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

# Traffic Safety Facts
## 2021 Data

DOT HS 813 491 August 2023

# Older Population

In this fact sheet for 2021 the information is presented as follows.



For the purposes of this fact sheet, the term "older"—in relation to population, drivers, occupants, and nonoccupants—refers to people 65 and older.

## Key Findings

- In 2021 there were 7,489 people 65 and older killed in traffic crashes in the United States, accounting for 17 percent of all traffic fatalities. From 2020 to 2021 there was a 14-percent increase in the number of people 65 and older killed in traffic crashes.
- In 2021 there were 55.8 million people—17 percent of the total U.S. population—who were 65 and older.
- The older population traffic fatality rates per 100,000 population in 2021 was 13.41, an increase of 11 percent from 12.09 in 2020.
- Older female drivers accounted for 20 percent of all female driver fatalities in 2021, compared with 16 percent for the older-male-driver fatalities.
- Among the older population, the traffic fatality rate per 100,000 population in 2021 was highest for the 85-and-older age group.
- Older drivers made up 21 percent of all licensed drivers in 2021 and 13 percent of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021.
- In 2021 most traffic fatalities in crashes involving older drivers occurred during the daytime (72%), on weekdays (70%), and were in multi-vehicle crashes (69%). These percentages are higher compared to all fatalities (46% were during the daytime, 58% were on weekdays, and 46% were in multi-vehicle crashes).
- Among passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in 2021, when restraint use was known, those occupants 65 and older were restrained 70 percent of the time, compared to 45 percent for those occupants under 65.
- Seventy-one percent of older pedestrian fatalities in 2021 occurred at non-intersection locations, compared to 85 percent for those under 65.

This fact sheet contains information on fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes based on data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and non-fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes from the Crash Report Sampling System (CRSS). A change instituted with the release of 2020 data is rounding estimates to the nearest whole number instead of the nearest thousand for all police-reported crashes, including injury estimates. Refer to the end of this publication for more information on FARS and CRSS.

**Due to a vehicle classification change, the 2020 and later-year vehicle type classifications are not comparable to 2019 and earlier-year vehicle type classifications. This change affects any analysis with a vehicle component to it. Refer to the end of this publication for more information on Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC).**

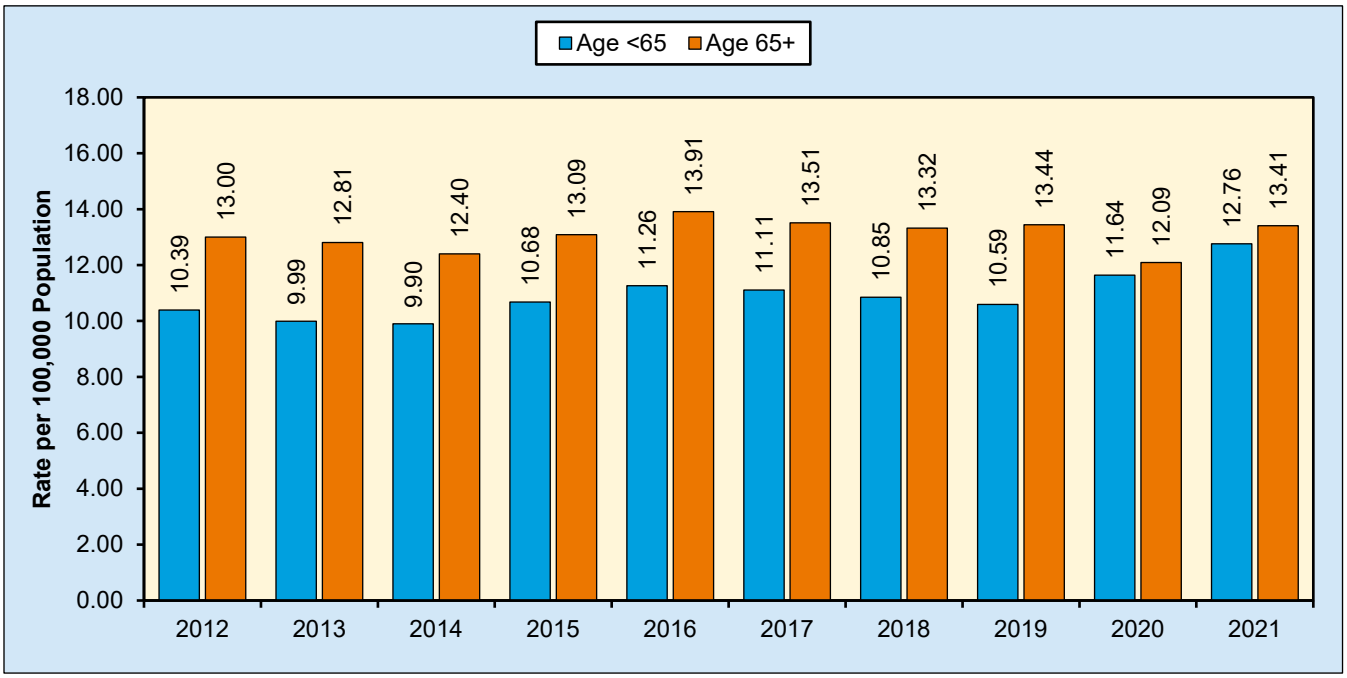
A motor vehicle traffic crash is defined as an incident that involved one or more motor vehicles in-transport that originated on or had a harmful event (injury or damage) on a public trafficway, such as a road or highway. Crashes that occurred on private property not regularly used by the public for transport, including some parts of parking lots and driveways, are excluded. The terms "motor vehicle traffic crash" and "traffic crash" are used interchangeably in this document.

## Overview

In 2021 there were 7,489 people 65 and older killed and an estimated 266,064 injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Older people made up 17 percent of all traffic fatalities and 11 percent of all people injured in 2021. Compared to 2020 there was a 14-percent increase in the number of traffic fatalities and a 14-percent increase in the number of those injured in the older age group.

In 2021 there were 55.8 million people—17 percent of the total U.S. population—who were 65 and older. From 2012 to 2021 the traffic fatality rate per 100,000 population of older people increased, from 13.00 in 2012 to 13.41 in 2021. In this same period, the traffic fatality rates of the population younger than 65 increased from 10.39 in 2012 to 12.76 in 2021. Figure 1 shows motor vehicle traffic fatality rates according to these age groups.

**Figure 1. Traffic Fatality Rates per 100,000 Population, by Age Group, 2012–2021**




Sources: FARS 2012–2020 Final File, 2021 Annual Report File (ARF); Population – Census Bureau

Some notable changes among the 65-and-older age group from 2012 to 2021 are seen in Table 1.

- Total traffic fatalities among the 65-and-older population increased by 34 percent (increased for males by 42% and increased for females by 20%).
- Traffic fatalities of 65-and-older pedestrians increased by 45 percent overall (increased for males by 53% and increased for females by 30%).
- Traffic fatalities of pedalcyclists 65 and older, though a relatively small number, more than doubled for men and tripled for women.

