
Manner: TRAFFIC

During the calendar year 2004, the Medical Examiner's Office participated in the investigation of 192 traffic fatalities. There were 127 traffic deaths where the collision occurred in King County, compared to 112 in 2003, 121 in 2002 and 142 in 2001. In 2004, 34% (65/192) 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 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 2004, 41% (78/192) of the traffic fatalities were motor vehicle drivers. Teenage drivers (16-19 years of age) were 4% (3/78) of the driver deaths in 2004 compared to 15% (11/76) in 2003 and 9% (9/100) in 2002. By age, 31% percent of vehicle driver deaths (24/78) were people between the ages of 20 and 29. Thirteen percent of driver deaths (10/78) were adults between the ages of 30 and 39. Fifteen percent (12/78) were adults between the ages of 40 and 49. Male drivers represented 68% (53/78) of driver deaths as compared to 32% for female drivers (25/78).

Of the 192 traffic fatalities in 2004, 54 were passengers, representing 28% of the total (54/192). In 2004, teenagers (13-19 years old) accounted for 18 passenger deaths. There was one passenger death of an infant (less than one year of age), and three 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 metabolize¹. Therefore, blood alcohol figures presented in this report are not a total description of the role of alcohol in traffic collisions. In 39% (21/54) of drivers tested, blood ethanol was present. In 24 vehicle driver deaths, no alcohol determination was performed. Passenger fatalities showed the presence of alcohol in 41% (16/39) of victims tested.

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

Of cases in which restraint status was known, 37% (25/68) of drivers in vehicle deaths were not restrained. This is comparable to 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, 54% (7/13) were unrestrained.

Motorcycle riders accounted for 12% (23/192) of traffic fatalities. In 2004, there were 23 motorcycle driver fatalities and no passenger fatalities. Twenty-two of the motorcycle driver deaths were male, and one was female. Of the 21 motorcycle fatalities in which helmet use was known, 95% (20/21) of the motorcyclists were wearing a helmet. Twenty of the motorcyclist fatalities were tested for the presence of blood alcohol. Five, or 25% (5/20), had a detectable amount of alcohol at the time of autopsy.

Pedestrians constituted 16% (30/192) of traffic fatalities. The majority of pedestrian deaths, 60% (18/30), were male. Of the pedestrian fatalities that were tested, 36% (9/25) had detectable amounts of alcohol present in their blood at the time of death.

There were five bicyclist deaths in 2004. Two riders were wearing a helmet and three riders were not wearing helmets.

