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

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS
2012 Data

NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov

DOT HS 811 870

December 2013

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 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 2012, 10,322 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 increased by 4.6 percent from 9,865 in 2011 to 10,322 in 2012. The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) declined to 0.33 in 2011 from 0.34 in 2010 (VMT data for 2012 is not available yet) (see Figure 1).

An average of 1 alcohol-impaired-driving fatality occurred every 51 minutes in 2012.

In 2012, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had created by law a threshold making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. Of the 10,322 people who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2012, 6,688 (65%) were drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher. The remaining fatalities consisted of 2,824 (27%) motor vehicle occupants and 810 (8%) nonoccupants.

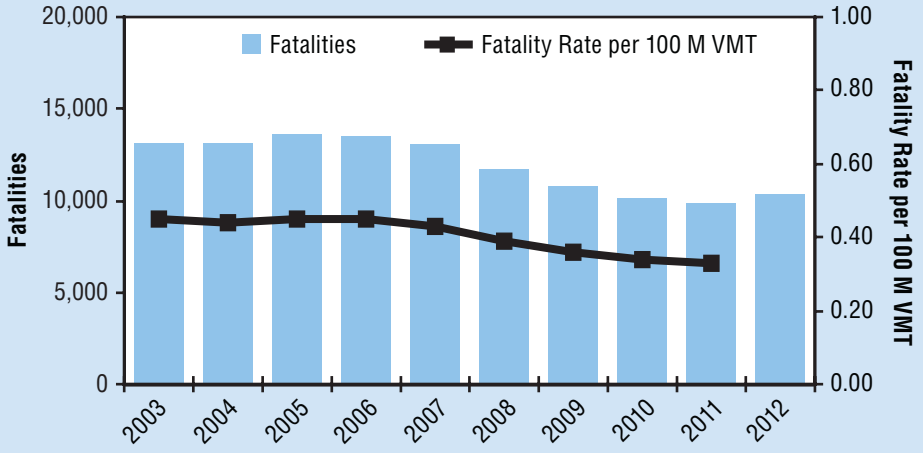
In 2012, there were 10,322 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher – 31 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year.

Table 1
Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08 Or Higher, 2012

Role	Number	Percent of Total
Driver With BAC=.08+	6,688	65%
Passenger Riding w/Driver With BAC=.08+	1,654	16%
Subtotal	***8,342***	***81%***
Occupants of Other Vehicles	1,170	11%
Nonoccupants	810	8%
Total Fatalities	**10,322**	**100%**

Figure 1

Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Crashes, 2003–2012



Note: VMT data for 2012 not yet available.

In 2012, of the fatalities among children age 14 and younger, 20 percent occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.

Alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in the past 10 years have declined by 21 percent from 13,096 in 2003 to 10,322 in 2012. The national rate of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in 2011 was 0.33 per 100 million VMT (VMT data for 2012 is not available yet). The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate declined by 27 percent from 0.45 in 2003 to 0.33 in 2011.

Children

In 2012, a total of 1,168 children age 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those 1,168 fatalities, 239 (20%) occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Out of those 239 deaths, 124 (52%) were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a BAC level of .08 or higher, and another 38 children (16%) were pedestrians or pedalcyclists struck by drivers with BACs 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. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at 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.

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Time of Day and Day of Week

The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2012 was nearly 4 times higher at night than during the day (35% versus 9%).

In 2012, 15 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-impaired, compared to 30 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, 2003 and 2012