**Table 1. Population and Involvement of Older Population in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Sex, 2012 and 2021**

| | 2012 | | | 2021 | | | Percentage Change, 2012–2021 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Age 65+ | Percentage of Total | Total | Age 65+ | Percentage of Total | Total | Age 65+ |
| **Population** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | **313,877,662** | **43,132,211** | **14%** | **331,893,745** | **55,847,953** | **17%** | **6%** | **29%** |
| Male | 154,397,027 | 18,815,872 | 12% | 164,384,742 | 25,213,543 | 15% | 6% | 34% |
| Female | 159,480,635 | 24,316,339 | 15% | 167,509,003 | 30,634,410 | 18% | 5% | 26% |
| **Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **45,664** | **5,793** | **13%** | **60,904** | **8,031** | **13%** | **33%** | **39%** |
| Male | 33,351 | 4,122 | 12% | 44,036 | 5,842 | 13% | 32% | 42% |
| Female | 11,604 | 1,670 | 14% | 15,130 | 2,185 | 14% | 30% | 31% |
| **Total Traffic Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **33,782** | **5,607** | **17%** | **42,939** | **7,489** | **17%** | **27%** | **34%** |
| Male | 23,961 | 3,477 | 15% | 30,747 | 4,925 | 16% | 28% | 42% |
| Female | 9,809 | 2,128 | 22% | 12,051 | 2,550 | 21% | 23% | 20% |
| **Driver Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **21,490** | **3,471** | **16%** | **27,422** | **4,691** | **17%** | **28%** | **35%** |
| Male | 16,604 | 2,474 | 15% | 21,329 | 3,465 | 16% | 28% | 40% |
| Female | 4,885 | 997 | 20% | 6,049 | 1,222 | 20% | 24% | 23% |
| **Occupant Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **28,003** | **4,516** | **16%** | **34,290** | **5,863** | **17%** | **22%** | **30%** |
| Male | 19,813 | 2,759 | 14% | 24,525 | 3,797 | 15% | 24% | 38% |
| Female | 8,183 | 1,757 | 21% | 9,705 | 2,060 | 21% | 19% | 17% |
| **Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **21,779** | **4,021** | **18%** | **26,325** | **4,981** | **19%** | **21%** | **24%** |
| Male | 14,204 | 2,311 | 16% | 17,303 | 2,990 | 17% | 22% | 29% |
| Female | 7,571 | 1,710 | 23% | 8,979 | 1,985 | 22% | 19% | 16% |
| **Pedestrian Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **4,818** | **949** | **20%** | **7,388** | **1,375** | **19%** | **53%** | **45%** |
| Male | 3,337 | 597 | 18% | 5,171 | 915 | 18% | 55% | 53% |
| Female | 1,478 | 350 | 24% | 2,154 | 456 | 21% | 46% | 30% |
| **Pedalcyclist Fatalities** | | | | | | | | |
| **Total*** | **734** | **82** | **11%** | **966** | **192** | **20%** | **32%** | **134%** |
| Male | 642 | 76 | 12% | 829 | 170 | 21% | 29% | 124% |
| Female | 90 | 6 | 7% | 121 | 19 | 16% | 34% | 217% |

Sources: FARS 2012 Final File, 2021 ARF; Population – Census Bureau
*Includes fatalities of unknown sex.
Note: Use caution with reporting of percentages, as some are based on small fatality figures.

People 65 and older made up 17 percent of the population in 2021, as seen in Table 1.

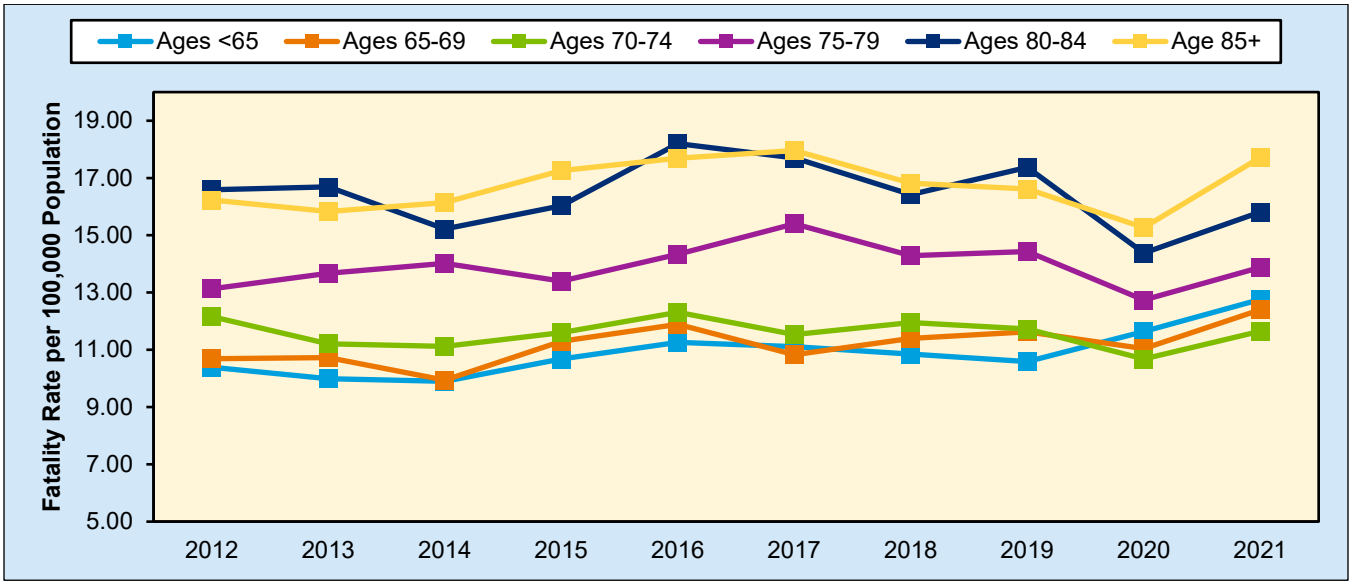
- Fifteen percent of the male population was 65 and older, compared to 18 percent of females.
- From 2012 to 2021 the number of older people in the United States increased by 29 percent (increased for males by 34% and increased for females by 26%), while the total population increased by 6 percent.
- A larger percentage of the population was in this older age group (17% in 2021) than a decade before (14% in 2012).

The percentage of females 65 and older is larger than that of males when looking at all categories in Table 1 except for pedalcyclist traffic fatalities. While the numbers and percentages have changed, the pattern of females having the higher percentages than males for this age group is the same as a decade ago.

## Age

Figure 2 shows the motor vehicle traffic fatality rates per 100,000 population for those 64 and younger and a breakdown of those 65 and older by smaller segments. In 2021 among the older population, the traffic fatality rate for the 85+ age group was 17.72 per 100,000 population, which was higher than all other age groups, followed by 15.81 for the 80-to-84 age group. The traffic fatality rate for the 85+ age group increased by 9.2 percent from 16.23 in 2012 to 17.72 in 2021. From 2020 to 2021 the traffic fatality rate for the 85+ age group had the largest increase at 16 percent. This was followed by the 65-to-69 age group with a 12-percent increase, and the 80-to-84 age group with a 10-percent increase. From 2020 to 2021 the traffic fatality rate for those under the age of 65 increased by 10 percent.

**Figure 2. Traffic Fatality Rate per 100,000 Population, by Age Group, 2012–2021**




Sources: FARS 2012–2020 Final File, 2021 ARF; Population – Census Bureau

## Drivers

There were 49.6 million licensed older drivers in 2021—a 38-percent increase from 10 years earlier (2012). In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers in the United States increased by 10 percent from 2012 to 2021. Older drivers made up 21 percent of all licensed drivers in 2021, compared to 17 percent in 2012.

