Manner: TRAFFIC

During the calendar year 2005, the Medical Examiner's Office participated in the investigation of 226 traffic fatalities. There were 152 traffic deaths where the collision occurred in King County, compared to 127 in 2004, 112 in 2003, 121 in 2002 and 142 in 2001. In 2005, 33% (74/226) of the traffic deaths that the Medical Examiner investigated were the result of collisions that occurred outside of King County with the injured transported to hospitals in King County, primarily Harborview Medical Center. Because the death occurred in King County, it came under the jurisdiction of the King County Medical Examiner. This is comparable to 34% (65/192) in 2004, 37% (67/179) in 2003 and 40% (82/203) in 2002. Although these deaths are classified "accident" for death certification purposes, the more accurate term is "motor vehicle collision."

In 2005, 44% (99/226) of the traffic fatalities were motor vehicle drivers. Teenage drivers (16-19 years of age) were 5% (5/99) of the driver deaths in 2005 compared to 4% (3/78) in 2004, 15% (11/76) in 2003 and 9% (9/100) in 2002. By age, 28% percent of vehicle driver deaths (28/99) were people between the ages of 20 and 29. Twelve percent of driver deaths (12/99) were adults between the ages of 30 and 39. Thirteen percent (13/99) were adults between the ages of 40 and 49. Male drivers represented 86% (85/99) of driver deaths as compared to 14% for female drivers (14/99).

Of the 226 traffic fatalities in 2005, 47 were motor vehicle passengers, representing 21% of the total (47/226). In 2005, teenagers (13-19 years old) accounted for 9 motor vehicle passenger deaths. There were three passenger deaths of infants (less than one year of age), and no deaths of children between the ages of 1 - 5 years.

Blood ethanol (alcohol) statistics are presented to describe the role of alcohol in traffic deaths. However, it should be noted that in many cases someone other than the person who died was under the influence of alcohol and directly responsible for the accident. The Medical Examiner determines the blood alcohol levels of persons who die, not of everyone involved in the incident. In addition, blood alcohol is not tested in persons who die after surviving more than 24 hours, because in those deaths the alcohol has had time to metabolize[1]. Therefore, blood alcohol figures presented in this report are not a total description of the role of alcohol in traffic collisions. In 34% (26/76) of drivers tested, blood ethanol was present. In 23 vehicle driver deaths, no alcohol determination was performed. Passenger fatalities showed the presence of alcohol in 26% (9/35) of victims tested.

[1] See "Explanation of Data" for criteria for blood alcohol testing.

Of cases in which restraint status was known, 37% (32/87) of drivers in vehicle deaths were not restrained. This is comparable to 37% (25/68) in 2004, 37% (18/49) in 2003 and 43% (30/69) in 2002. Of the vehicle drivers who died at the scene of the collision and who tested positive for blood alcohol, 47% (8/17) were unrestrained.

Motorcycle riders accounted for 16% (36/226) of traffic fatalities. In 2005, there were 33 motorcycle driver fatalities and three motorcycle passenger fatalities. Thirty-one of the motorcycle driver deaths were male, and two were female. Of the 35 motorcycle fatalities in which helmet use was known, 97% (34/35) of the motorcyclists were wearing a helmet. Thirty-one of the motorcyclist fatalities were tested for the presence of blood alcohol. Eight, or 26% (8/31), had a detectable amount of alcohol at the time of autopsy.

Pedestrians constituted 16% (36/226) of traffic fatalities. The majority of pedestrian deaths, 56% (20/36), were male. Of the pedestrian fatalities that were tested, 31% (9/29) had detectable amounts of alcohol present in their blood at the time of death.

There were six bicyclist deaths in 2005. Four riders were wearing a helmet and two riders were not wearing helmets.