Total Drivers							
	2003			2012			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2003–2012
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	58,517	12,035	21%	45,337	9,678	21%	0
Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day							
Single-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	21,669	7,893	36%	18,613	6,462	35%	-1
Daytime	8,481	1,373	16%	7,433	1,328	18%	+2
Nighttime	12,814	6,321	49%	10,964	5,021	46%	-3
Multiple-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	36,848	4,142	11%	26,724	3,216	12%	+1
Daytime	23,382	1,122	5%	16,494	919	6%	+1
Nighttime	13,444	3,015	22%	10,198	2,288	22%	0
Drivers by Time of Day							
Daytime	31,863	2,495	8%	23,927	2,246	9%	+1
Nighttime	26,258	9,336	36%	21,162	7,309	35%	-1
Drivers by Day of Week and Time of Day							
Weekday*	35,145	5,104	15%	27,291	4,214	15%	0
Daytime	22,967	1,403	6%	17,413	1,299	7%	+1
Nighttime	12,059	3,659	30%	9,798	2,882	29%	-1
Weekend*	23,262	6,877	30%	17,981	5,439	30%	0
Daytime	8,896	1,092	12%	6,514	948	15%	+3
Nighttime	14,199	5,677	40%	11,364	4,427	39%	-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 2012 was nearly four times higher at night than during the day."

Drivers

In fatal crashes in 2012 the highest percentage of drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher was for drivers ages 21 to 24 (32%), followed by ages 25 to 34 (29%) and 35 to 44 (25%).

The proportion of drivers involved in fatal crashes with BAC levels of .08 or higher was 24 percent among males and 14 percent among females (see Table 3).

The percentages of drivers involved in fatal crashes with a BAC level of .08 or higher in 2012 were 27 percent for motorcycles, 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%).

In 2012, the 21- to 24-year-old age group had the highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes with BAC levels of .08 or higher – 32 percent.

Table 3

Drivers With a BAC of .08 or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age, Gender, And Vehicle Type, 2003 and 2012

Total Drivers							
	2003			2012			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2003–2012
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	58,517	12,035	21%	45,337	9,678	21%	0
Drivers by Age Group (Years)							
16–20	7,744	1,441	19%	4,211	758	18%	-1
21–24	6,276	2,019	32%	4,738	1,539	32%	0
25–34	11,288	2,995	27%	8,950	2,581	29%	+2
35–44	11,053	2,632	24%	7,311	1,800	25%	+1
45–54	9,024	1,707	19%	7,601	1,573	21%	+2
55–64	5,455	623	11%	5,899	805	14%	+3
65–74	3,116	234	8%	3,212	274	9%	+1
75+	3,329	158	5%	2,532	139	5%	0
Drivers by Gender							
Male	42,586	10,096	24%	33,124	7,905	24%	0
Female	15,211	1,785	12%	11,509	1,588	14%	+2
Drivers by Vehicle Type							
Passenger Cars	26,422	5,813	22%	17,992	4,104	23%	+1
Light Trucks	22,172	4,776	22%	17,131	3,704	22%	0
Large Trucks	4,658	64	1%	3,753	80	2%	+1
Motorcycles	3,800	1,106	29%	5,075	1,390	27%	-2

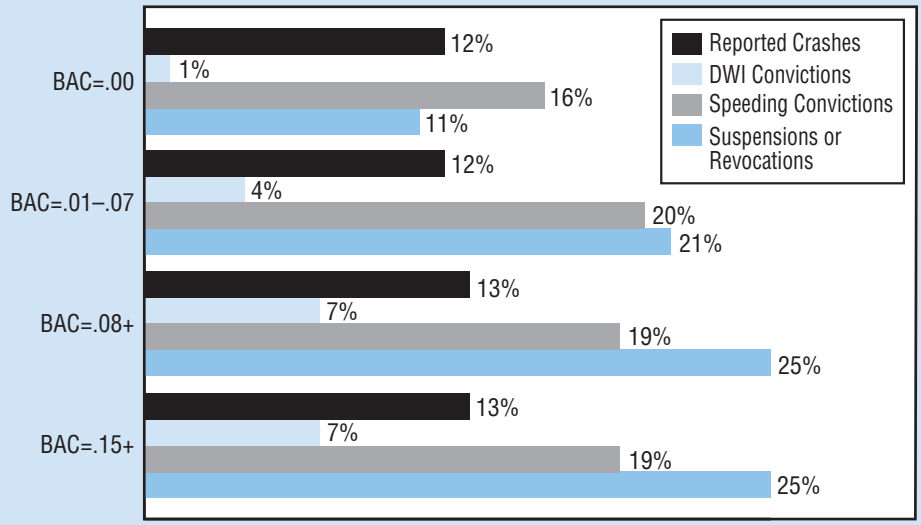
Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown/not reported or other data not included.

