

Traffic Safety Facts 1995

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



Alcohol



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines a fatal traffic crash as being alcohol-related if either a driver or a nonoccupant (e.g., pedestrian) had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater in a police-reported traffic crash. Persons with a BAC of 0.10 g/dl or greater involved in fatal crashes are considered to be intoxicated. This is the legal limit of intoxication in most states.

Traffic fatalities in alcohol-related crashes rose by 4 percent from 1994 to 1995. The 17,274 alcohol-related fatalities in 1995 (41 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year) represent a 24 percent reduction from the 22,715 alcohol-related fatalities reported in 1985 (52 percent of the total).

NHTSA estimates that alcohol was involved in 41 percent of fatal crashes and in 7 percent of all crashes in 1995.

The 17,274 fatalities in alcohol-related crashes during 1995 represent an average of one alcohol-related fatality every 30 minutes.

More than 300,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present—an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes.

Approximately 1.4 million drivers were arrested in 1994 for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This is an arrest rate of 1 for every 127 licensed drivers in the United States (1995 data not yet available).

About 2 in every 5 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

In 1995, 32 percent of all traffic fatalities occurred in crashes in which at least one driver or nonoccupant had a BAC of 0.10 g/dl or greater. More than two-thirds of the 13,564 people killed in such crashes were themselves intoxicated. The remaining one-third were passengers, nonintoxicated drivers, or nonintoxicated nonoccupants.

Table 1. Types of Fatalities in Fatal Crashes Involving at Least One Intoxicated Driver or Nonoccupant, 1995

Type of Fatality	Number	Percent of Total
Intoxicated Drivers	7,550	56
Nonintoxicated Drivers	854	6
Passengers	2,682	20
Intoxicated Nonoccupants (Pedestrians and Pedalcyclists)	1,882	14
Nonintoxicated Nonoccupants	596	4
Total Fatalities	13,564	100

“There were 17,274 alcohol-related fatalities in 1995—41 percent of the total traffic fatalities for the year.”

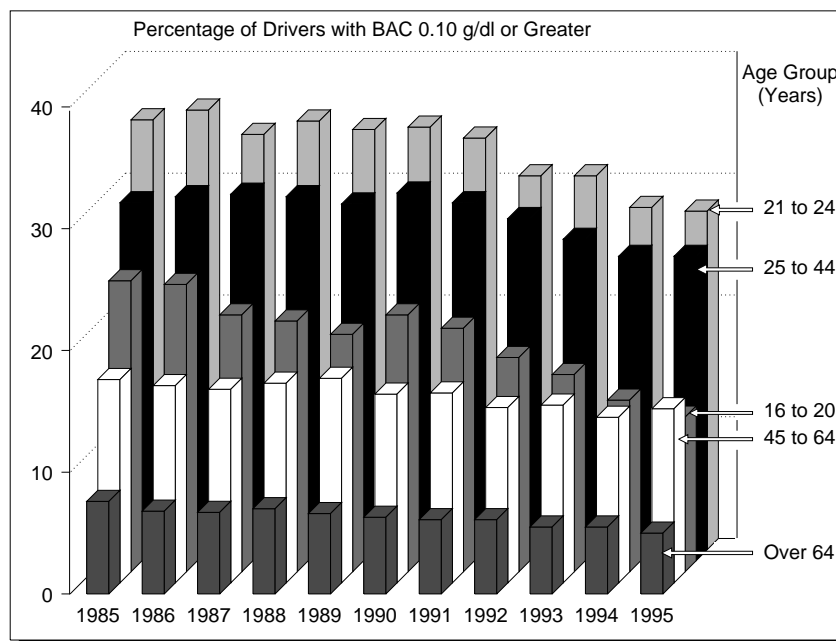
The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is three and one-third times as high at night as during the day (62.3 percent vs. 18.8 percent). For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is nearly 5 times as high at night (14 percent vs. 3 percent).