Graph 7-1 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

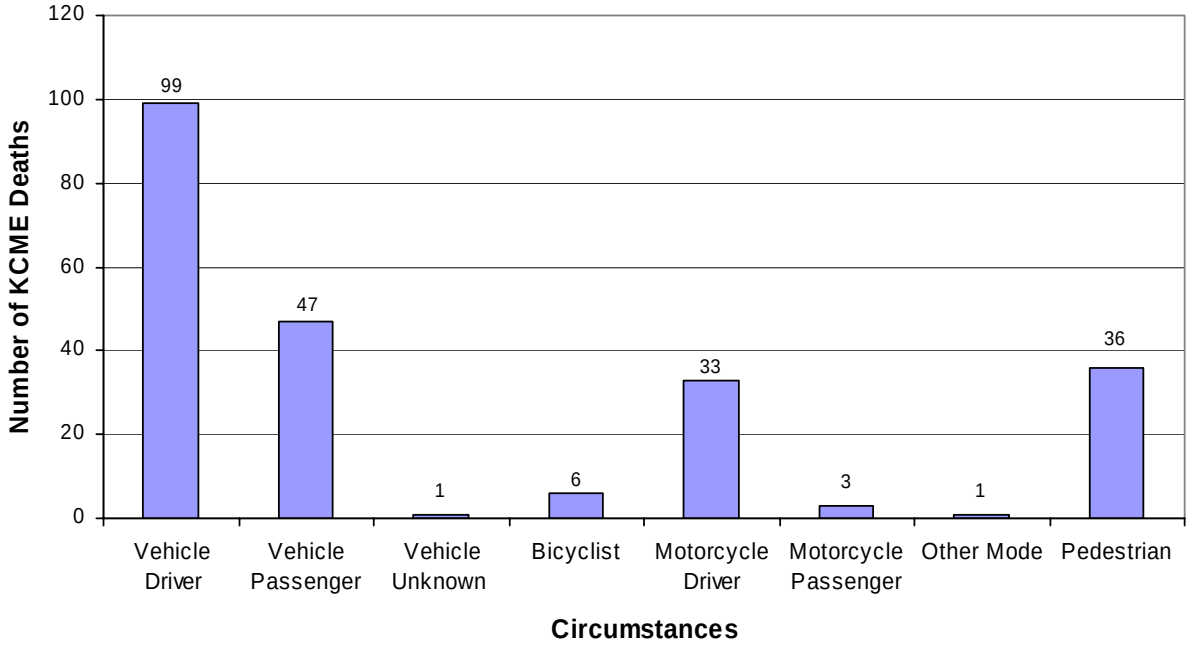
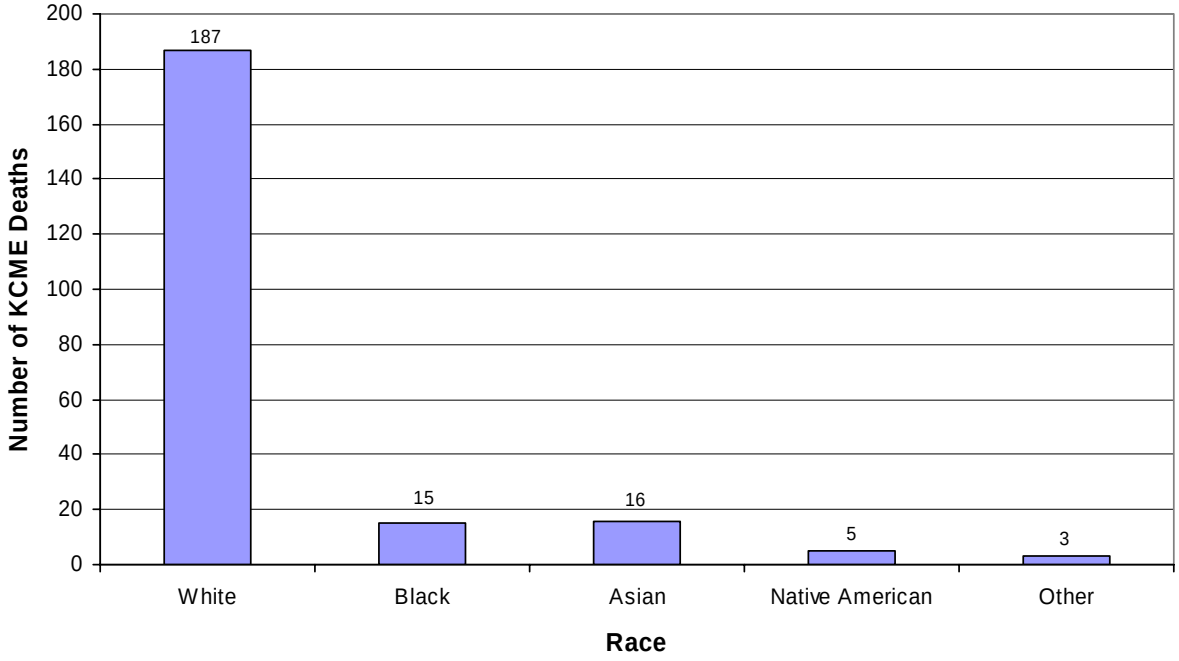


