



# Alcohol-Impaired Driving

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

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.

In 2010, 10,228 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 31 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States.

Traffic fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes decreased by 4.9 percent from 10,759 in 2009 to 10,228 in 2010. The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) decreased to 0.34 in 2010 from 0.36 in 2009.

An average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality occurred every 51 minutes in 2010.

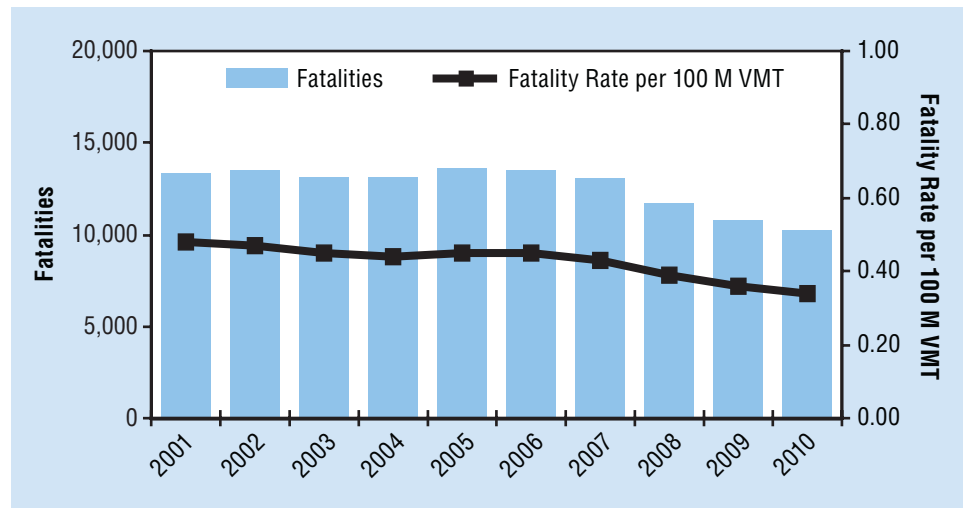
In 2010, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had by law created a threshold making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. Of the 10,228 people who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2010, 6,627 (65%) were drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher. The remaining fatalities consisted of 2,872 (28%) motor vehicle occupants and 729 (7%) nonoccupants.

Table 1  
**Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08 Or Higher, 2010**

Role	Number	Percent of Total
Driver With BAC=.08+	6,627	65%
Passenger Riding w/Driver With BAC=.08+	1,721	17%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8,348</b>	<b>82%</b>
Occupants of Other Vehicles	1,151	11%
Nonoccupants	729	7%
<b>Total Fatalities</b>	<b>10,228</b>	<b>100%</b>

*In 2010, there were 10,228 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher – 31 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year.*

Figure 1  
**Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Crashes, 2001–2010**



The national rate of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in 2010 was 0.34 per 100 million VMT. The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate in the past 10 years has declined by 29 percent from 0.48 in 2001 to 0.34 in 2010.

*In 2010, of the fatalities among children ages 14 and younger, 17 percent occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.*

## Children

In 2010, a total of 1,210 children age 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those 1,210 fatalities, 211 (17%) occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Out of those 211 deaths, 131 (62%) were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a BAC level of .08 or higher, and another 25 children (12%) were pedestrians or pedalcyclists 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 (NCSA), NVS-424, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted at 800-934-8517 or via the following e-mail address: [ncsaweb@dot.gov](mailto:ncsaweb@dot.gov). General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at [www.nhtsa.gov/NCSA](http://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 *Bicyclists and Other Cyclists*, *Children*, *Large Trucks*, *Motorcycles*, *Occupant Protection*, *Older Population*, *Overview*, *Passenger Vehicles*, *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](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CATS/index.aspx).



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

## Time of Day and Day of Week

The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2010 was four times higher at night than during the day (37% versus 9%).

