Traffic Safety Facts
2014 Data

December 2015

DOT HS 812 231

Alcohol-Impaired Driving

Key Findings

- In 2014, there were 9,967 fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher; this was 31 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year.
- An average of 1 alcohol-impaired-driving fatality occurred every 53 minutes in 2014.
- The estimated economic cost of alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in the United States in 2010 (the most recent year for which cost data is available) was $44 billion.
- Of the traffic fatalities among children 14 and younger in 2014, 19 percent occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.
- In 2014, the 21- to 24-year-old age group had the highest percentage of drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher (30%) in fatal crashes.
- The percentage of drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher in fatal crashes in 2014 was highest for motorcycle riders (29%), compared to passenger cars (22%), light trucks (22%), and large trucks (2%).
- The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2014 was almost four times higher at night than during the day.
- Among the 9,967 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in 2014, 69 percent (6,852) were in crashes in which at least one driver in the crash had a BAC of .15 g/dL or higher.

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Drivers are considered to be alcohol-impaired when their blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) are .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Thus, any fatal crash involving a driver with a BAC of .08 g/dL 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 BAC values imputed when they are not reported. The term "alcohol-impaired" does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was *caused* by alcohol impairment, only that an alcohol-impaired driver was involved in the crash.

In this fact sheet, the 2014 alcohol-impaired-driving information is presented as follows:

Overview

All 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have by law set a threshold making it illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher. In 2014, there were 9,967 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes, an average of 1 alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 53 minutes. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 31 percent of all motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States in 2014.

Of the 9,967 people who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2014, there were 6,391 drivers (64%) with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher. The remaining fatalities consisted of 2,752 motor vehicle occupants (28%) and 824 nonoccupants (8%). The distribution of fatalities in these crashes by role is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08 g/dL or Higher, 2014

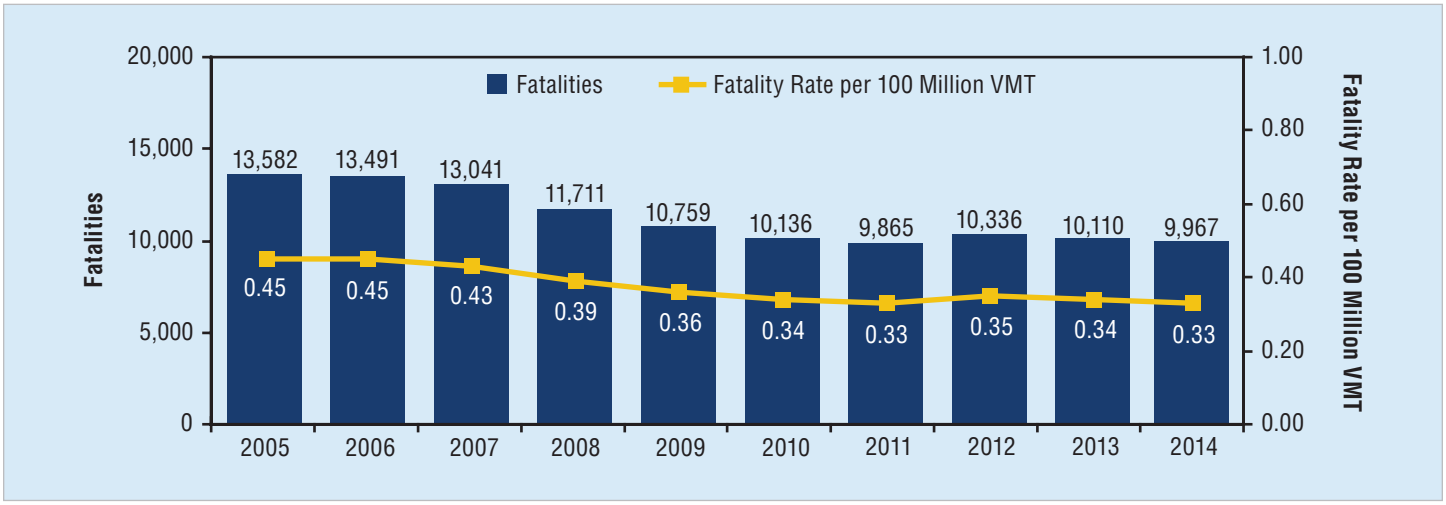
Role	Number	Percent of Total Fatalities
Driver With BAC=.08+	6,391	64%
Passenger Riding w/Driver With BAC=.08+	1,511	15%
Subtotal	**7,902**	**79%**
Occupants of Other Vehicles	1,241	12%
Nonoccupants (pedestrians/pedalcyclists/other)	824	8%
Total Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatalities	**9,967**	**100%**