In 1995, 32 percent of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 54 percent on weekends. For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate was 5 percent during the week and 11 percent during the weekend.

From 1985 to 1995, intoxication rates decreased for drivers of all age groups involved in fatal crashes, with the youngest and oldest drivers experiencing the largest decreases. For drivers 65 and older, intoxication rates dropped from 7.6 percent in 1985 to 5.0 percent in 1995, a decline of 34 percent; for drivers 16 to 20 years of age, intoxication rates dropped by 47 percent, from 23.9 percent in 1985 to 12.7 percent in 1995.

“From 1985 to 1995, intoxication rates decreased for drivers of all age groups involved in fatal crashes.”

Figure 1. Intoxicated Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Age Group, 1985-1995



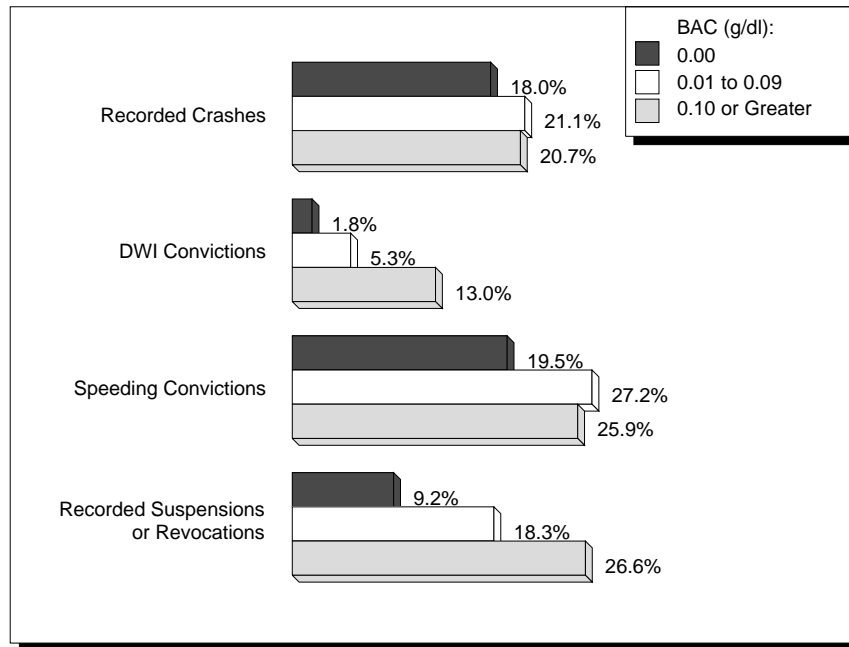
The highest intoxication rates in fatal crashes in 1995 were recorded for drivers 21-24 years old (27.8 percent), followed by ages 25-34 (26.8 percent) and 35-44 (22.8 percent). These three groups have also shown the smallest reductions since 1985 (21.3 percent, 17.3 percent, and 6.0 percent, respectively).

Intoxication rates for drivers in fatal crashes in 1995 were highest for motorcycle operators (29.1 percent) and lowest for drivers of large trucks (1.3 percent). The intoxication rate for drivers of light trucks was higher than that for passenger car drivers (22.4 percent and 19.2 percent, respectively).

Safety belts were used by only about 17.5 percent of the fatally injured *intoxicated* drivers (BAC of 0.10 g/dl or greater), compared to 29.1 percent of fatally injured *impaired* drivers (BAC between 0.01 g/dl and 0.09 g/dl) and 44.6 percent of fatally injured sober drivers.

Fatally injured drivers with BAC levels of 0.10 g/dl or greater were about 7 times as likely to have a prior conviction for driving while intoxicated compared to fatally injured sober drivers (13.0 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively).