In 2012, the percentage of drivers with BAC of .08 or above in fatal crashes was highest for motorcycle riders (27%).

In 2012, 5,163 passenger vehicle (includes passenger cars and light trucks [vans, SUVs, pickups, and other light trucks]) drivers killed had a BAC of .08 or higher. Out of those driver fatalities for which restraint use was known, 70 percent were unrestrained. Among passenger vehicle drivers killed who had a BAC of .01 to .07 g/dL the percentage unrestrained was 57 percent, and for passenger vehicle drivers killed who had no alcohol (BAC=.00) the percentage unrestrained was 41 percent.

Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were seven times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers in fatal crashes with no alcohol (7% and 1%, respectively) (see Figure 2). Note: FARS records previous DWI convictions of drivers, that occurred up to three years prior to the date of the crash.

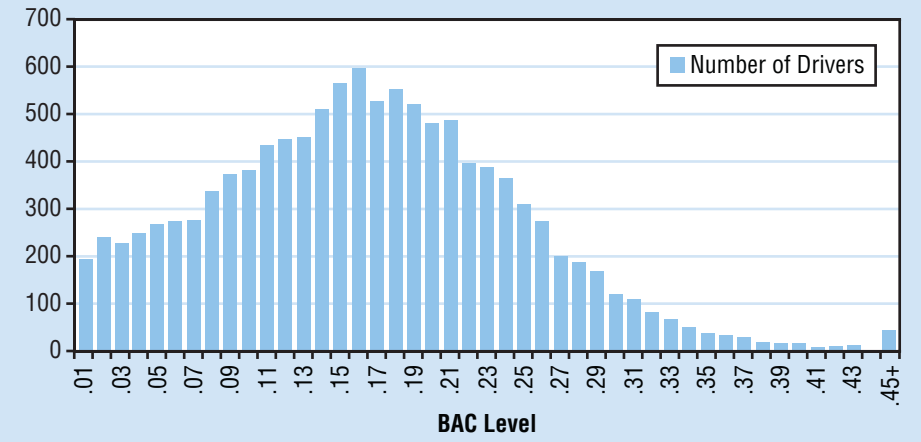
Figure 2
Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by BAC, 2012



Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher in fatal crashes in 2012 were seven times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were drivers with no alcohol.

In 2012, 85 percent (9,678) of the 11,415 drivers with a BAC of .01 or higher who were involved in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or above .08, and 59 percent (6,730) had BAC levels at or above .15. The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers in fatal crashes was .16 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Distribution of BAC Levels for Drivers With a BAC of .01 or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, 2012



In 2012, 6,730 (59%) of the drivers involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking had a BAC of .15 or greater.

Table 4 shows traffic fatalities by State and the highest driver BAC in the crash in 2012. Among all alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities (10,322) in 2012, 70 percent (7,251) were in crashes in which at least one driver in the crash had a BAC of .15 g/dL or higher. Among all States, fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2012 ranged from 3,398 (highest) to 15 (lowest) depending on the size and population of the State. Alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities were highest in Texas (1,296), followed by California (802), and Florida (697), and lowest in the District of Columbia (4). The proportion of alcohol- impaired-driving fatalities among total fatalities in States ranged from a high of 44 percent (Montana) to a low of 16 percent (Utah). The proportion of fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .15 g/dL or higher, ranged from a high of 34 percent (North Dakota) to a low of 12 percent (Utah).