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System 2014 Annual Report File (ARF).
Note: Percentages may not equal sum of components due to independent rounding.

From 2013 to 2014, fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes decreased by 1.4 percent (10,110 to 9,967 fatalities). Alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in the past 10 years have declined by 27 percent from 13,582 in 2005 to 9,967 in 2014. The national rate of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in 2014 was 0.33 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), a decline from 0.34 in 2013. The alcohol-impaired-driving fatality rate in the past 10 years has declined by 27 percent, from 0.45 in 2005 to 0.33 in 2014. Figure 1 presents the fatality numbers and rates for the past decade.

Figure 1

Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Crashes, 2005–2014



Source: Fatalities – FARS 2005–2013 Final File, 2014 ARF; 2005–2013 VMT – Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Annual Highway Statistics; 2014 VMT – FHWA's Traffic Volume Trends (September 2015)

Economic Cost

The estimated economic cost of all motor vehicle traffic crashes in the United States in 2010 (the most recent year for which cost data is available) was $242 billion, of which $44 billion resulted from alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Included in the economic costs are:

- Lost productivity
- Workplace losses
- Legal and court expenses
- Medical costs
- Emergency medical services (EMS)
- Insurance administration
- Congestion
- Property damage

These costs represent the tangible losses that result from motor vehicle traffic crashes. However, in cases of serious injury or death, such costs fail to capture the relatively intangible value of lost quality-of-life that results from these injuries. When quality-of-life valuations are considered, the total value of societal harm from motor vehicle traffic crashes in the United States in 2010 was an estimated $836 billion, of which $201.1 billion resulted from alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. For further information on cost estimates, see *The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised).*[1]

Children

In 2014, a total of 1,070 children 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of these 1,070 fatalities, 209 children (19%) died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Of these 209 child deaths:

- 116 (56%) were occupants of vehicles with drivers who had BACs of .08 g/dL or higher;
- 61 (29%) were occupants of other vehicles;
- 30 (14%) were nonoccupants (pedestrians, pedalcyclists, or other nonoccupants); and
- 2 (1%) were drivers.

Time of Day and Day of Week

The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2014 was almost 4 times higher at night than during the day (34% versus 9%). In 2014, 16 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-impaired, compared to 29 percent on weekends. Table 2 presents information on drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2005 and 2014 by time of day and day of week, as well as single-vehicle and multiple-vehicle crash data.

[1] Blincoe, L. J., Miller, T. R., Zaloshnja, E., & Lawrence, B. A. (2014). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2010 (Revised).* (Report No. DOT HS 812 013). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/812013.pdf

Table 2

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes With BACs of .08 g/dL or Higher, by Crash Type, Time of Day and Day of Week, 2005 and 2014

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	2005			2014			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2005–2014
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		
		Number	Percent of Total		Number	Percent of Total	
Total	59,220	12,571	21%	44,583	9,417	21%	0
Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day							
Single-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	22,596	8,314	37%	17,813	6,053	34%	-3
Daytime	8,914	1,554	17%	7,085	1,240	18%	+1
Nighttime	13,389	6,601	49%	10,518	4,709	45%	-4
Multiple-Vehicle Crash							
Total*	36,624	4,257	12%	26,770	3,364	13%	+1
Daytime	22,906	1,165	5%	16,397	961	6%	+1
Nighttime	13,696	3,088	23%	10,350	2,396	23%	0
Drivers by Time of Day							
Daytime	31,820	2,718	9%	23,482	2,201	9%	0
Nighttime	27,085	9,689	36%	20,868	7,105	34%	-2
Drivers by Day of Week and Time of Day							
Weekday*	35,780	5,358	15%	26,939	4,262	16%	+1
Daytime	23,231	1,506	6%	17,105	1,347	8%	+2
Nighttime	12,451	3,809	31%	9,741	2,874	29%	-2
Weekend*	23,346	7,167	31%	17,589	5,134	29%	-2
Daytime	8,588	1,212	14%	6,377	854	13%	-1
Nighttime	14,634	5,880	40%	11,127	4,232	38%	-2