Figure 2. Previous Driving Records of Drivers Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Blood Alcohol Concentration, 1995



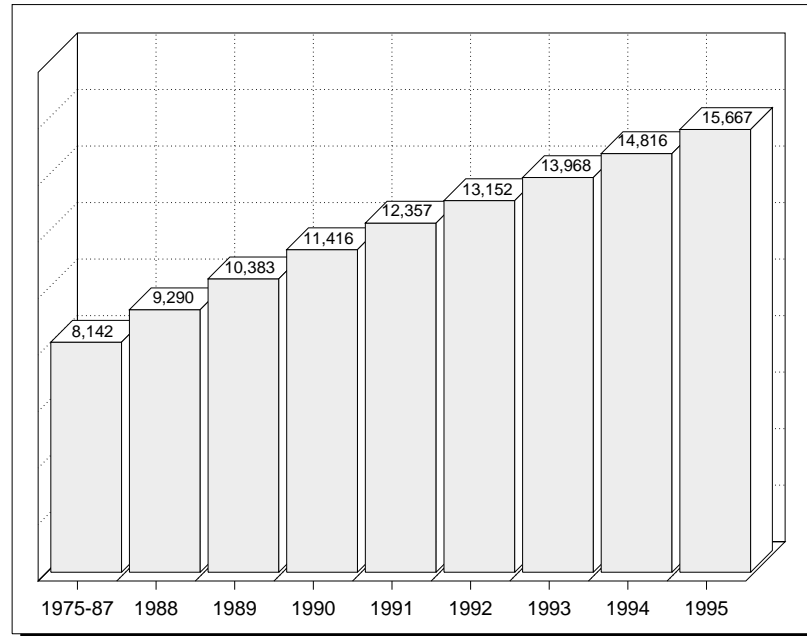
“More than one-third of all pedestrians 16 years of age or older killed in traffic crashes in 1995 were intoxicated.”

More than one-third of all pedestrians 16 years of age or older killed in traffic crashes in 1995 were intoxicated. By age group, the percentages ranged from a low of 10.8 for pedestrians 65 and over years and older to a high of 49.8 percent for those 25 to 34 years old.

The driver, pedestrian, or both were intoxicated in 39 percent of all fatal pedestrian crashes in 1995. In these crashes, the intoxication rate for pedestrians was more than twice the rate for drivers—31 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Both the pedestrian and the driver were intoxicated in 6 percent of the crashes that resulted in a pedestrian fatality.

All states and the District of Columbia now have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws. NHTSA estimates that these laws have reduced traffic fatalities involving drivers 18 to 20 years old by 13 percent and have saved an estimated 15,667 lives since 1975.

Figure 3. Cumulative Estimated Number of Lives Saved by Minimum Drinking Age Laws, 1975-1995



“NHTSA estimates that minimum drinking age laws have saved 15,667 lives since 1975.”

On the following pages, Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present summary data on alcohol involvement in fatal crashes in 1995, compared with 1985 data.

For more information:

Information on alcohol involvement in traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone inquiries should be addressed to Ms. Louann Hall at (202) 366-4198. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nrsa>. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

Table 2. Alcohol Involvement in Fatal Crashes, 1985 and 1995

	1985		1995		Change in Percentage, 1985-1995
	Number	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater *	Number	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater *	
Fatal Crashes	39,195	41.2	37,221	32.8	-20%
Total Fatalities	43,825	41.3	41,798	32.5	-21%

* For any person (occupant or nonoccupant) involved in the fatal crash.