Table 7-1 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Race / Sex / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES / SEX	RACE						
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER	SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
Vehicle Driver	85	3	9	1	1		99
Male	*75*	*3*	*6*	*1*	*0*	*87*	
Female	*10*	*0*	*3*	*0*	*1*	*14*	
Vehicle Passenger	33	7	3	3	1		47
Male	*20*	*5*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*25*	
Female	*13*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*20*	
Vehicle Unknown	1	0	0	0	0		1
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Female	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	
Bicycle	5	0	1	0	0		6
Male	*3*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*4*	
Female	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	
Motorcycle Driver	28	4	1	0	0		33
Male	*26*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*31*	
Female	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	
Motorcycle Passenger	3	0	0	0	0		3
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Female	*3*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*	
Other Mode	1	0	0	0	0		1
Male	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Pedestrian	31	1	2	1	1		36
Male	*18*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*20*	
Female	*13*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*1*	*16*	
Totals	**187**	**15**	**16**	**5**	**3**		**226**
Percent	83%	7%	7%	2%	1%		100%

Graph 7-2 Traffic Fatalities / Race / King County Medical Examiner / 2005



Graph 7-3 Traffic Fatalities / Age / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

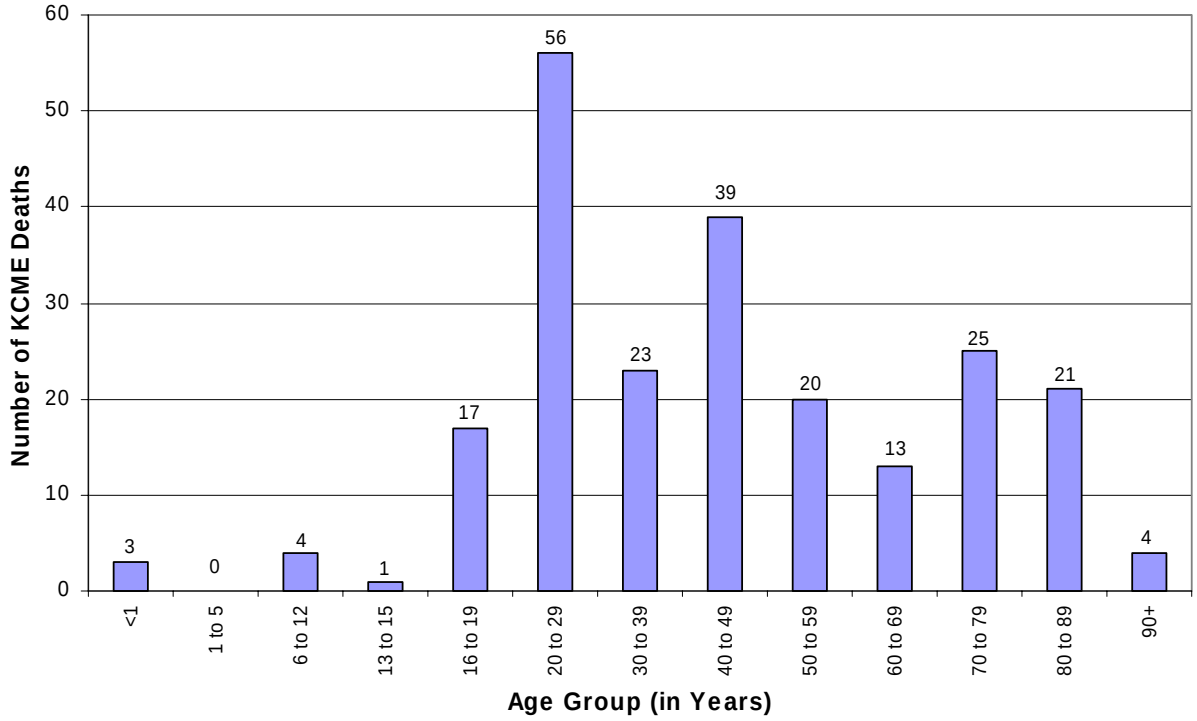


Table 7-2 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Age / Sex / KCME / 2005

Circumstances / Sex	AGE GROUP (YEARS) < 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +	SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
Vehicle Driver	0	0	0	0	5	28	12	13	8	8	13	10	2		99
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*23*	*12*	*13*	*6*	*5*	*11*	*9*	*2*	*85*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*14*	
Vehicle Passenger	3	0	2	1	8	14	4	4	0	1	2	7	1		47
Male	*1*	*0*	*2*	*1*	*8*	*6*	*3*	*3*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*2*	*0*	*27*	
Female	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*8*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*1*	*20*	
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	