Source: FARS 2005 Final File and 2014 ARF.
Daytime – 6 a.m. to 5:59 p.m.
Nighttime – 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.
Weekday – Monday 6 a.m. to Friday 5:59 p.m.
Weekend – Friday 6 p.m. to Monday 5:59 a.m.
*Includes drivers involved in fatal crashes when time of day was unknown.

Drivers

In fatal crashes in 2014, the highest percentage of drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher was for 21- to 24-year-old drivers (30%), followed by 25- to 34-year-old drivers (29%). The percentage of drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher involved in fatal crashes was 23 percent among males and 15 percent among females. In 2014, there were 4.5 male alcohol-impaired drivers for every female alcohol-impaired driver (7,574 versus 1,671). Table 3 provides information on impaired-driving crashes by the age of the driver as well as gender and vehicle type.

The percentages of drivers involved in fatal crashes with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher in 2014 by vehicle type were 29 percent for motorcycles, 22 percent for passenger cars, and 22 percent for light trucks (24% for pickup trucks, 22% for SUVs, and 12% for vans). The percentage of drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher in fatal crashes was the lowest for drivers of large trucks (2%).

Table 3

Drivers With BACs of .08 g/dL or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age Group, Gender, and Vehicle Type, 2005 and 2014

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	2005			2014			Change in Percentage With BAC=.08+ 2005–2014
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		Total Number of Drivers	BAC=.08+		
		Number	Percent of Total		Number	Percent of Total	
Total	59,220	12,571	21%	44,583	9,417	21%	0
Drivers by Age Group (Years)							
16–20	7,334	1,271	17%	3,803	662	17%	0
21–24	6,585	2,171	33%	4,654	1,404	30%	-3
25–34	11,467	3,276	29%	8,972	2,586	29%	0
35–44	10,793	2,616	24%	6,894	1,652	24%	0
45–54	9,434	1,808	19%	7,350	1,493	20%	+1
55–64	6,075	764	13%	5,997	945	16%	+3
65–74	3,217	225	7%	3,314	327	10%	+3
75+	3,016	122	4%	2,641	152	6%	+2
Drivers by Gender							
Male	43,282	10,330	24%	32,572	7,574	23%	-1
Female	15,059	1,990	13%	11,258	1,671	15%	+2
Drivers by Vehicle Type							
Passenger Cars	25,046	5,898	24%	17,757	3,922	22%	-2
Light Trucks*	22,879	4,940	22%	17,017	3,694	22%	0
–Pickup Trucks	*10,941*	*2,706*	*25%*	*7,865*	*1,925*	*24%*	*-1*
–SUVs	*8,150*	*1,695*	*21%*	*6,959*	*1,503*	*22%*	*+1*
–Vans	*3,709*	*530*	*14%*	*2,086*	*253*	*12%*	*-2*
Large Trucks	4,900	67	1%	3,697	68	2%	+1
Motorcycles	4,679	1,262	27%	4,692	1,372	29%	+2