Table 3. Alcohol Involvement for Drivers in Fatal Crashes, 1985 and 1995

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	1985		1995		Change in Percentage, 1985-1995
	Number of Drivers	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Drivers	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Total Drivers</i>					
Total *	57,883	25.7	56,155	19.3	-25%
<i>Drivers by Age Group (Years)</i>					
16-20	9,386	23.9	7,738	12.7	-47%
21-24	9,046	35.3	6,268	27.8	-21%
25-34	15,257	32.4	13,029	26.8	-17%
35-44	8,892	24.3	10,664	22.8	-6%
45-64	9,262	16.7	10,884	14.3	-14%
Over 64	4,479	7.6	6,238	5.0	-34%
<i>Drivers by Sex</i>					
Male	44,846	28.2	41,216	21.8	-23%
Female	12,142	15.5	14,179	11.2	-28%
<i>Drivers by Vehicle Type</i>					
Passenger Cars	34,071	26.1	30,692	19.2	-27%
Light Trucks	12,372	28.7	17,420	22.4	-22%
Large Trucks	5,091	3.6	4,391	1.3	-62%
Motorcycles	4,598	39.3	2,257	29.1	-26%

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

Table 4. Alcohol Involvement for Drivers Killed in Fatal Crashes, 1985 and 1995

Driver Fatalities	1985		1995		Change in Percentage, 1985-1995
	Number of Driver Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Driver Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Total Driver Fatalities</i>					
Total	25,337	38.7	24,398	30.9	-20%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Crash Type and Time of Day</i>					
Single-Vehicle	12,259	54.8	11,723	46.7	-15%
Daytime *	4,040	28.1	4,356	21.8	-22%
Nighttime **	7,995	68.1	7,081	61.6	-10%
Multiple-Vehicle	13,078	23.6	12,675	16.4	-31%
Daytime *	7,256	10.1	7,975	7.0	-31%
Nighttime **	5,811	40.5	4,692	32.4	-20%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Day of Week</i>					
Weekday ***	14,494	30.2	14,414	23.1	-23%
Weekend ****	10,837	50.1	9,976	42.3	-16%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Time of Day</i>					
Daytime *	11,296	16.5	12,331	12.2	-26%
Nighttime **	13,806	56.5	11,773	50.0	-12%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Day of Week and Time of Day</i>					
Weekday ***					
Daytime *	8,261	13.1	9,019	9.8	-25%
Nighttime **	6,133	52.7	5,276	45.1	-14%
Weekend ****					
Daytime *	3,035	25.9	3,312	18.7	-28%
Nighttime **	7,673	59.5	6,497	53.9	-9%

* 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

** 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

*** Monday 6:00 AM to Friday 6:00 PM.

**** Friday 6:00 PM to Monday 6:00 AM.

Table 5. Alcohol Involvement for Nonoccupants Killed in Fatal Crashes, 1985 and 1995

Nonoccupant Fatalities	1985		1995		Change in Percentage, 1985-1995
	Number of Nonoccupant Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Nonoccupant Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities by Age Group (Years)</i>					
16-20	500	38.8	294	31.0	-20%
21-24	523	54.8	293	46.4	-15%
25-34	1,040	51.5	831	49.8	-3%
35-44	757	49.2	954	48.3	-2%
45-64	1,265	42.2	1,140	37.4	-11%
Over 64	1,454	10.5	1,260	10.8	3%
Total *	6,808	32.1	5,585	30.7	-4%
<i>Pedalcyclist Fatalities</i>					
Total	890	12.3	830	19.6	60%

* Includes pedestrians under 16 years old and pedestrians of unknown age.

Table 6. Traffic Fatalities by State and Highest Blood Alcohol Concentration in the Crash, 1995