In 2010, 16 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-impaired, compared to 31 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, 2001 and 2010

Drivers Involved In Fatal Crashes	Total Drivers						Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2001-2010
	2001			2010			
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Number	Percent of Total		
Total	57,586	12,233	21%	44,440	9,694	22%	+1
<b>Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day</b>							
Single-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	21,400	7,877	37%	18,068	6,501	36%	-1
Daytime	8,379	1,462	17%	7,250	1,262	17%	0
Nighttime	12,740	6,253	49%	10,615	5,139	48%	-1
Multiple-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	36,186	4,356	12%	26,372	3,193	12%	0
Daytime	23,241	1,180	5%	16,504	834	5%	0
Nighttime	12,921	3,174	25%	9,849	2,358	24%	-1
<b>Drivers by Time of Day</b>							
Daytime	31,620	2,641	8%	23,754	2,095	9%	+1
Nighttime	25,661	9,428	37%	20,464	7,497	37%	0
<b>Drivers by Day of Week and Time of Day</b>							
Weekday*	34,984	5,362	15%	27,054	4,316	16%	+1
Daytime	23,227	1,541	7%	17,393	1,259	7%	0
Nighttime	11,674	3,780	32%	9,584	3,021	32%	0
Weekend*	22,501	6,827	30%	17,329	5,355	31%	+1
Daytime	8,393	1,100	13%	6,361	837	13%	0
Nighttime	13,987	5,648	40%	10,880	4,476	41%	+1

Daytime – 6 a.m. to 5:59 p.m. Weekday – Monday 6 a.m. to Friday 5:59 p.m.

Nighttime – 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m. Weekend – Friday 6 p.m. to Monday 5:59 a.m.

\*Includes drivers involved in fatal crashes when time of day was unknown.

*“The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2010 was four times higher at night than during the day.”*

## Drivers

In fatal crashes in 2010 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 (30%) and 35 to 44 (25%).

*In 2010, the 21- to 24-year-old age group had the highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes with BAC levels of .08 or higher – 34 percent.*

The percentages of drivers involved in fatal crashes with a BAC level of .08 or higher in 2010 were 28 percent for motorcycle riders, 23 percent for passenger cars, and 22 percent for light trucks. The percentage of drivers with BAC levels of .08 or higher in fatal crashes was the lowest for large trucks (2%).

Table 3

### Drivers With a BAC of .08 or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age, Gender, And Vehicle Type, 2001 and 2010

Drivers Involved In Fatal Crashes	Total Drivers						Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2001–2010
	2001			2010			
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	
Total	57,586	12,233	21%	44,440	9,694	22%	+1
<b>Drivers by Age Group (Years)</b>							
16–20	7,992	1,420	18%	4,487	827	18%	0
21–24	6,037	1,979	33%	4,585	1,545	34%	+1
25–34	11,584	3,213	28%	8,540	2,566	30%	+2
35–44	11,261	2,839	25%	7,313	1,845	25%	0
45–54	8,346	1,601	19%	7,490	1,592	21%	+2
55–64	4,714	543	12%	5,554	769	14%	+2
65–74	3,156	224	7%	2,894	230	8%	+1
75+	3,290	132	4%	2,666	130	5%	+1
<b>Drivers by Gender</b>							
Male	41,901	10,120	24%	31,965	7,721	24%	0
Female	14,919	1,903	13%	11,811	1,810	15%	+2
<b>Drivers by Vehicle Type</b>							
Passenger Cars	27,444	6,235	23%	17,623	4,082	23%	0
Light Trucks	20,704	4,706	23%	17,322	3,895	22%	-1
Large Trucks	4,779	56	1%	3,446	61	2%	+1
Motorcycles	3,261	951	29%	4,629	1,285	28%	-1