As shown in Table 2, among the age groups displayed of drivers of legal drinking age (21 and older) involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021, older drivers had lower percentages (10%) of drivers with blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher, compared to those from the 21-to-64 group (23%). Drivers and motorcycle riders are considered to be alcohol-impaired when their BACs are .08 g/dL or higher. Note: Utah set a lower threshold of .05 g/dL or higher that went into effect on December 30, 2018.

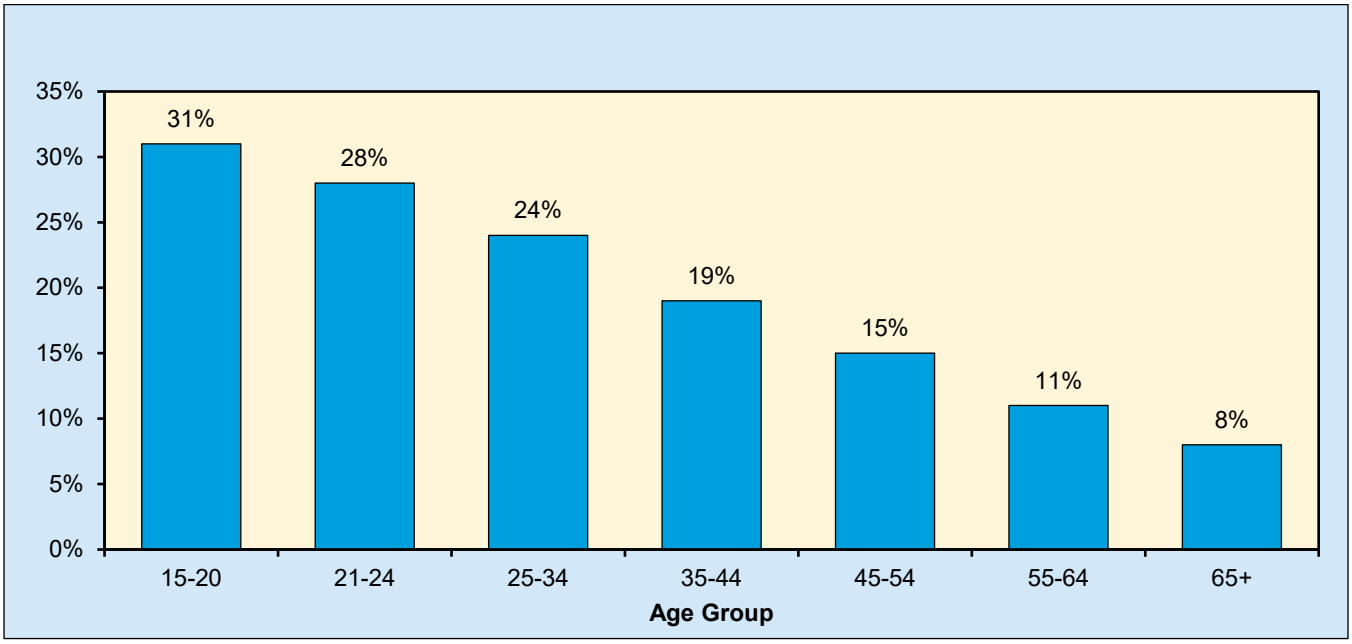
**Table 2. Drivers of Legal Drinking Age Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Their BACs, 2021**

| | Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No Alcohol (BAC=.00 g/dL) | | BAC=.01–.07 g/dL | | Alcohol-Impaired (BAC=.08+ g/dL) | |
| Age Group | Total | Number | Percentage of Total | Number | Percentage of Total | Number | Percentage of Total |
| **21–64** | **45,853** | **33,580** | **73%** | **1,806** | **4%** | **10,467** | **23%** |
| **65+** | **8,031** | **6,986** | **87%** | **204** | **3%** | **841** | **10%** |
| 65–69 | 2,743 | 2,285 | 83% | 93 | 3% | 365 | 13% |
| 70–74 | 2,025 | 1,754 | 87% | 47 | 2% | 224 | 11% |
| 75–79 | 1,483 | 1,319 | 89% | 33 | 2% | 131 | 9% |
| 80–84 | 943 | 859 | 91% | 17 | 2% | 67 | 7% |
| 85+ | 837 | 769 | 92% | 14 | 2% | 54 | 6% |
| **Total*** | **53,884** | **40,567** | **75%** | **2,010** | **4%** | **11,308** | **21%** |

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Excludes drivers of unknown age.
Note: NHTSA estimates BACs when alcohol test results are unknown.

As shown in Figure 3, among the age groups displayed of speeding drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021, older drivers had lower percentages (8%) of speeding drivers involved, compared to the other age groups.

**Figure 3. Percentage of Speeding Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group, 2021**




Source: FARS 2021 ARF

When compared to younger (15- to 64-year-olds) drivers, older drivers were more frequently killed in traffic crashes in 2021 where the initial impact point was on the left side (15% versus 10%) or the right side (10% versus 7%). For older drivers killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes, non-collision crashes were less common than they were for younger drivers who were killed. Table 3 shows initial impact point by age group for drivers killed in traffic crashes in 2021.

### Table 3. Percentage of Drivers Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Initial Impact Point and Age Group, 2021

| Initial Impact Point | Age Group | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 15–64 | | 65+ | | Total* | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Front | 13,945 | 62% | 2,756 | 59% | 16,753 | 61% |
| Left Side | 2,159 | 10% | 702 | 15% | 2,872 | 10% |
| Right Side | 1,570 | 7% | 451 | 10% | 2,029 | 7% |
| Rear | 986 | 4% | 267 | 6% | 1,259 | 5% |
| Top | 62 | 0% | 10 | 0% | 73 | 0% |
| Undercarriage | 149 | 1% | 23 | 0% | 174 | 1% |
| Non-Collision | 2,375 | 10% | 314 | 7% | 2,702 | 10% |
| **Total*** | **22,623** | **100%** | **4,691** | **100%** | **27,422** | **100%** |

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Includes drivers with unknown initial impact point and other or unknown age.

Table 4 shows the numbers of drivers killed in traffic crashes on rural roadways versus urban roadways. In 2021 more older drivers were killed on rural roadways than on urban roadways (50% versus 49%). This is the opposite for younger drivers, where more were killed on urban roadways than on rural roadways (55% versus 45%). Also, in 2021 more older drivers (33%) were killed in intersection crashes than younger drivers (21%).

### Table 4. Drivers Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Land Use, 2021

| Age Group | Rural | | | Urban | | | Total* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Column Percent | Row Percent | Number | Column Percent | Row Percent | Number | Column Percent | Row Percent |
| 15–64 | 10,148 | 81% | 45% | 12,363 | 84% | 55% | 22,623 | 82% | 100% |
| 65+ | 2,366 | 19% | 50% | 2,296 | 16% | 49% | 4,691 | 17% | 100% |
| **Total*** | **12,554** | **100%** | **46%** | **14,722** | **100%** | **54%** | **27,422** | **100%** | **100%** |

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Includes drivers with unknown land use and other or unknown age.

Table 5 presents total traffic fatalities in crashes involving older drivers over the 10-year period by the person type. From 2012 to 2021 there were 38 percent more people killed in traffic crashes involving older drivers, from 5,940 in 2012 to 8,209 in 2021. In 2021 there was a 15-percent increase in the number of people killed in these crashes compared to 2020.