Graph 7-1 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

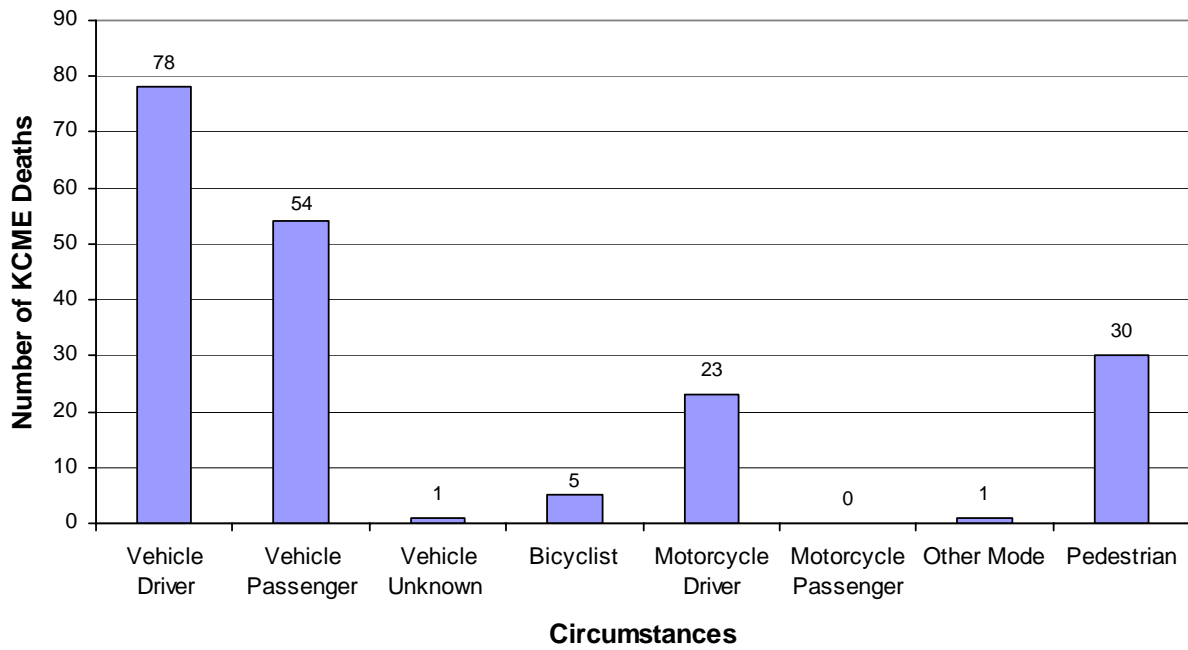
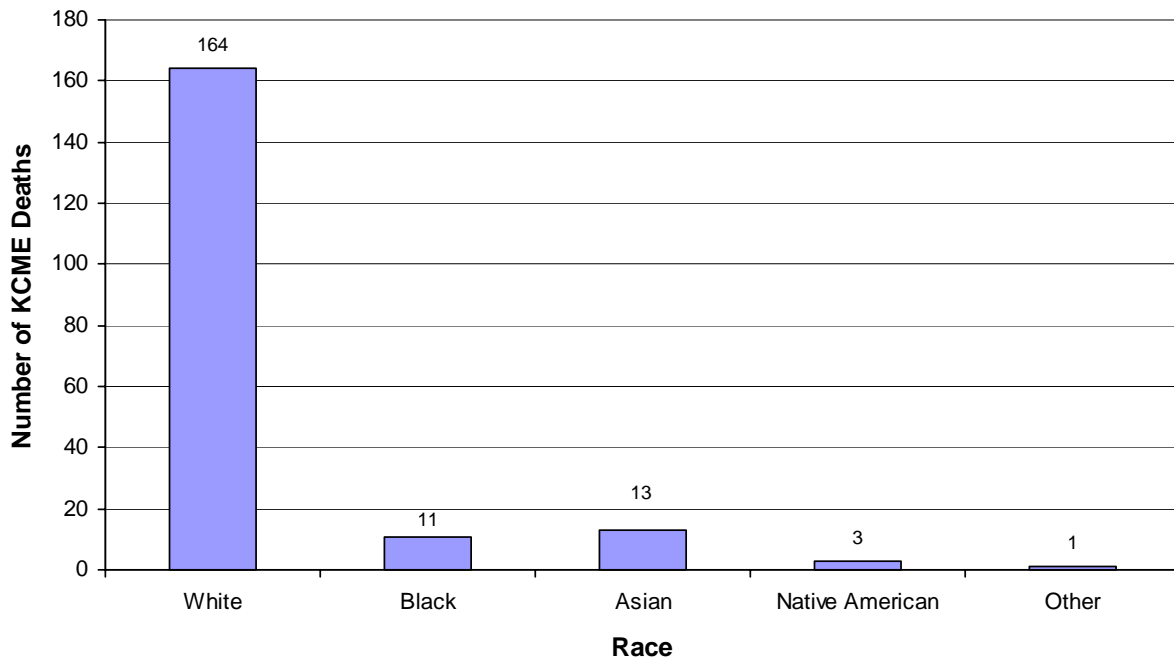


Table 7-1 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Race / Sex / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES / SEX	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Vehicle Driver	69	4	4	0	1		78
<i>Male</i>	46	4	2	0	1	53	
<i>Female</i>	23	0	2	0	0	25	
Vehicle Passenger	45	2	4	3	0		54
<i>Male</i>	24	1	1	1	0	27	
<i>Female</i>	21	1	3	2	0	27	
Vehicle Unknown	0	1	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bicycle	5	0	0	0	0		5
<i>Male</i>	5	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Motorcycle Driver	21	2	0	0	0		23
<i>Male</i>	20	2	0	0	0	22	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Motorcycle Passenger	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Mode	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pedestrian	23	2	5	0	0		30
<i>Male</i>	14	2	2	0	0	18	
<i>Female</i>	9	0	3	0	0	12	
Totals	164	11	13	3	1		192
Percent	85.4%	5.7%	6.8%	1.6%	0.5%		100%

