

Traffic Safety Facts

2005 Data

DOT HS 810 625

Rural/Urban Comparison

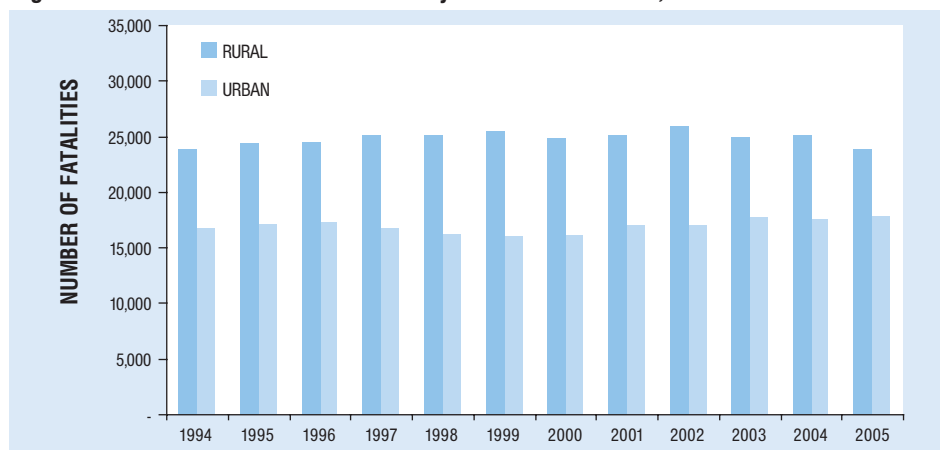
Overview/Trends

The 2005 crash data shows that there were 21,924 fatal crashes involving 32,512 vehicles and 54,990 people, resulting in 24,837 fatalities in rural areas. Urban areas accounted for 17,265 fatal crashes involving 26,861 vehicles and 46,044 people resulting in 18,606 fatalities.

Although 21 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, rural fatal crashes accounted for 57 percent of all traffic fatalities. From 1994 to 2005, rural fatalities increased by approximately 4 percent and compared to urban fatalities that increased 10 percent.

The rural fatality rate has declined from 2.6 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 1994 to 2.3 fatalities per 100 million VMT in 2005, a decrease of 12 percent. Similarly during the same time period the urban fatality rate has decreased from 1.2 per 100 million VMT to 1 per 100 million VMT, a decrease of 17 percent.

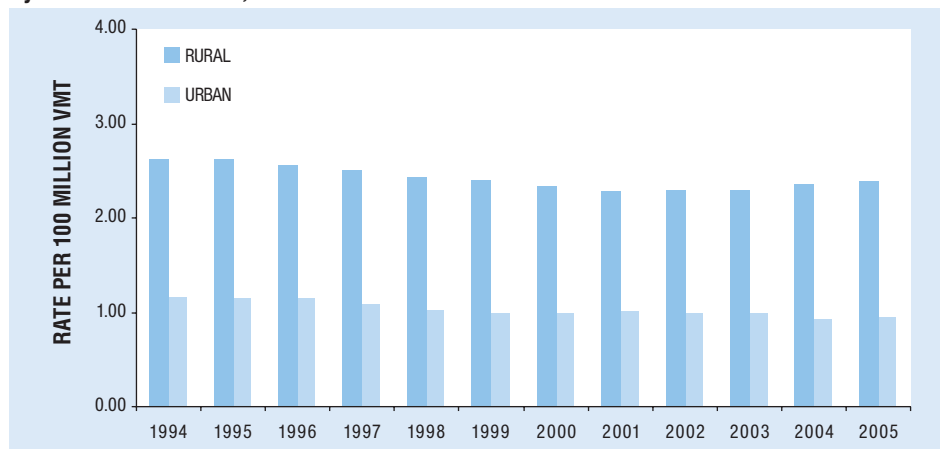
Figure 1. Number of Traffic Fatalities by Year and Location, 1994-2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 1994-2005

Note: 2000 and 2005 Unknowns distributed between Rural and Urban

Figure 2. Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled by Year and Location, 1994-2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 1994-2005 and FHWA, VMT data

Note: 2000 and 2005 Unknowns distributed between Rural and Urban

There has been a gradual increase in annual rural fatalities, from 23,841 in 1994 to 24,837 in 2005. Likewise, urban fatalities have increased from 16,811 in 1994 to 18,606 in 2005.