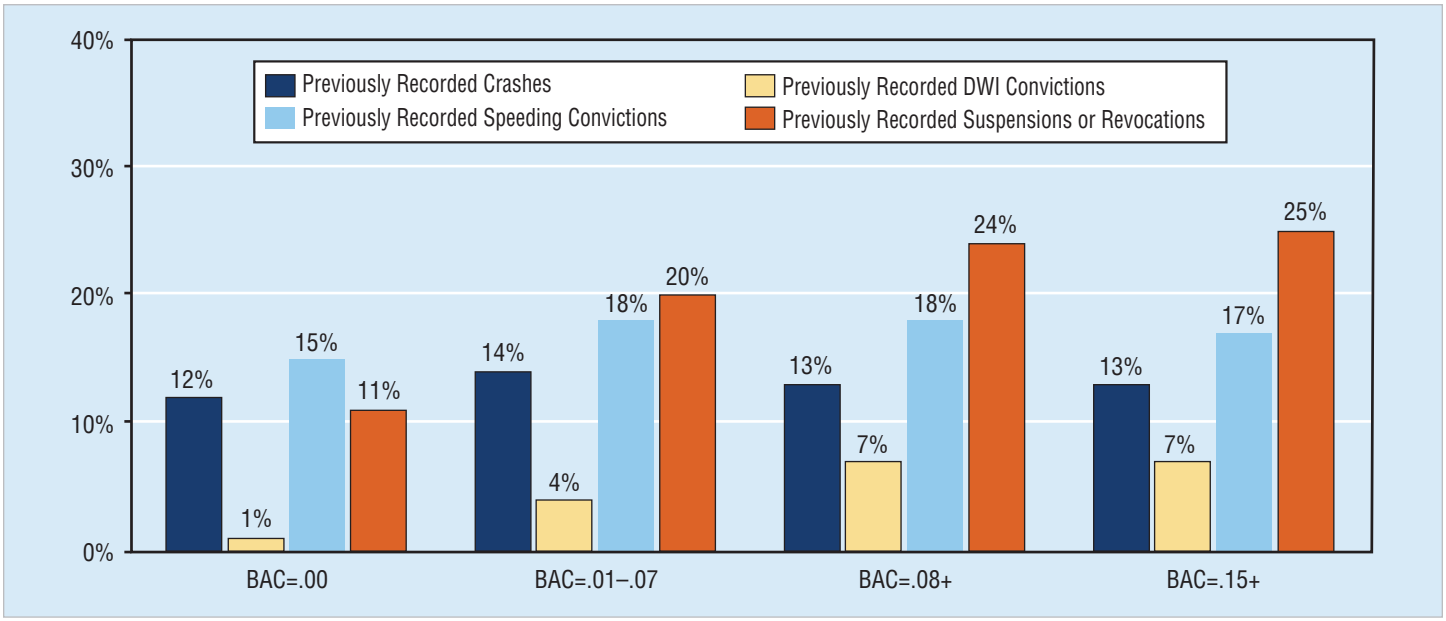
Source: FARS 2005 Final File and 2014 ARF.
Note: Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown/not reported or other data not included.
*Includes other/unknown light-truck vehicle types.

In 2014, there were 4,900 passenger vehicle drivers killed with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher ("passenger vehicles" include passenger cars as well as light trucks such as vans, SUVs, and pickup trucks). Of these driver fatalities for which restraint use was known, 67 percent were unrestrained. Based on known restraint use, 55 percent of passenger vehicle drivers killed who had BACs of .01 to .07 g/dL were unrestrained, and 38 percent of passenger vehicle drivers killed who had no alcohol (.00 g/dL) were unrestrained.

Figure 2 shows information on the driving record for drivers in fatal crashes in 2014, at different BAC levels. There was little difference by BAC level in the percentage of drivers with previously recorded crashes. Drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher involved in fatal crashes were seven times more likely to have prior convictions for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers with no alcohol (7% and 1%, respectively). Note that FARS records drivers' previous crashes, suspensions/revocations, and convictions 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, 2014

