
Drivers by Vehicle Type							
Passenger Cars	28,907	6,155	21%	20,284	4,692	23%	+2%
Light Trucks	19,247	4,271	22%	18,989	4,307	23%	+1%
Large Trucks	4,905	72	1%	4,017	68	2%	+1%
Motorcycles	2,333	803	34%	5,383	1,564	29%	-5%

Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown or other data not included.

Drivers

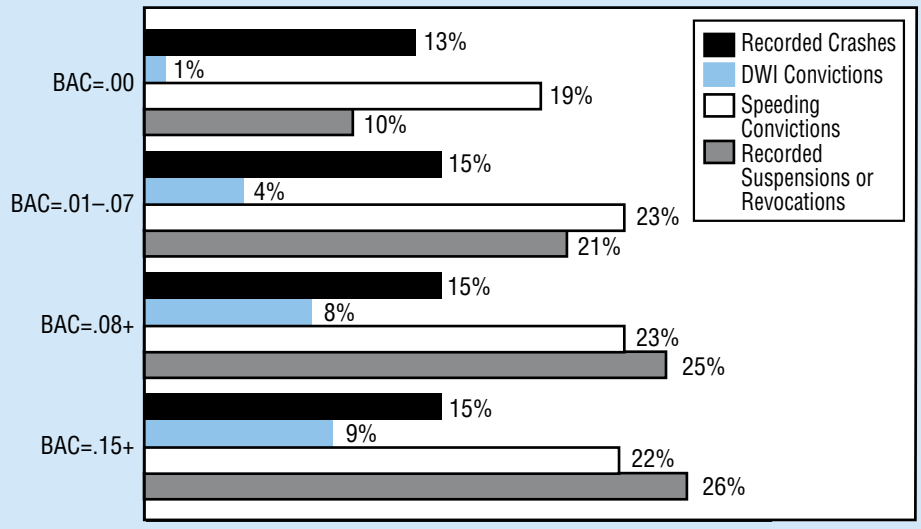
In fatal crashes in 2008 the highest percentage of drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher was for drivers ages 21 to 24 (34%), followed by ages 25 to 34 (31%) and 35 to 44 (25%).

The percentages of drivers involved in fatal crashes with a BAC level of .08 or higher in 2008 were 29 percent for motorcycle riders and 23 percent for both passenger cars and light trucks. The percentage of drivers with BAC levels of .08 or higher in fatal crashes was the lowest for large trucks (2%).

In 2008, 6,316 passenger vehicle drivers killed had a BAC of .08 or higher. Out of those 6,316 driver fatalities, for which restraint use was known, 73 percent were unrestrained.

Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers with no alcohol (8% and 1%, respectively).

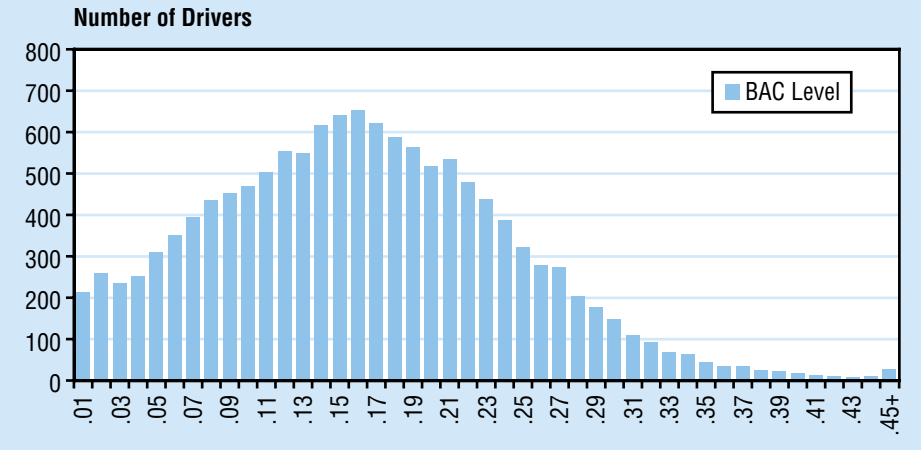
Figure 2
Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by BAC, 2008



"Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were drivers with no alcohol."

In 2008, 84 percent (10,946) of the 13,029 drivers with a BAC of .01 or higher who were involved in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or above .08, and 57 percent (7,378) had BAC levels at or above .15. The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers in fatal crashes was .16.

Figure 3
Distribution of BAC Levels for Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .01 or Higher, 2008



"In 2008, 7,378 (57%) of the drivers involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking had a BAC of .15 or greater."

