

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS



2012 Data

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.

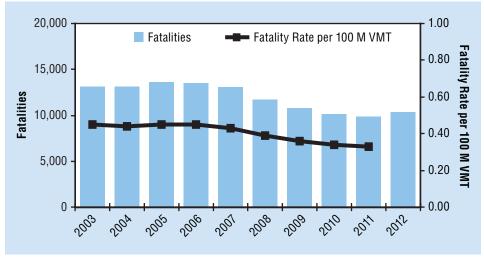
Table 1
Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08
Or Higher, 2012

| 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% | | |

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.

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 alcoholimpaired-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.



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.

 $^{\mbox{\scriptsize Table 2}}$ 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 | | | Change in | | | | | |
| Drivers Involved | Total Number | BAC=.08+ | | Total Number | BAC= | 08+ Percent | Percentage With BAC=.08+ | | | |
| In Fatal Crashes | of Drivers | Number | Percent of Total | of Drivers | Number | of Total | 2003-2012 | | | |
| Total | 58,517 | 12,035 | 21% | 45,337 | 9,678 | 21% | 0 | | | |
| | Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day | | | | | | | | | |
| Single-Vehicle Cra | ısh | | | | | | | | | |
| 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 C | rash | | | | | | | | | |
| 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 | | | |
| | | Dri | vers by Ti | me 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 | | | |

"The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2012 was nearly four times higher at night than during the day."

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.

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%).

 $^{\mbox{\scriptsize Table 3}}$ Drivers With a BAC of .08 or Higher Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age, Gender, And Vehicle Type, 2003 and 2012

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.

| | | | Total Dri | ivers | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | 2003 | | | Change in | | | | | |
| Drivers Involved | Total Number | BAC | =.08+ Percent | Total Number | BAC= | :.08+ Percent | Percentage With BAC=.08+ | | | |
| In Fatal Crashes | of Drivers | Number | of Total | of Drivers | Number | of Total | 2003-2012 | | | |
| 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 | | | |
| | | [| Orivers 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 | | | |

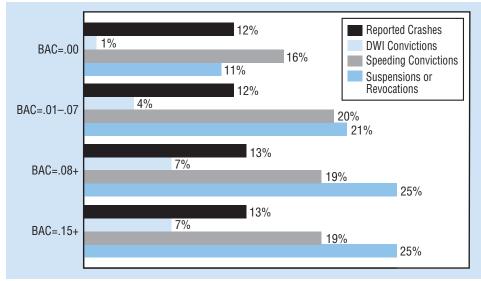
Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown/not reported or other data not included.

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.

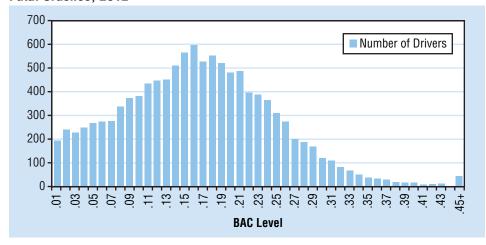
Figure 2 **Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by BAC, 2012**



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).

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Table 4
Traffic Fatalities by State and Highest Driver BAC in the Crash, 2012

| | Total Fatalities* | BAC=.00 | | BAC=.0107 | | BAC=.08+ | | BAC=.15+ | | BAC=.01+ | |
|------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| State | 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.