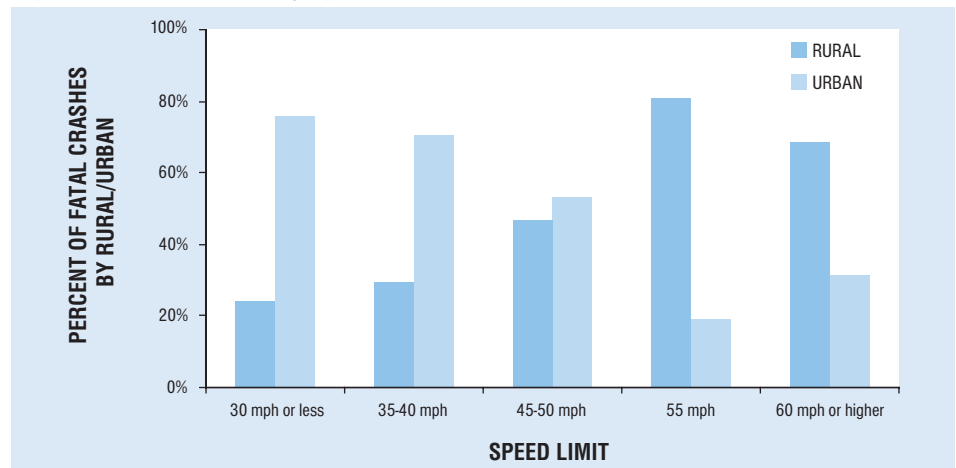
Crashes

In 2005, there were 21,924 fatal crashes (56%) in rural areas and 17,265 fatal crashes (44%) in urban areas.

In rural areas, 53 percent of the crashes occur during the day while 46 percent occur at night. In urban areas the situation is reversed with 45 percent of the crashes occurring during the day and 55 percent of the crashes occurring at night.

Approximately 70 percent of all fatal crashes on roadways with speed limits of 40 mph or less are in urban areas. Slightly less than half (47%) of all fatal crashes occurring on roadways with speed limit between 45 and 50 mph are in rural areas. Over 70 percent of the fatal crashes on roadways with speed limit of 55 mph or higher occur in rural areas.

Figure 3. Fatal Crashes by Speed Limit and Location, 2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 2005

Note: 2005 Unknowns distributed between Rural and Urban

Approximately 91 percent of nighttime rural fatal crashes occur on dark roadways and 9 percent occur on roads lighted by streetlights. In urban areas, 40 percent of fatal nighttime crashes occur on dark roadways and 60 percent occur on lighted roadways.

Less than 2 percent of fatal rural crashes are classified as hit-and-run, compared to 7 percent of urban fatal crashes.

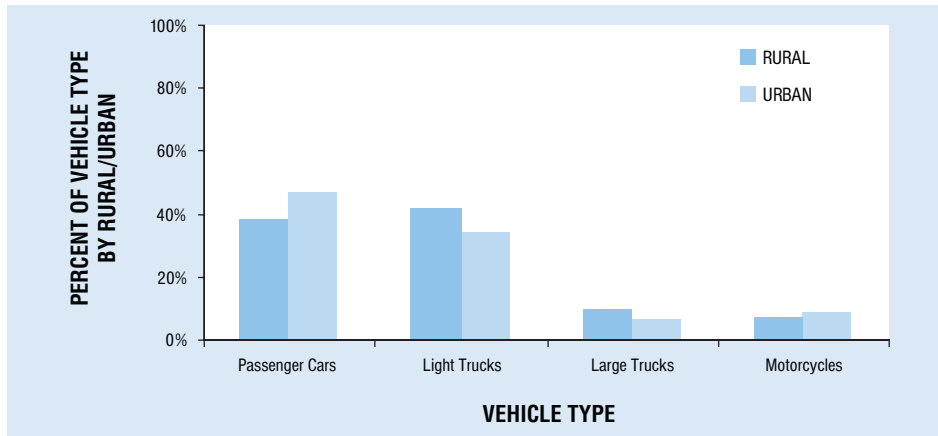
Approximately 67 percent of fatal rural crashes occur on straight roads, whereas 81 percent of fatal urban crashes are on straight roads.

Head-on crashes are more prevalent in rural areas, making up 13 percent of all rural fatal crashes. In urban areas, head-on crashes are responsible for less than 7 percent of all urban fatal crashes.

Vehicles

In 2005, 32,512 vehicles were involved in fatal rural crashes compared to 26,861 in fatal urban crashes.