Table 4

Traffic Fatalities by State and the Highest Driver or Motorcycle Rider BAC in the Crash, 2008

State	*Total Fatalities	BAC=.00		BAC=.01-.07		BAC=.08+		BAC=.15+		BAC=.01+	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	966	596	62%	53	5%	315	33%	213	22%	367	38%
Alaska	62	39	62%	3	5%	21	33%	11	17%	24	38%
Arizona	937	594	63%	63	7%	266	28%	183	20%	329	35%
Arkansas	600	392	65%	34	6%	171	28%	111	18%	205	34%
California	3,434	2,227	65%	170	5%	1,029	30%	683	20%	1,198	35%
Colorado	548	346	63%	29	5%	173	32%	110	20%	202	37%
Connecticut	264	156	59%	19	7%	86	32%	62	23%	104	40%
Delaware	121	72	60%	3	3%	45	37%	39	32%	49	40%
Dist of Columbia	34	21	61%	4	13%	9	26%	5	13%	13	39%
Florida	2,978	1,930	65%	165	6%	875	29%	581	20%	1,041	35%
Georgia	1,493	997	67%	73	5%	416	28%	277	19%	489	33%
Hawaii	107	56	53%	8	7%	42	39%	29	27%	50	46%
Idaho	232	138	60%	14	6%	78	34%	56	24%	93	40%
Illinois	1,043	608	58%	72	7%	362	35%	252	24%	434	42%
Indiana	814	564	69%	42	5%	208	26%	138	17%	250	31%
Iowa	412	299	73%	24	6%	89	22%	51	12%	113	27%
Kansas	385	225	59%	12	3%	145	38%	99	26%	157	41%
Kentucky	826	599	73%	26	3%	200	24%	146	18%	226	27%
Louisiana	912	508	56%	66	7%	338	37%	219	24%	404	44%
Maine	155	108	70%	4	3%	43	28%	30	19%	47	30%
Maryland	591	405	69%	34	6%	152	26%	97	16%	186	31%
Massachusetts	363	210	58%	27	8%	124	34%	81	22%	151	42%
Michigan	980	647	66%	49	5%	282	29%	190	19%	331	34%
Minnesota	456	294	64%	26	6%	135	30%	94	21%	161	35%
Mississippi	783	486	62%	32	4%	266	34%	175	22%	297	38%
Missouri	960	595	62%	53	6%	310	32%	213	22%	364	38%
Montana	229	124	54%	12	5%	91	40%	64	28%	103	45%
Nebraska	208	132	63%	20	10%	55	27%	39	19%	75	36%
Nevada	324	203	63%	14	4%	107	33%	79	24%	121	37%
New Hampshire	139	87	62%	8	6%	45	32%	33	24%	53	38%
New Jersey	590	392	66%	43	7%	154	26%	106	18%	197	33%
New Mexico	366	248	68%	13	4%	105	29%	80	22%	118	32%
New York	1,231	821	67%	68	5%	341	28%	202	16%	409	33%
North Carolina	1,433	932	65%	77	5%	423	30%	297	21%	500	35%
North Dakota	104	52	50%	5	4%	47	46%	37	35%	52	50%
Ohio	1,190	774	65%	60	5%	356	30%	243	20%	415	35%
Oklahoma	749	475	63%	29	4%	244	33%	169	23%	274	37%
Oregon	416	256	61%	23	6%	136	33%	88	21%	159	38%
Pennsylvania	1,468	886	60%	81	6%	496	34%	361	25%	578	39%
Rhode Island	65	36	55%	5	7%	25	38%	18	28%	29	45%
South Carolina	920	454	49%	60	6%	403	44%	286	31%	463	50%
South Dakota	119	74	62%	7	6%	34	29%	26	22%	41	34%
Tennessee	1,035	648	63%	59	6%	327	32%	217	21%	386	37%
Texas	3,382	1,909	56%	195	6%	1,269	38%	882	26%	1,463	43%
Utah	275	220	80%	9	3%	46	17%	21	8%	55	20%
Vermont	73	58	79%	3	5%	12	16%	8	11%	15	21%
Virginia	824	457	55%	71	9%	294	36%	207	25%	365	44%
Washington	521	295	57%	43	8%	182	35%	143	27%	225	43%
West Virginia	380	236	62%	15	4%	128	34%	92	24%	142	37%
Wisconsin	605	355	59%	42	7%	208	34%	159	26%	250	41%
Wyoming	159	84	53%	8	5%	67	42%	50	31%	75	47%
National	37,261	23,317	63%	2,072	6%	11,773	32%	8,048	22%	13,846	37%
Puerto Rico	399	236	59%	30	7%	132	33%	83	21%	162	41%

* Total includes fatalities in crashes in which there was no driver or motorcycle rider present.