Bicyclist	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	6
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	
Motorcycle Driver	0	0	0	0	2	10	5	8	7	1	0	0	0		33
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*10*	*4*	*7*	*7*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*31*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	
Motorcycle Passenger	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0		3
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*	
Other Mode	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Male	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
Pedestrian	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	10	3	3	10	4	1		36
Male	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*2*	*0*	*7*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*2*	*0*	*20*	
Female	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*5*	*2*	*1*	*16*	
Totals	**3**	**0**	**4**	**1**	**17**	**56**	**23**	**39**	**20**	**13**	**25**	**21**	**4**		**226**
Percent	1.3	0	1.8	0.4	7.5	24.8	10.1	17.3	8.8	5.8	11.1	9.3	1.8		100%

Table 7-3 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

	SEX		
CIRCUMSTANCES	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Vehicle Driver	85	14	99
Vehicle Passenger	27	20	47
Vehicle Unknown	0	1	1
Bicyclist	4	2	6
Motorcycle Driver	31	2	33
Motorcycle Passenger	0	3	3
Other Mode	1	0	1
Pedestrian	20	16	36
Totals	**168**	**58**	**226**
Percent	74%	26%	100%

Table 7-4 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Use of Restraint / Helmet / KCME / 2005[2]

CIRCUMSTANCES	Used Safety Device	No Safety Device Used	Unknown	TOTAL
Vehicle Driver	55	32	12	99
Vehicle Passenger	22	18	7	47
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	1	1
Bicyclist	4	2	0	6
Motorcycle Driver	31	1	1	33
Motorcycle Passenger	3	0	0	3
Other Mode	1	0	0	1
Totals	**116**	**53**	**21**	**190**
Percent	61%	28%	11%	100%

[2] Does not include pedestrian deaths.

Table 7-5 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Blood Alcohol / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	TESTED		NOT TESTED	TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE		
Vehicle Driver	26	50	23	99
Vehicle Passenger	9	26	12	47
Vehicle Unknown	0	1	0	1
Bicyclist	0	1	5	6
Motorcycle Driver	8	20	5	33
Motorcycle Passenger	0	3	0	3
Other Mode	1	0	0	1
Pedestrian	9	20	7	36
Totals	**53**	**121**	**52**	**226**
Percent	23%	54%	23%	100%