### Table 5. Fatalities in Traffic Crashes Involving Older Drivers, by Person Type, 2012–2021

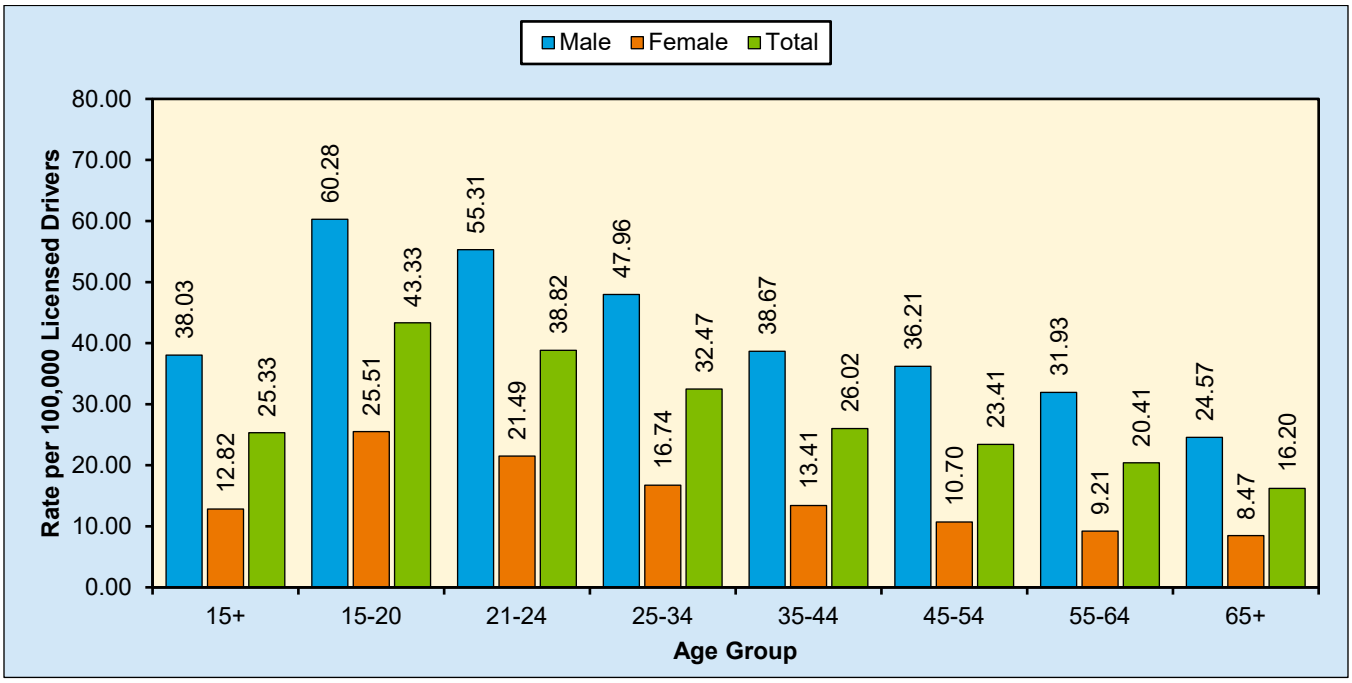
| Year | Older Drivers | Passengers of Older Drivers by Age | | Occupants of Other Vehicles | Nonoccupants | Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | <65 | 65+ | | | |
| 2012 | 3,471 | 168 | 643 | 1,046 | 612 | 5,940 |
| 2013 | 3,601 | 137 | 628 | 1,107 | 583 | 6,057 |
| 2014 | 3,564 | 143 | 605 | 1,129 | 610 | 6,052 |
| 2015 | 3,891 | 168 | 662 | 1,259 | 686 | 6,668 |
| 2016 | 4,242 | 199 | 743 | 1,418 | 738 | 7,342 |
| 2017 | 4,272 | 185 | 723 | 1,480 | 769 | 7,431 |
| 2018 | 4,316 | 201 | 691 | 1,476 | 802 | 7,488 |
| 2019 | 4,483 | 212 | 757 | 1,456 | 871 | 7,779 |
| 2020 | 4,241 | 181 | 547 | 1,427 | 737 | 7,135 |
| 2021 | 4,691 | 201 | 732 | 1,763 | 820 | 8,209 |

Source: FARS 2012–2020 Final File, 2021 ARF
*Includes passenger fatalities of unknown age.

Most traffic fatalities in crashes involving older drivers in 2021 occurred during the daytime (72%), occurred on weekdays (70%), and involved more than one vehicle (69%). These percentages differ from those for all traffic fatalities in 2021: 46 percent occurred in the daytime; 58 percent occurred on the weekdays; and 46 percent involved other vehicles.

Among drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2021, drivers 65 and older had a lower involvement rate per 100,000 licensed drivers (16.20) than any other age group. The involvement rate for male drivers 65 and older in 2021 was 24.57 per 100,000 licensed drivers, and the involvement rate for female drivers 65 and older was 8.47 per 100,000 licensed drivers, as seen in Figure 4.

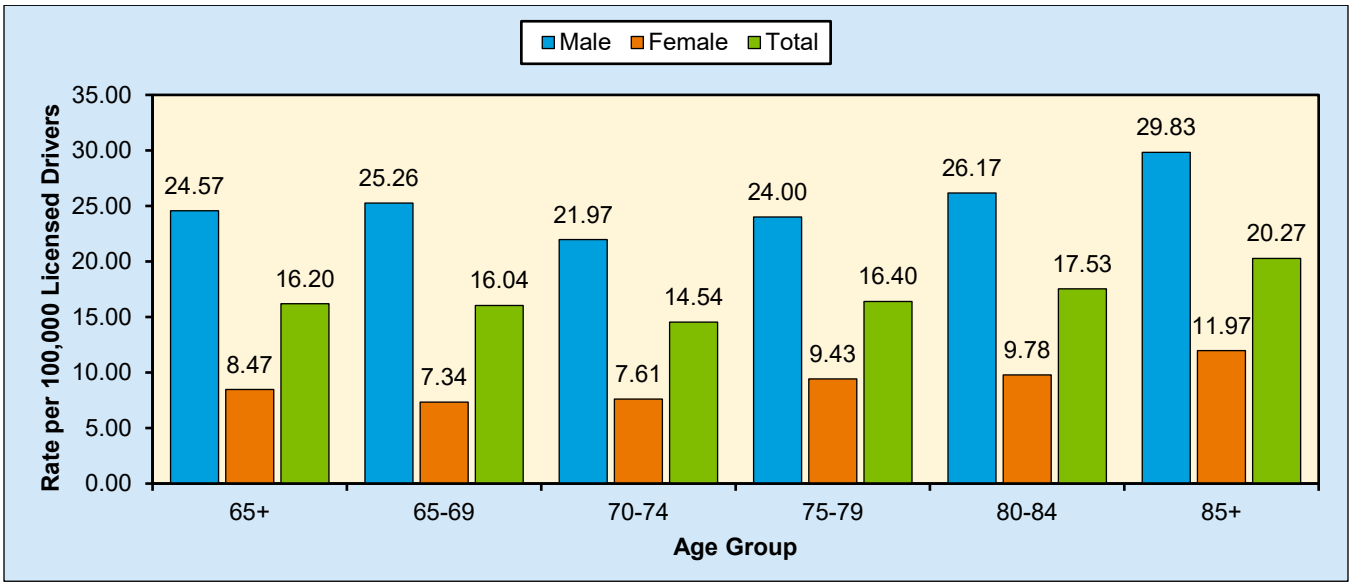
**Figure 4. Driver Involvement Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Sex, 2021**




Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Licensed Drivers – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

While Figure 4 looked at the involvement rate for older drivers compared to other age groups in 2021, Figure 5 compares the involvement rates for age groups within the population of drivers 65 and older, by sex. Driver involvement rates in fatal traffic crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers were highest in the 85-and-older age group among both older male (29.83) and female (11.97) drivers in 2021.