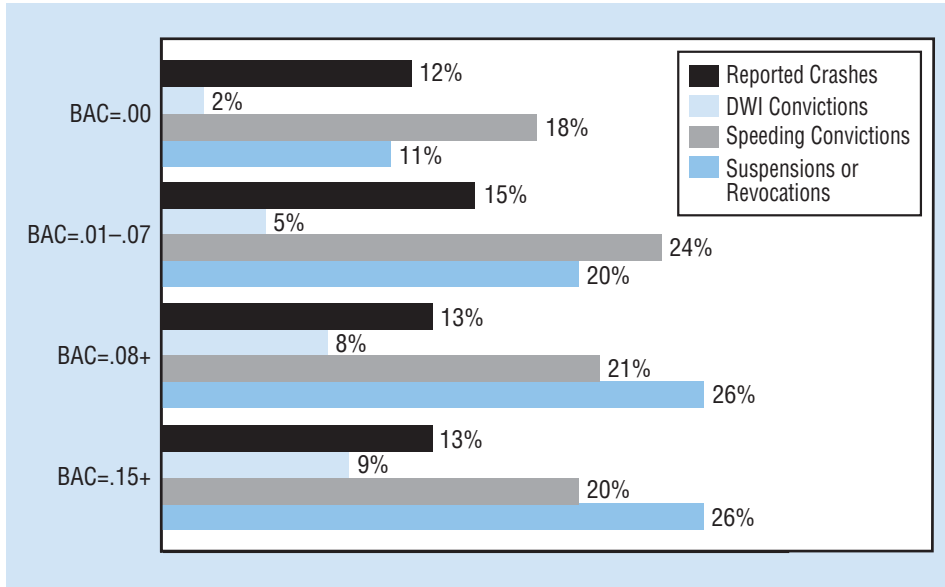
Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown/not reported or other data not included.

In 2010, 5,189 passenger vehicle drivers killed had a BAC of .08 or higher. Out of those driver fatalities for which restraint use was known, 70 percent were unrestrained.

Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were four times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers with no alcohol (8% and 2%, respectively). See Figure 2.

*In 2010, the percentage of drivers with BAC of .08 or above in fatal crashes was highest for motorcycle riders (28%).*

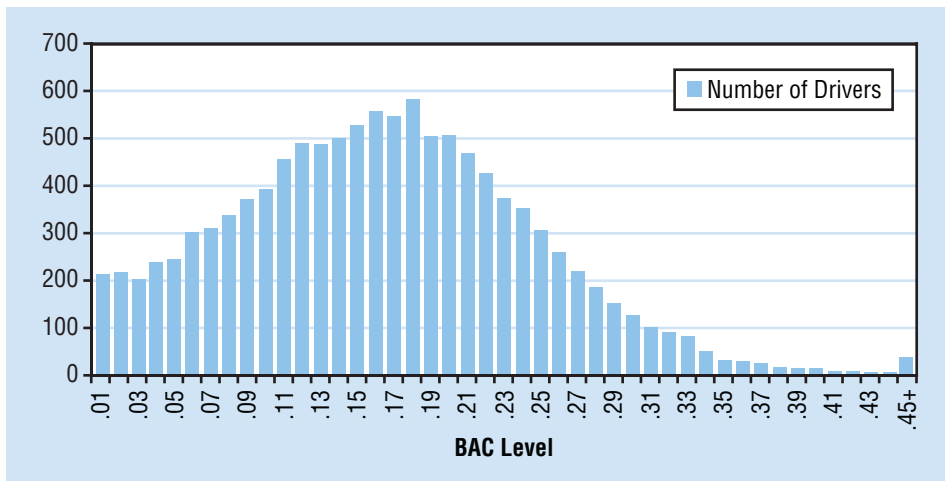
Figure 2  
**Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by BAC, 2010**



*Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher in fatal crashes in 2010 were four times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were drivers with no alcohol.*

In 2010, 85 percent (9,694) of the 11,432 drivers with a BAC of .01 or higher who were involved in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or above .08, and 58 percent (6,652) had BAC levels at or above .15. The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers in fatal crashes was .18.

Figure 3  
**Distribution of BAC Levels for Drivers With a BAC of .01 or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, 2010**



*In 2010, 6,652 (58%) 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 Highest Driver BAC in the Crash, 2010**