Table 4

Traffic Fatalities by State and Highest Driver BAC in the Crash, 2012

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	865	570	66%	35	4%	257	30%	170	20%	293	34%
Alaska	59	44	74%	0	1%	15	25%	12	21%	15	26%
Arizona	825	534	65%	40	5%	227	28%	170	21%	268	32%
Arkansas	552	378	68%	28	5%	143	26%	94	17%	171	31%
California	2,857	1,911	67%	134	5%	802	28%	560	20%	936	33%
Colorado	472	303	64%	35	7%	133	28%	92	19%	167	35%
Connecticut	236	134	57%	13	5%	85	36%	63	26%	98	41%
Delaware	114	68	60%	12	10%	34	30%	20	18%	46	40%
Dist of Columbia	15	10	68%	1	5%	4	27%	3	20%	5	32%
Florida	2,424	1,601	66%	121	5%	697	29%	488	20%	818	34%
Georgia	1,192	832	70%	56	5%	301	25%	206	17%	357	30%
Hawaii	126	69	55%	4	3%	51	41%	37	30%	56	44%
Idaho	184	124	67%	7	4%	54	29%	39	21%	60	33%
Illinois	956	561	59%	72	8%	321	34%	223	23%	393	41%
Indiana	779	518	66%	31	4%	228	29%	170	22%	259	33%
Iowa	365	260	71%	14	4%	92	25%	68	19%	106	29%
Kansas	405	284	70%	20	5%	98	24%	73	18%	117	29%
Kentucky	746	553	74%	23	3%	168	23%	119	16%	191	26%
Louisiana	722	451	62%	29	4%	241	33%	162	22%	270	37%
Maine	164	102	62%	13	8%	49	30%	32	20%	62	38%
Maryland	505	316	63%	29	6%	160	32%	109	22%	189	37%
Massachusetts	349	202	58%	22	6%	123	35%	77	22%	146	42%
Michigan	938	626	67%	51	5%	259	28%	189	20%	311	33%
Minnesota	395	261	66%	17	4%	114	29%	90	23%	131	33%
Mississippi	582	382	66%	21	4%	179	31%	113	19%	200	34%
Missouri	826	490	59%	46	6%	280	34%	196	24%	326	40%
Montana	205	97	48%	18	9%	89	44%	67	32%	108	52%
Nebraska	212	123	58%	15	7%	74	35%	50	24%	89	42%
Nevada	258	159	62%	17	7%	82	32%	58	22%	99	38%
New Hampshire	108	71	66%	4	4%	32	30%	23	21%	37	34%
New Jersey	589	377	64%	48	8%	164	28%	109	18%	211	36%
New Mexico	365	251	69%	17	5%	97	27%	65	18%	113	31%
New York	1,168	746	64%	78	7%	344	29%	225	19%	422	36%
North Carolina	1,292	828	64%	58	4%	402	31%	260	20%	460	36%
North Dakota	170	84	49%	14	8%	72	42%	58	34%	86	51%
Ohio	1,123	690	61%	45	4%	385	34%	283	25%	430	38%
Oklahoma	708	470	66%	32	5%	205	29%	158	22%	238	34%
Oregon	336	233	69%	17	5%	86	26%	51	15%	103	31%
Pennsylvania	1,310	849	65%	52	4%	408	31%	300	23%	460	35%
Rhode Island	64	35	55%	5	7%	24	38%	18	28%	29	45%
South Carolina	863	456	53%	48	6%	358	41%	254	29%	405	47%
South Dakota	133	79	59%	9	6%	45	33%	33	25%	53	40%
Tennessee	1,014	666	66%	53	5%	295	29%	210	21%	348	34%
Texas	3,398	1,892	56%	202	6%	1,296	38%	901	27%	1,498	44%
Utah	217	176	81%	8	4%	34	16%	25	12%	42	19%
Vermont	77	50	65%	2	3%	23	30%	12	15%	25	33%
Virginia	777	521	67%	44	6%	211	27%	166	21%	255	33%
Washington	444	281	63%	14	3%	145	33%	98	22%	160	36%
West Virginia	339	235	69%	9	3%	95	28%	68	20%	104	31%
Wisconsin	615	381	62%	34	6%	200	33%	155	25%	234	38%
Wyoming	123	81	66%	2	2%	40	32%	29	24%	42	34%
National	**33,561**	**21,411**	**64%**	**1,719**	**5%**	**10,322**	**31%**	**7,251**	**22%**	**12,041**	**36%**
Puerto Rico	347	220	63%	23	7%	104	30%	65	19%	128	37%

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