Table 7-6 Blood Alcohol Levels of Traffic Fatalities who died AT THE SCENE of the Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL (G%)					TOTAL
	NONE	.01-.09	.10-.19	.20-.29	.30+	
Vehicle Driver	26	2	10	5	0	43
Vehicle Passenger	7	4	4	2	0	17
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bicyclist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Driver	11	0	2	2	0	15
Motorcycle Passenger	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other Mode	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pedestrian	3	0	1	3	0	7
Totals	**48**	**6**	**18**	**12**	**0**	**84**
Percent	57%	7%	22%	14%	0%	100%

Graph 7-4 Blood Alcohol Levels of Traffic Fatalities who Died AT THE SCENE / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

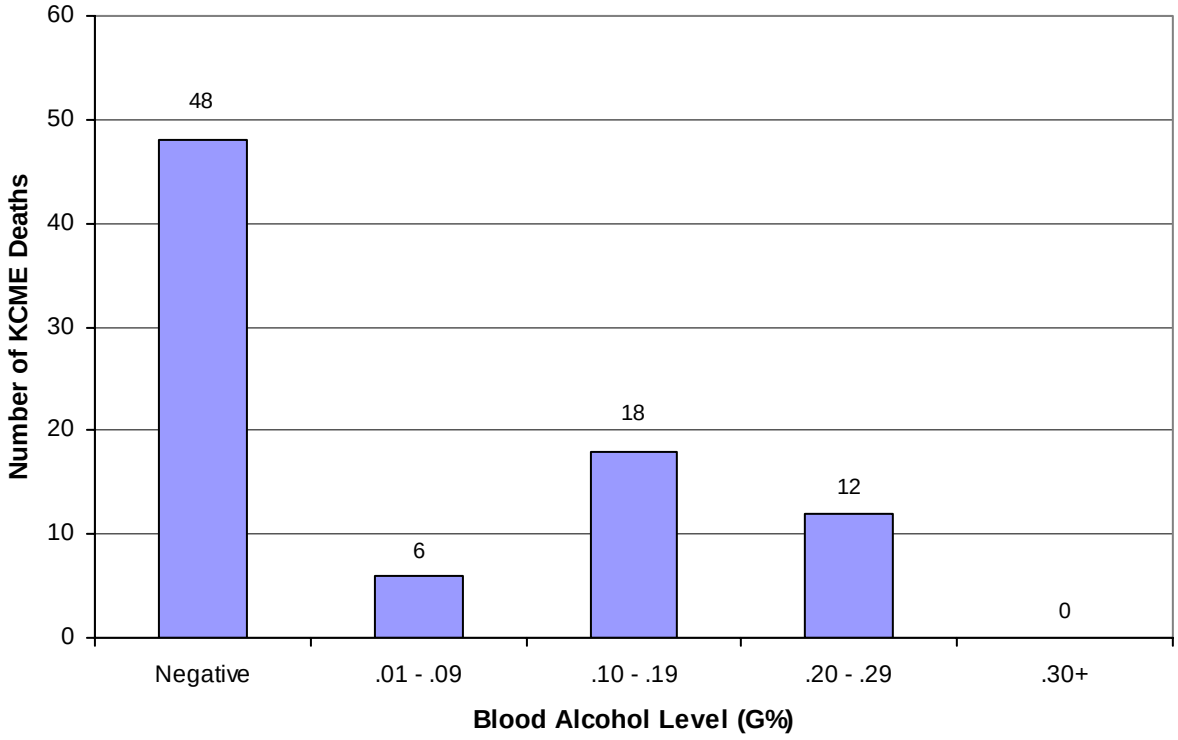


Table 7-7 Time of Fatal Traffic Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

TIME OF DAY	TOTAL	PERCENT
12:01 AM - 3:00 AM	43	19.0%
3:01 AM - 6:00 AM	18	8.0%
6:01 AM - 9:00 AM	17	7.5%
9:01 AM - Noon	17	7.5%
12:01 PM - 3:00 PM	30	13.3%
3:01 PM - 6:00 PM	43	19.0%
6:01 PM - 9:00 PM	24	10.6%
9:01 PM -Midnight	28	12.4%
Unknown	6	2.7%
TOTALS	**226**	100%

Graph 7-5 Time of Fatal Traffic Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2005