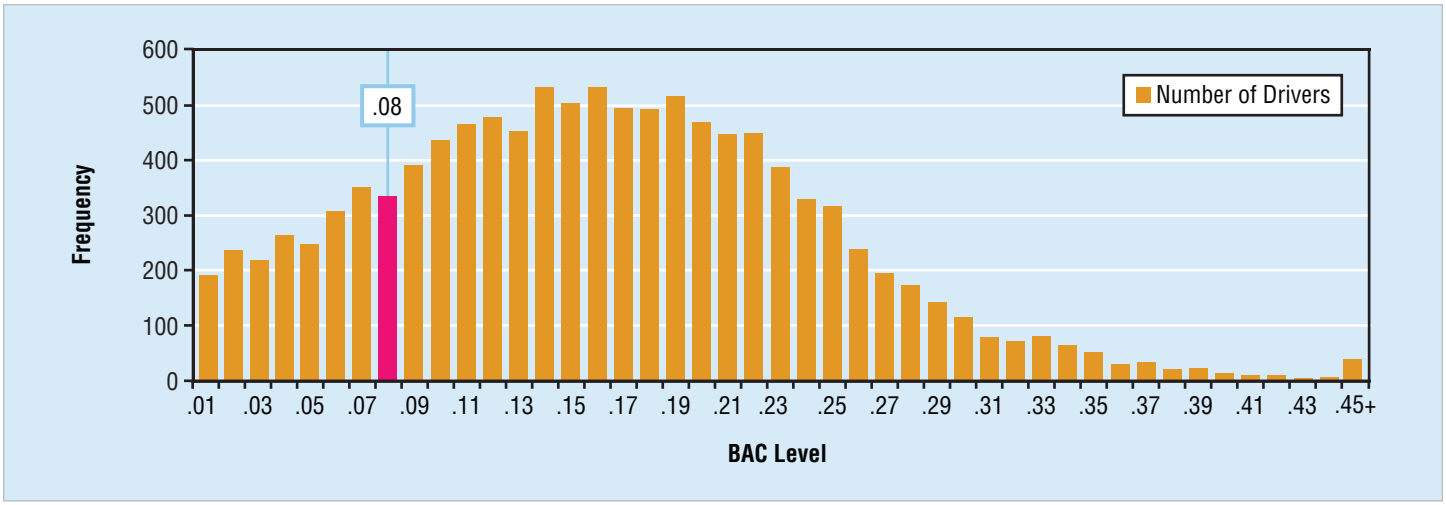


Source: FARS 2014 ARF.

While BAC of .08 g/dL is considered to be impaired in all States, the large majority of drivers in fatal crashes with any measurable alcohol had levels far higher. In 2014, 84 percent (9,417) of the 11,231 drivers with BACs of .01 g/dL or higher who were involved in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or above .08 g/dL, and 56 percent (6,324) had BAC levels at or above .15 g/dL. Among the 9,967 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in 2014, 69 percent (6,852) were in crashes in which at least one driver in the crash had a BAC of .15 g/dL or higher. Figure 3 presents the distribution of BACs for those drivers with any alcohol in their systems. The most frequently recorded BACs among drinking drivers in fatal crashes were tied at .14 and .16 g/dL.

Figure 3

Distribution of BACs for Drivers With BACs of .01 g/dL or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, 2014



Source: FARS 2014 ARF.

Fatalities by State

Table 4 shows motor vehicle traffic fatalities by State and the highest driver BAC in the crashes in 2014.

- Among all States, the number of fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes ranged from 23 (District of Columbia) to 3,538 (Texas), depending on the size and population of the State.
- Alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities were highest in Texas (1,446), followed by California (882) and Florida (685), and lowest in the District of Columbia (5).
- The percentage of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities among total traffic fatalities in States ranged from a high of 41 percent (Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Texas) to a low of 20 percent (Vermont), compared to the national average of 31 percent.
- The percentage of fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .15 g/dL or higher ranged from a high of 30 percent (Montana and Rhode Island) to a low of 14 percent (Vermont), compared to the national average of 21 percent.

This fact sheet contains information on motor vehicle fatalities and fatal crashes, based on data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). FARS is a census of fatal crashes within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (although Puerto Rico is not included in U.S. totals).

The suggested APA format citation for this document is:

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2015, December). *Alcohol-impaired driving: 2014 data*. (Traffic Safety Facts. DOT HS 812 231). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), NSA-230, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted at 800-934-8517 or by e-mail at ncsaweb@dot.gov. General information on highway traffic safety can be found 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, 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.