**Figure 5. Involvement Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers for Older Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Age Group and Sex, 2021**




Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Licensed Drivers – FHWA

## Restraint Use

Among passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2021, when restraint use was known, those 65 and older were restrained 70 percent of the time, compared to 45 percent for those under 65. For those who survived fatal traffic crashes in 2021, when restraint use was known, passenger vehicle occupants 65 and older were restrained 95 percent of the time, while those 64 and younger were restrained 84 percent of the time.

Females tend to be restrained more often than males, and this holds true for both younger and older passenger vehicle occupants. In 2021 male passenger vehicle occupants 65 and over who were killed in traffic crashes, when restraint use was known, were restrained 63 percent of the time, compared to 42 percent for those under 65. For female passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2020, when restraint use was known, those 65 and older were restrained 79 percent of the time, compared to those under 65 who were restrained 52 percent of the time. Although the restraint percentages were much higher for those who survived fatal crashes, the same pattern held true.

Restraint use tends to be higher during the daytime. Passenger vehicle occupants 65 and older who were killed in traffic crashes, when restraint use was known, were restrained 72 percent of the time during the day, compared to 51 percent for those under 65. At night, passenger vehicle occupants 65 and older who were killed, when restraint use was known, were restrained 63 percent of the time, while those under 65 were restrained 41 percent of the time. Again, the pattern is similar for those who survived fatal traffic crashes.

**Table 6. Passenger Vehicle Occupants Involved in Traffic Crashes, by Survival Status, Age Group, Restraint Use, Sex, and Time of Day, 2021**

| | Passenger Vehicle Occupants Killed | | | | | Passenger Vehicle Occupants Who Survived | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Percent Based on Known Restraint Use | | | | | Percent Based on Known Restraint Use | |
| | Age <65 | Age 65+ | Total* | Age <65 | Age 65+ | Age <65 | Age 65+ | Total* | Age <65 | Age 65+ |
| **Total** | **21,263** | **4,981** | **26,325** | | | **38,765** | **3,888** | **43,750** | | |
| Restraint Used | 8,550 | 3,245 | 11,820 | 45% | 70% | 29,623 | 3,514 | 33,364 | 84% | 95% |
| Restraint Not Used | 10,374 | 1,413 | 11,813 | 55% | 30% | 5,647 | 191 | 5,922 | 16% | 5% |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | **14,269** | **2,990** | **17,303** | | | **23,133** | **2,220** | **25,596** | | |
| Restraint Used | 5,288 | 1,767 | 7,068 | 42% | 63% | 17,116 | 1,972 | 19,191 | 82% | 94% |
| Restraint Not Used | 7,334 | 1,017 | 8,367 | 58% | 37% | 3,726 | 125 | 3,877 | 18% | 6% |
| **Female** | **6,966** | **1,985** | **8,979** | | | **15,548** | **1,665** | **17,385** | | |
| Restraint Used | 3,249 | 1,476 | 4,736 | 52% | 79% | 12,444 | 1,539 | 14,076 | 87% | 96% |
| Restraint Not Used | 3,026 | 393 | 3,428 | 48% | 21% | 1,910 | 66 | 2,000 | 13% | 4% |
| **Time of Day** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Daytime** | **9,374** | **3,787** | **13,194** | | | **17,812** | **2,671** | **20,869** | | |
| Restraint Used | 4,334 | 2,573 | 6,918 | 51% | 72% | 14,209 | 2,440 | 16,760 | 86% | 95% |
| Restraint Not Used | 4,191 | 1,003 | 5,205 | 49% | 28% | 2,387 | 126 | 2,538 | 14% | 5% |
| **Nighttime** | **11,712** | **1,171** | **12,931** | | | **20,888** | **1,209** | **22,803** | | |
| Restraint Used | 4,160 | 666 | 4,840 | 41% | 63% | 15,379 | 1,071 | 16,566 | 83% | 94% |
| Restraint Not Used | 6,077 | 399 | 6,491 | 59% | 37% | 3,249 | 64 | 3,369 | 17% | 6% |

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Includes occupants of unknown age.

## Pedestrians

For older people, the proportion of pedestrian traffic fatalities in 2021 that occurred at non-intersection locations (71%) was much lower than for pedestrians under 65 (85%). Among all pedestrians killed in traffic crashes, older pedestrians (65+) had a lower percentage (17%) with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher as compared to pedestrians 15- to 64 years old (34%), as seen in Table 7.

**Table 7. Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities, by Age Group and Their BACs, 2021**

| | Pedestrian Fatalities | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No Alcohol (BAC=.00 g/dL) | | BAC=.01–.07 g/dL | | BAC=.08+ g/dL | |
| Age Group | Total | Number | Percentage of Total | Number | Percentage of Total | Number | Percentage of Total |
| **15-64** | **5,728** | **3,522** | **61%** | **271** | **5%** | **1,935** | **34%** |
| **65+** | **1,375** | **1,098** | **80%** | **41** | **3%** | **236** | **17%** |
| 65–69 | 529 | 384 | 73% | 18 | 3% | 127 | 24% |
| 70–74 | 348 | 275 | 79% | 10 | 3% | 64 | 18% |
| 75–79 | 216 | 193 | 89% | 3 | 1% | 21 | 10% |
| 80–84 | 163 | 142 | 87% | 6 | 3% | 15 | 9% |
| 85+ | 119 | 105 | 88% | 5 | 4% | 9 | 7% |
| **Total*** | **7,103** | **4,621** | **65%** | **312** | **4%** | **2,171** | **31%** |

Source: FARS 2021 ARF
*Excludes pedestrians younger than 15 and pedestrians of unknown age.
Note: NHTSA estimates BACs when alcohol test results are unknown.