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	862	548	64%	35	4%	279	32%	187	22%	314	36%
Alaska	56	39	69%	1	3%	16	28%	11	20%	17	31%
Arizona	762	505	66%	38	5%	194	25%	132	17%	231	30%
Arkansas	563	365	65%	23	4%	173	31%	117	21%	196	35%
California	2,715	1,787	66%	133	5%	791	29%	547	20%	924	34%
Colorado	448	306	68%	15	3%	127	28%	90	20%	142	32%
Connecticut	319	180	56%	16	5%	121	38%	82	26%	138	43%
Delaware	101	58	58%	7	7%	36	36%	26	26%	43	42%
Dist of Columbia	24	16	65%	4	15%	5	20%	4	16%	9	35%
Florida	2,445	1,686	69%	91	4%	660	27%	435	18%	751	31%
Georgia	1,244	894	72%	48	4%	298	24%	205	16%	346	28%
Hawaii	113	64	57%	6	5%	42	37%	28	25%	48	42%
Idaho	209	127	61%	11	5%	71	34%	57	27%	82	39%
Illinois	927	559	60%	69	7%	298	32%	218	24%	366	40%
Indiana	754	533	71%	25	3%	195	26%	138	18%	220	29%
Iowa	390	286	73%	13	3%	90	23%	59	15%	103	26%
Kansas	431	239	55%	25	6%	168	39%	110	26%	192	45%
Kentucky	760	549	72%	39	5%	171	23%	108	14%	210	28%
Louisiana	710	429	60%	55	8%	225	32%	137	19%	280	39%
Maine	161	113	70%	10	6%	38	23%	19	12%	48	30%
Maryland	493	303	62%	34	7%	154	31%	104	21%	188	38%
Massachusetts	314	172	55%	26	8%	115	36%	78	25%	141	45%
Michigan	942	653	69%	55	6%	230	24%	168	18%	285	30%
Minnesota	411	276	67%	8	2%	127	31%	100	24%	135	33%
Mississippi	641	383	60%	23	4%	236	37%	149	23%	259	40%
Missouri	819	503	61%	55	7%	258	32%	194	24%	313	38%
Montana	189	104	55%	11	6%	73	39%	51	27%	84	44%
Nebraska	190	131	69%	7	4%	51	27%	35	18%	59	31%
Nevada	257	172	67%	17	7%	69	27%	48	19%	85	33%
New Hampshire	128	75	58%	9	7%	44	35%	32	25%	53	42%
New Jersey	556	369	66%	35	6%	153	27%	98	18%	187	34%
New Mexico	346	225	65%	10	3%	111	32%	82	24%	121	35%
New York	1,200	768	64%	64	5%	364	30%	234	19%	428	36%
North Carolina	1,319	859	65%	65	5%	388	29%	280	21%	453	34%
North Dakota	105	54	52%	4	4%	47	44%	40	38%	51	48%
Ohio	1,080	666	62%	71	7%	341	32%	247	23%	413	38%
Oklahoma	668	420	63%	29	4%	220	33%	161	24%	248	37%
Oregon	317	223	70%	20	6%	71	22%	52	16%	91	29%
Pennsylvania	1,324	817	62%	69	5%	433	33%	332	25%	502	38%
Rhode Island	66	36	55%	4	6%	25	38%	19	28%	30	45%
South Carolina	810	400	49%	53	7%	357	44%	251	31%	410	51%
South Dakota	140	93	66%	9	7%	37	26%	24	17%	46	33%
Tennessee	1,031	689	67%	57	6%	283	27%	196	19%	340	33%
Texas	2,998	1,540	51%	190	6%	1,259	42%	879	29%	1,450	48%
Utah	236	187	79%	5	2%	44	19%	27	12%	49	21%
Vermont	71	46	65%	7	10%	18	25%	13	19%	25	35%
Virginia	740	487	66%	41	6%	211	29%	145	20%	253	34%
Washington	458	263	57%	25	5%	170	37%	128	28%	194	42%
West Virginia	315	214	68%	13	4%	88	28%	67	21%	101	32%
Wisconsin	572	332	58%	34	6%	205	36%	161	28%	240	42%
Wyoming	155	97	62%	5	3%	54	35%	42	27%	59	38%
<b>National</b>	<b>32,885</b>	<b>20,838</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>10,228</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>7,145</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>11,948</b>	<b>36%</b>
Puerto Rico	340	219	64%	23	7%	97	29%	61	18%	120	35%

\*Total includes fatalities in crashes in which there was no driver present.