Table 4

Traffic Fatalities, by State and Highest Driver BAC in the Crash, 2014 TSF Alcohol 2014

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	820	508	62%	48	6%	264	32%	180	22%	312	38%
Alaska	73	45	61%	6	9%	22	30%	17	23%	29	39%
Arizona	770	505	66%	48	6%	199	26%	140	18%	246	32%
Arkansas	466	302	65%	27	6%	135	29%	94	20%	162	35%
California	3,074	2,017	66%	171	6%	882	29%	602	20%	1,053	34%
Colorado	488	300	62%	26	5%	160	33%	112	23%	187	38%
Connecticut	248	135	54%	17	7%	97	39%	63	26%	113	46%
Delaware	121	70	58%	3	2%	49	40%	26	22%	51	42%
Dist of Columbia	23	17	74%	1	5%	5	21%	4	16%	6	26%
Florida	2,494	1,686	68%	122	5%	685	27%	470	19%	807	32%
Georgia	1,164	834	72%	47	4%	278	24%	184	16%	326	28%
Hawaii	95	60	63%	3	3%	32	34%	20	21%	35	37%
Idaho	186	125	67%	7	4%	53	28%	34	18%	59	32%
Illinois	924	551	60%	52	6%	317	34%	212	23%	369	40%
Indiana	746	504	68%	34	5%	205	27%	142	19%	239	32%
Iowa	321	214	67%	12	4%	93	29%	70	22%	105	33%
Kansas	385	263	68%	18	5%	103	27%	69	18%	121	31%
Kentucky	672	475	71%	26	4%	171	25%	114	17%	196	29%
Louisiana	737	435	59%	48	6%	253	34%	178	24%	300	41%
Maine	131	81	62%	6	4%	44	33%	31	23%	49	38%
Maryland	442	289	65%	24	5%	130	29%	82	19%	154	35%
Massachusetts	328	169	52%	21	6%	133	41%	89	27%	154	47%
Michigan	901	634	70%	51	6%	215	24%	141	16%	266	29%
Minnesota	361	239	66%	15	4%	106	29%	75	21%	121	33%
Mississippi	607	399	66%	29	5%	178	29%	124	20%	207	34%
Missouri	766	515	67%	46	6%	204	27%	131	17%	249	33%
Montana	192	107	56%	13	7%	73	38%	58	30%	85	44%
Nebraska	225	146	65%	17	8%	60	27%	42	19%	77	34%
Nevada	290	177	61%	20	7%	93	32%	65	22%	112	39%
New Hampshire	95	61	64%	4	5%	30	31%	21	22%	34	36%
New Jersey	556	355	64%	38	7%	163	29%	107	19%	201	36%
New Mexico	383	236	62%	28	7%	116	30%	77	20%	144	38%
New York	1,039	659	63%	62	6%	317	30%	207	20%	379	36%
North Carolina	1,284	856	67%	49	4%	378	29%	267	21%	427	33%
North Dakota	135	69	51%	11	8%	55	41%	37	27%	66	49%
Ohio	1,006	644	64%	46	5%	310	31%	225	22%	355	35%
Oklahoma	669	488	73%	27	4%	154	23%	111	17%	181	27%
Oregon	357	232	65%	25	7%	100	28%	68	19%	125	35%
Pennsylvania	1,195	799	67%	51	4%	345	29%	247	21%	396	33%
Rhode Island	52	34	65%	1	1%	18	34%	15	30%	18	35%
South Carolina	824	495	60%	51	6%	279	34%	212	26%	329	40%
South Dakota	136	83	61%	7	5%	46	34%	36	26%	52	38%
Tennessee	962	648	67%	45	5%	267	28%	188	20%	312	32%
Texas	3,538	1,864	53%	224	6%	1,446	41%	974	28%	1,671	47%
Utah	256	193	76%	7	3%	56	22%	40	16%	63	24%
Vermont	44	30	68%	5	12%	9	20%	6	14%	14	32%
Virginia	703	446	63%	42	6%	214	30%	145	21%	256	36%
Washington	462	292	63%	34	7%	134	29%	89	19%	168	36%
West Virginia	272	174	64%	12	4%	84	31%	56	21%	96	35%
Wisconsin	507	303	60%	37	7%	166	33%	122	24%	202	40%
Wyoming	150	96	64%	5	3%	48	32%	35	23%	53	36%
U.S. Total	**32,675**	**20,856**	**64%**	**1,764**	**5%**	**9,967**	**31%**	**6,852**	**21%**	**11,731**	**36%**
Puerto Rico	304	172	56%	38	13%	93	31%	54	18%	131	43%

Source: FARS 2014 ARF.