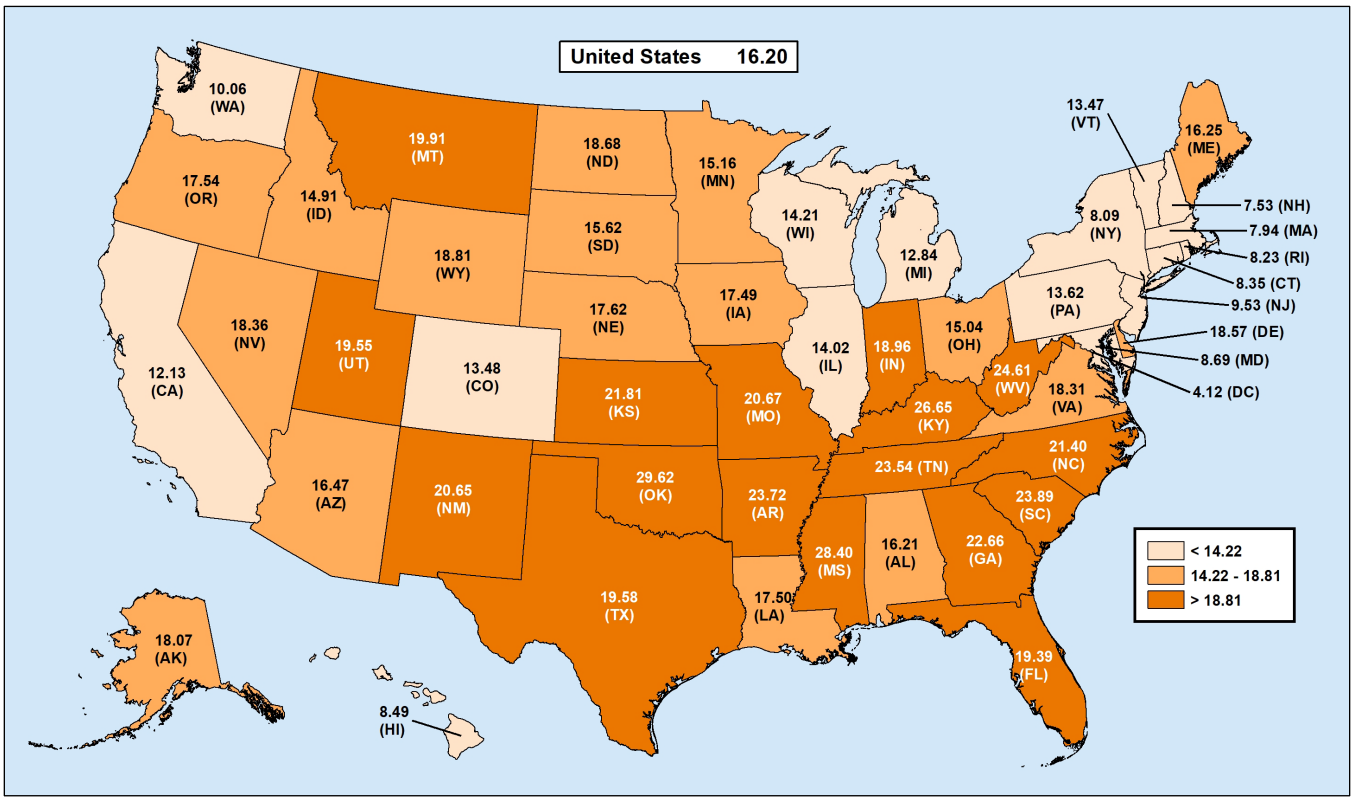
## State

Figure 6 looks at a U.S. map of older drivers involved in 2021 fatal traffic crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers. Table 8 shows 2021 drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes by State, driver age group, and licensed driver rate.

Florida had the largest number of older drivers involved in fatal crashes at 767, compared to the District of Columbia with 3 older drivers involved in fatal crashes. The District of Columbia had the lowest percentage of older drivers involved in fatal crashes with 4.7 percent, followed by California and Maryland with 9.4 percent each. Maine had the largest percentage with 23.1 percent.

Nationally, the fatal traffic crash involvement rate per 100,000 licensed drivers for drivers 65 and older was 16.20 in 2021. Looking at the rate of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers in 2021, the District of Columbia was lowest with 4.12, followed by New Hampshire with a rate of 7.53. Oklahoma had the highest driver involvement rate for those 65 and older (29.62), followed by Mississippi with a rate of 28.40.

**Figure 6. Older Driver Involvement Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by State, 2021**




Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Licensed Drivers – FHWA
Note: Licensed driver data for Puerto Rico not available.

The previous section looked at drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes. Table 9 shows fatalities in traffic crashes by State and age group in 2021. Also included in Table 9 is Puerto Rico, which is not included in the overall U.S. total.

The State with the highest number of fatalities of people 65 and older was Florida with 698 fatalities in 2021, compared to the District of Columbia with the fewest, 5. The District of Columbia had the lowest percentage of fatalities of those 65 and older (12.2%), while Maine had the highest (26.8%), followed by West Virginia with 26.4 percent.

Looking at the traffic fatality rate by population for those 65 and older, District of Columbia was lowest with 5.82 fatalities per 100,000 population in that age group, followed by Rhode Island with a rate of 6.04 per 100,000 population in 2021. Mississippi had the highest rate with 24.28 per 100,000 population, followed by Arkansas with 24.05 in 2021. The national rate in 2021 was 13.41 per 100,000 population for those 65 and older.

## Table 8. Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by State and Age Group, 2021

| State | Total Drivers Involved* | Age Group | | | | | | Age 65+ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | <65 | 65–69 | 70–74 | 75–79 | 80–84 | 85+ | Total 65+ | Percentage of Total | Involvement Rate† |
| Alabama | 1,369 | 1,190 | 51 | 44 | 25 | 17 | 20 | 157 | 11.5% | 16.21 |
| Alaska | 91 | 74 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 17 | 18.7% | 18.07 |
| Arizona | 1,703 | 1,392 | 74 | 57 | 36 | 21 | 16 | 204 | 12.0% | 16.47 |
| Arkansas | 956 | 809 | 41 | 32 | 33 | 16 | 12 | 134 | 14.0% | 23.72 |
| California | 6,038 | 5,165 | 220 | 150 | 91 | 61 | 47 | 569 | 9.4% | 12.13 |
| Colorado | 1,013 | 879 | 42 | 27 | 24 | 15 | 14 | 122 | 12.0% | 13.48 |
| Connecticut | 432 | 373 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 48 | 11.1% | 8.35 |
| Delaware | 205 | 165 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 39 | 19.0% | 18.57 |
| District of Columbia | 64 | 57 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4.7% | 4.12 |
| Florida | 5,447 | 4,486 | 227 | 208 | 158 | 93 | 81 | 767 | 14.1% | 19.39 |
| Georgia | 2,617 | 2,227 | 129 | 87 | 59 | 40 | 26 | 341 | 13.0% | 22.66 |
| Hawaii | 127 | 107 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 14.2% | 8.49 |
| Idaho | 373 | 326 | 18 | 13 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 44 | 11.8% | 14.91 |
| Illinois | 1,894 | 1,563 | 74 | 63 | 36 | 28 | 31 | 232 | 12.2% | 14.02 |
| Indiana | 1,387 | 1,146 | 79 | 42 | 31 | 21 | 15 | 188 | 13.6% | 18.96 |
| Iowa | 489 | 398 | 41 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 6 | 89 | 18.2% | 17.49 |
| Kansas | 595 | 485 | 34 | 25 | 18 | 16 | 11 | 104 | 17.5% | 21.81 |
| Kentucky | 1,155 | 946 | 59 | 39 | 31 | 27 | 24 | 180 | 15.6% | 26.65 |
| Louisiana | 1,369 | 1,183 | 54 | 28 | 26 | 17 | 16 | 141 | 10.3% | 17.50 |
| Maine | 195 | 150 | 18 | 5 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 45 | 23.1% | 16.25 |
| Maryland | 800 | 698 | 23 | 19 | 16 | 9 | 8 | 75 | 9.4% | 8.69 |
| Massachusetts | 582 | 491 | 22 | 18 | 13 | 8 | 21 | 82 | 14.1% | 7.94 |
| Michigan | 1,648 | 1,379 | 76 | 54 | 50 | 28 | 19 | 227 | 13.8% | 12.84 |
| Minnesota | 668 | 532 | 33 | 32 | 28 | 13 | 19 | 125 | 18.7% | 15.16 |
| Mississippi | 1,037 | 869 | 49 | 38 | 30 | 9 | 15 | 141 | 13.6% | 28.40 |
| Missouri | 1,420 | 1,187 | 66 | 53 | 36 | 25 | 17 | 197 | 13.9% | 20.67 |
| Montana | 286 | 243 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 43 | 15.0% | 19.91 |
| Nebraska | 308 | 252 | 20 | 16 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 55 | 17.9% | 17.62 |
| Nevada | 567 | 470 | 36 | 22 | 11 | 9 | 2 | 80 | 14.1% | 18.36 |
| New Hampshire | 148 | 124 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 24 | 16.2% | 7.53 |
| New Jersey | 967 | 795 | 37 | 29 | 26 | 24 | 17 | 133 | 13.8% | 9.53 |
| New Mexico | 641 | 532 | 30 | 19 | 5 | 12 | 5 | 71 | 11.1% | 20.65 |
| New York | 1,594 | 1,306 | 69 | 54 | 38 | 25 | 31 | 217 | 13.6% | 8.09 |
| North Carolina | 2,350 | 1,952 | 106 | 108 | 72 | 42 | 36 | 364 | 15.5% | 21.40 |
| North Dakota | 138 | 115 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 21 | 15.2% | 18.68 |
| Ohio | 1,922 | 1,591 | 97 | 71 | 46 | 35 | 30 | 279 | 14.5% | 15.04 |
| Oklahoma | 1,075 | 882 | 66 | 40 | 25 | 22 | 20 | 173 | 16.1% | 29.62 |
| Oregon | 830 | 667 | 50 | 33 | 25 | 18 | 10 | 136 | 16.4% | 17.54 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,747 | 1,418 | 87 | 67 | 54 | 39 | 50 | 297 | 17.0% | 13.62 |
| Rhode Island | 93 | 79 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 15.1% | 8.23 |
| South Carolina | 1,726 | 1,486 | 76 | 65 | 40 | 16 | 19 | 216 | 12.5% | 23.89 |
| South Dakota | 179 | 153 | 11 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 14.0% | 15.62 |
| Tennessee | 1,961 | 1,645 | 81 | 66 | 55 | 28 | 31 | 261 | 13.3% | 23.54 |
| Texas | 6,443 | 5,549 | 240 | 169 | 124 | 70 | 52 | 655 | 10.2% | 19.58 |
| Utah | 473 | 394 | 30 | 9 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 70 | 14.8% | 19.55 |
| Vermont | 102 | 84 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 16.7% | 13.47 |
| Virginia | 1,334 | 1,081 | 72 | 53 | 48 | 29 | 25 | 227 | 17.0% | 18.31 |
| Washington | 945 | 796 | 44 | 33 | 14 | 19 | 12 | 122 | 12.9% | 10.06 |
| West Virginia | 381 | 296 | 22 | 27 | 21 | 2 | 9 | 81 | 21.3% | 24.61 |
| Wisconsin | 878 | 726 | 55 | 30 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 142 | 16.2% | 14.21 |
| Wyoming | 142 | 122 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 19 | 13.4% | 18.81 |
| **U.S. Total** | **60,904** | **51,035** | **2,743** | **2,025** | **1,483** | **943** | **837** | **8,031** | **13.2%** | **16.20** |
| Puerto Rico | 467 | 397 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 41 | 8.8% | N/A |

Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Licensed Drivers – FHWA
*Includes drivers of unknown age.
†Per 100,000 Licensed Drivers.
Note: Licensed driver data for Puerto Rico not available.

## Table 9. Fatalities in Traffic Crashes, by State and Age Group, 2021

| State | Total Fatalities* | Age Group | | | | | | Age 65+ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | <65 | 65–69 | 70–74 | 75–79 | 80–84 | 85+ | Total 65+ | Percentage of Total | Fatality Rate† |
| Alabama | 983 | 823 | 43 | 37 | 26 | 20 | 25 | 151 | 15.4% | 16.99 |
| Alaska | 67 | 54 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 13 | 19.4% | 13.31 |
| Arizona | 1,180 | 979 | 63 | 51 | 33 | 23 | 17 | 187 | 15.8% | 14.03 |
| Arkansas | 693 | 565 | 38 | 25 | 29 | 19 | 16 | 127 | 18.3% | 24.05 |
| California | 4,285 | 3,666 | 210 | 139 | 94 | 82 | 79 | 604 | 14.1% | 10.14 |
| Colorado | 691 | 583 | 35 | 24 | 20 | 17 | 12 | 108 | 15.6% | 12.28 |
| Connecticut | 298 | 255 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 42 | 14.1% | 6.47 |
| Delaware | 136 | 105 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 31 | 22.8% | 15.37 |
| District of Columbia | 41 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 12.2% | 5.82 |
| Florida | 3,738 | 2,966 | 196 | 170 | 137 | 100 | 95 | 698 | 18.7% | 15.18 |
| Georgia | 1,797 | 1,482 | 89 | 80 | 54 | 40 | 36 | 299 | 16.6% | 18.88 |
| Hawaii | 94 | 72 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 22 | 23.4% | 7.79 |
| Idaho | 271 | 225 | 19 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 46 | 17.0% | 14.58 |
| Illinois | 1,334 | 1,074 | 58 | 63 | 37 | 34 | 41 | 233 | 17.5% | 11.09 |
| Indiana | 932 | 763 | 55 | 32 | 26 | 17 | 22 | 152 | 16.3% | 13.64 |
| Iowa | 356 | 275 | 33 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 8 | 81 | 22.8% | 14.33 |
| Kansas | 424 | 330 | 26 | 25 | 18 | 13 | 12 | 94 | 22.2% | 19.20 |
| Kentucky | 806 | 656 | 42 | 34 | 28 | 22 | 24 | 150 | 18.6% | 19.47 |
| Louisiana | 972 | 841 | 44 | 21 | 23 | 23 | 16 | 127 | 13.1% | 16.67 |
| Maine | 153 | 112 | 18 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 41 | 26.8% | 13.80 |
| Maryland | 561 | 485 | 20 | 19 | 15 | 6 | 15 | 75 | 13.4% | 7.48 |
| Massachusetts | 417 | 326 | 23 | 20 | 9 | 9 | 30 | 91 | 21.8% | 7.49 |
| Michigan | 1,136 | 935 | 57 | 47 | 45 | 27 | 25 | 201 | 17.7% | 11.03 |
| Minnesota | 488 | 372 | 32 | 24 | 27 | 14 | 19 | 116 | 23.8% | 12.14 |
| Mississippi | 772 | 644 | 37 | 28 | 30 | 7 | 18 | 120 | 15.5% | 24.28 |
| Missouri | 1,016 | 829 | 54 | 45 | 34 | 27 | 25 | 185 | 18.2% | 17.07 |
| Montana | 239 | 199 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 40 | 16.7% | 18.48 |
| Nebraska | 221 | 176 | 11 | 17 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 45 | 20.4% | 13.98 |
| Nevada | 385 | 309 | 29 | 23 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 75 | 19.5% | 14.47 |
| New Hampshire | 118 | 93 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 25 | 21.2% | 9.35 |
| New Jersey | 699 | 539 | 40 | 36 | 31 | 31 | 20 | 158 | 22.6% | 10.09 |
| New Mexico | 481 | 419 | 24 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 60 | 12.5% | 15.31 |
| New York | 1,157 | 916 | 65 | 53 | 43 | 31 | 42 | 234 | 20.2% | 6.73 |
| North Carolina | 1,663 | 1,367 | 69 | 89 | 63 | 35 | 37 | 293 | 17.6% | 16.34 |
| North Dakota | 101 | 81 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 20 | 19.8% | 16.05 |
| Ohio | 1,354 | 1,084 | 78 | 68 | 47 | 37 | 40 | 270 | 19.9% | 12.86 |
| Oklahoma | 762 | 613 | 52 | 28 | 24 | 18 | 27 | 149 | 19.6% | 23.11 |
| Oregon | 599 | 472 | 48 | 24 | 26 | 16 | 13 | 127 | 21.2% | 16.11 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,230 | 951 | 73 | 55 | 53 | 38 | 60 | 279 | 22.7% | 11.32 |
| Rhode Island | 63 | 51 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 19.0% | 6.04 |
| South Carolina | 1,198 | 1,016 | 55 | 56 | 34 | 14 | 23 | 182 | 15.2% | 18.83 |
| South Dakota | 148 | 123 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 25 | 16.9% | 15.98 |
| Tennessee | 1,327 | 1,108 | 60 | 55 | 42 | 27 | 35 | 219 | 16.5% | 18.48 |
| Texas | 4,498 | 3,821 | 214 | 154 | 130 | 82 | 76 | 656 | 14.6% | 16.92 |
| Utah | 328 | 262 | 28 | 9 | 12 | 7 | 10 | 66 | 20.1% | 16.96 |
| Vermont | 74 | 60 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 18.9% | 10.51 |
| Virginia | 973 | 757 | 58 | 52 | 43 | 36 | 25 | 214 | 22.0% | 15.21 |
| Washington | 670 | 554 | 33 | 29 | 16 | 23 | 14 | 115 | 17.2% | 9.16 |
| West Virginia | 280 | 206 | 23 | 19 | 19 | 4 | 9 | 74 | 26.4% | 20.03 |
| Wisconsin | 620 | 501 | 37 | 29 | 12 | 15 | 25 | 118 | 19.0% | 11.16 |
| Wyoming | 110 | 90 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 18.2% | 19.25 |
| **U.S. Total** | **42,939** | **35,221** | **2,280** | **1,779** | **1,375** | **996** | **1,059** | **7,489** | **17.4%** | **13.41** |
| Puerto Rico | 337 | 261 | 18 | 13 | 15 | 12 | 4 | 62 | 18.4% | 8.37 |