Figure 4. Fatal Crashes by Vehicle Type and Location, 2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 2005

Note: 2005 Unknowns distributed between Rural and Urban

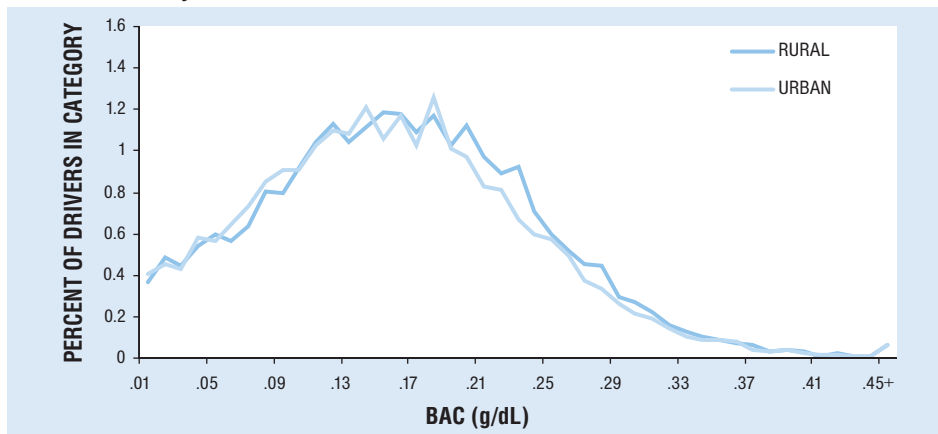
Passenger cars accounted for 38 and 47 percent of the vehicles involved in rural and urban fatal crashes respectively. Light trucks (pickups, vans, and SUVs) accounted for 42 percent of vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes and 34 percent in urban fatal crashes.

The damage to vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes is more severe than the damage to vehicles involved in urban fatal crashes as measured by the percent of disabling deformation. Almost 80 percent of vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes are disabled, whereas 67 percent of vehicles involved in urban fatal crashes are disabled.

Drivers

Rural drivers involved in fatal crashes are slightly more likely to have a valid driver's license, 86 percent, compared to urban drivers, 82 percent.

Figure 5. Distribution of Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes by Location, 2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 2005

Approximately 24 percent of rural and urban drivers involved in fatal crashes had a positive blood alcohol concentration (BAC). However, the percentage of rural drivers with more severe BAC levels was generally higher than the corresponding percentage of urban drivers with similar BAC levels.

Driver fatalities are the most common fatalities in both rural and urban fatal crashes, accounting for 68 percent and 57 percent of all crash fatalities in their respective areas.

People

Vehicle occupants involved in rural fatal crashes are ejected 15 percent of the time, while 7 percent of urban vehicle occupants are ejected in fatal crashes.

Of all people involved in fatal rural crashes, 50 percent are transported to hospitals compared to 48 percent in fatal urban crashes.

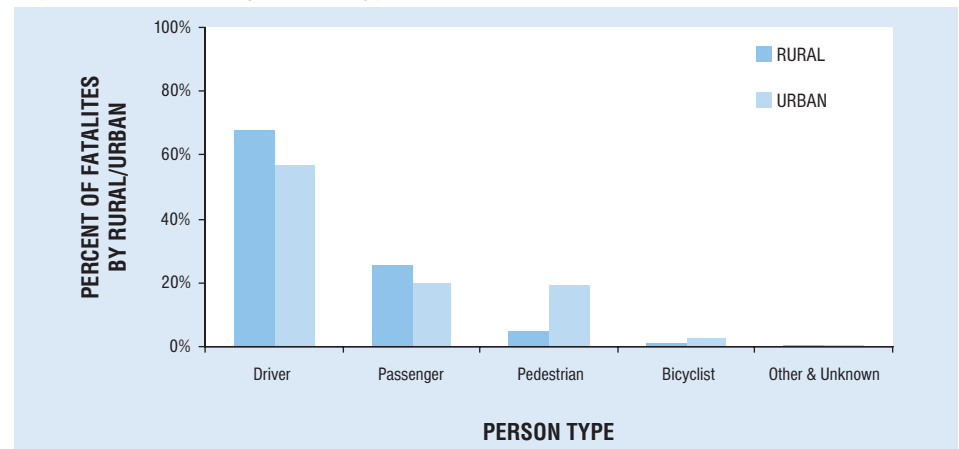
Rural areas have a larger proportion of fatally injured people, 45 percent compared to 40 percent in urban fatal crashes.

Fatalities

Vehicle occupants killed in rural fatal crashes are more likely to have been ejected (25 %) compared to occupants killed in fatal urban crashes (14 %).

Driver fatalities are the most common fatalities in both rural and urban fatal crashes, accounting for 68 percent and 57 percent of all crash fatalities in their respective areas.

Figure 6. Fatalities by Person Type, and Location, 2005



Source: NCSA, NHTSA, FARS 2005
2005 Unknowns distributed between Rural and Urban

Driver fatalities are the most common fatalities in both rural and urban fatal crashes, accounting for 68 percent and 57 percent of all crash fatalities in their respective areas. More pedestrian and pedalcyclist fatalities occur in urban areas than in rural areas.

Approximately 34 percent of rural fatalities are transported to a hospital. In urban areas, 53 percent of the fatalities are transported to a hospital.

For more information:

Information on rural and urban traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NPO-121, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA information can also be obtained by telephone or by fax-on-demand at 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.dot.gov/people/ncsa. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 800-424-9393.