State	Total Traffic Fatalities	No Alcohol (BAC = 0.00 g/dl)		Low Alcohol (BAC = 0.01-0.09 g/dl)		High Alcohol (BAC ≥ 0.10 g/dl)		Any Alcohol (BAC ≥ 0.01 g/dl)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	1,113	651	58.4	81	7.3	381	34.3	462	41.6
Alaska	87	40	45.5	11	12.1	37	42.4	47	54.5
Arizona	1,031	584	56.6	100	9.7	347	33.7	447	43.4
Arkansas	631	414	65.7	69	10.9	148	23.4	217	34.3
California	4,192	2,472	59.0	412	9.8	1,308	31.2	1,720	41.0
Colorado	645	351	54.4	68	10.5	226	35.1	294	45.6
Connecticut	317	162	51.2	25	7.9	130	40.9	155	48.8
Delaware	121	71	58.5	13	10.4	38	31.0	50	41.5
District of Columbia	58	26	45.3	6	10.9	25	43.8	32	54.7
Florida	2,805	1,695	60.4	237	8.5	873	31.1	1,110	39.6
Georgia	1,488	966	64.9	122	8.2	400	26.9	522	35.1
Hawaii	130	66	50.7	23	17.8	41	31.5	64	49.3
Idaho	262	173	66.0	19	7.4	69	26.5	89	34.0
Illinois	1,586	905	57.1	130	8.2	551	34.7	681	42.9
Indiana	960	629	65.6	67	7.0	263	27.4	331	34.4
Iowa	527	308	58.4	61	11.5	159	30.1	219	41.6
Kansas	442	263	59.6	27	6.0	152	34.4	179	40.4
Kentucky	849	562	66.2	60	7.0	227	26.7	287	33.8
Louisiana	883	413	46.8	117	13.2	353	39.9	470	53.2
Maine	187	135	72.3	8	4.1	44	23.6	52	27.7
Maryland	671	437	65.2	57	8.5	176	26.3	234	34.8
Massachusetts	444	241	54.3	55	12.3	148	33.4	203	45.7
Michigan	1,530	914	59.7	133	8.7	483	31.6	616	40.3
Minnesota	597	332	55.7	50	8.4	215	36.0	265	44.3
Mississippi	868	507	58.4	55	6.4	306	35.2	361	41.6
Missouri	1,109	537	48.4	122	11.0	450	40.6	572	51.6
Montana	215	124	57.5	12	5.7	79	36.8	91	42.5
Nebraska	254	161	63.3	29	11.5	64	25.2	93	36.7
Nevada	313	159	50.6	27	8.7	127	40.7	154	49.4
New Hampshire	118	72	60.9	16	13.8	30	25.4	46	39.1
New Jersey	773	457	59.1	73	9.4	243	31.5	316	40.9
New Mexico	485	241	49.8	42	8.6	202	41.7	244	50.2
New York	1,674	1,132	67.6	138	8.2	405	24.2	542	32.4
North Carolina	1,448	959	66.3	89	6.2	399	27.6	489	33.7
North Dakota	74	31	42.1	10	14.1	32	43.9	43	57.9
Ohio	1,366	926	67.8	95	7.0	344	25.2	440	32.2
Oklahoma	669	418	62.5	46	6.9	205	30.7	251	37.5
Oregon	572	335	58.6	61	10.6	176	30.7	237	41.4
Pennsylvania	1,480	870	58.8	125	8.4	485	32.7	610	41.2
Rhode Island	69	40	58.4	7	10.1	22	31.5	29	41.6
South Carolina	881	600	68.2	51	5.8	229	26.0	281	31.8
South Dakota	158	87	55.0	8	5.4	63	39.7	71	45.0
Tennessee	1,259	747	59.3	92	7.3	420	33.3	512	40.7
Texas	3,181	1,399	44.0	375	11.8	1,407	44.2	1,782	56.0
Utah	326	240	73.7	17	5.1	69	21.2	86	26.3
Vermont	106	62	58.6	11	10.2	33	31.2	44	41.4
Virginia	900	542	60.2	86	9.5	272	30.3	358	39.8
Washington	653	336	51.5	68	10.5	248	38.0	317	48.5
West Virginia	376	216	57.3	28	7.4	132	35.2	160	42.7
Wisconsin	745	428	57.4	54	7.3	263	35.3	317	42.6
Wyoming	170	87	51.1	20	11.8	63	37.2	83	48.9
U.S. Total	41,798	24,524	58.7	3,710	8.9	13,564	32.5	17,274	41.3
Puerto Rico	595	273	45.9	88	14.8	234	39.3	322	54.1