Sources: FARS 2021 ARF; Population – Census Bureau
*Includes fatalities of unknown age.
†Per 100,000 Population.

## Important Safety Reminders

*For Older Drivers:*

- Age-related changes may undermine your driving ability. Understanding how changes that are a part of normal aging, as well as any medical conditions you have, affect your driving allows you to make informed decisions about continuing to drive. By accurately assessing these changes, you may be able to adjust your driving habits to remain safe on the road or choose other kinds of transportation.
- Stay safe while driving by adjusting your seat and mirrors properly, knowing how to use your vehicle's driver assistance features, and making sure your vehicle is properly maintained.
- Explore how to adapt a vehicle to meet your specific needs.

*For Friends and Family Members:*

- Talking with an older person about their driving is often difficult. Most of us delay that talk until we believe that the person's driving has become dangerous. Such conversations can be awkward for everyone involved, but there are ways to make the conversations more productive. If you decide to initiate a conversation with an older adult about their ability to drive safely, consider taking these three steps:
- Collect information. Note specific concerns about the person's driving, and about their ability to carry out routine non-driving tasks such as cooking or yard work, as changes in the ability to do such tasks may indicate declines that affect driving as well.
- Develop a plan to (a) convey your concerns to the driver, (b) assist the driver to identify strategies to avoid unmanageable driving contexts, and (c) show them how to access and use alternative transportation options to maintain their mobility without driving.
- Follow through on the plan.

For more details and additional information, visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers.

*— NHTSA's Research and Program Development*

## Fatality Analysis Reporting System

FARS contains data on every fatal motor vehicle traffic crash within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To be included in FARS, a traffic crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway customarily open to the public, and must result in the death of a vehicle occupant or a nonoccupant within 30 days of the crash. The Annual Report File (ARF) is the FARS data file associated with the most recent available year, which is subject to change when it is finalized the following year to the final version known as the Final File. The additional time between the ARF and the Final File provides the opportunity for submission of important variable data requiring outside sources, which may lead to changes in the final counts. More information on FARS can be found at http://www.nhtsa.gov/crash-data-systems/fatality-analysis-reporting-system.

The updated final counts for the previous data year will be reflected with the release of the recent year's ARF. For example, along with the release of the 2021 ARF, the 2020 Final File was released to replace the 2020 ARF. The final fatality count in motor vehicle traffic crashes for 2020 was 39,007, which was updated from 38,824 in the 2020 ARF. The number of fatalities aged 65 years or older from the 2020 Final File was 6,582, which was updated from 6,549 from the 2020 ARF.

## Crash Report Sampling System

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) redesigned the nationally representative sample of police-reported traffic crashes, which estimates the number of police-reported injury and property-damage-only crashes in the United States. CRSS replaced the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) in 2016. More information on CRSS can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/crash-data-systems/crash-report-sampling-system-crss.

## Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC) Vehicle Classification

Historically, vehicle type classifications (e.g., passenger cars, light trucks, large trucks, motorcycles, buses) from FARS, NASS GES, and CRSS used for analysis and data reporting were based on analyst-coded vehicle body type. NHTSA did not have manufacturer authoritative data to assist in vehicle body type coding. NCSA has developed a Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC) dataset that is being used to decode VINs (Vehicle Identification Numbers) and extract vehicle information. Details of vehicles (make, model, body class, etc.) involved in crashes are obtained from vPIC via VIN-linkage. The VIN-derived information from vPIC uses the manufacturer's classification of body class, which allows for more accurate vehicle type analysis.

The vPIC-based analysis data are available beginning with 2020 FARS and CRSS data files. Starting with the release of 2021 FARS and CRSS data, all vehicle-related analysis for 2020 and later years will be based on vPIC vehicle classification. As a result, the 2020 and later-year vehicle type classifications are not comparable to 2019 and earlier-year vehicle type classifications. This change affects any analysis with a vehicle component to it. More information on vPIC can be found at https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

The suggested APA format citation for this document is:

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, August). *Older population: 2021 data* (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 491). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

## For More Information:

Motor vehicle traffic crash data are available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), NSA-230. NCSA can be contacted at NCSARequests@dot.gov or 800-934-8517. NCSA programs can be found at www.nhtsa.gov/data. To report a motor vehicle safety-related problem or to inquire about safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem.

The following data tools and resources can be found at https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/.

- Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data Visualizations
- Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Databook
- Fatality and Injury Reporting System Tool (FIRST)
- State Traffic Safety Information (STSI)
- Traffic Safety Facts Annual Report Tables
- FARS Data Tables (FARS Encyclopedia)
- Crash Viewer
- Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing (vPIC)
- FARS, NASS GES, CRSS, NASS Crashworthiness Data System (CDS), and Crash Investigation Sampling System (CISS) data can be downloaded for further analysis.

Other fact sheets available from NCSA:

- Alcohol-Impaired Driving
- Bicyclists and Other Cyclists
- Children
- Large Trucks
- Motorcycles
- Occupant Protection in Passenger Vehicles
- Passenger Vehicles
- Pedestrians
- Rural/Urban Comparison of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities
- School-Transportation-Related Crashes
- Speeding
- State Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Estimates
- State Traffic Data
- Summary of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes
- Young Drivers

Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data*. The fact sheets and Traffic Safety Facts annual report can be found at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

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