Graph 7-2 Traffic Fatalities / Race / King County Medical Examiner / 2004



Graph 7-3 Traffic Fatalities / Age / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

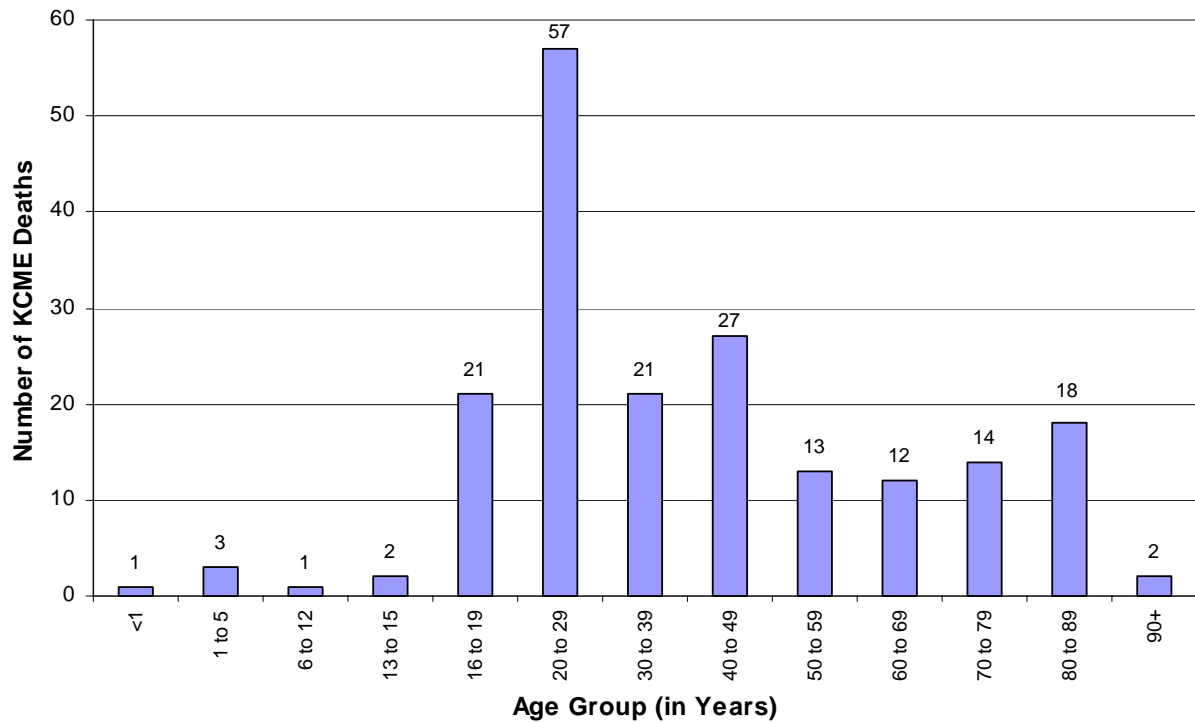


Table 7-2 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Age / Sex / KCME / 2004

Circumstances / Sex	AGE GROUP (YEARS)													SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 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 +		
Vehicle Driver	0	0	0	0	3	24	10	12	5	5	8	10	1	78	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	3	18	6	6	3	5	5	7	0	53	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	6	2	0	3	3	1	25	
Vehicle Passenger	1	3	0	1	17	19	2	2	2	1	4	2	0	54	
<i>Male</i>	1	1	0	1	8	11	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	27	
<i>Female</i>	0	2	0	0	9	8	2	0	1	0	3	2	0	27	
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bicyclist	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Motorcycle Driver	0	0	0	0	1	10	2	6	3	1	0	0	0	23	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	6	3	1	0	0	0	22	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Motorcycle Passenger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Mode	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pedestrian	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	5	3	5	2	6	0	30	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	2	6	0	18	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	12	
Totals	1	3	1	2	21	57	21	27	13	12	14	18	2	192	
Percent	0.5	1.6	0.5	1.0	10.9	29.7	11	14	6.8	6.3	7.3	9.4	1.0	100%	

Table 7-3 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	SEX		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Vehicle Driver	53	25	78
Vehicle Passenger	27	27	54
Vehicle Unknown	1	0	1
Bicyclist	5	0	5
Motorcycle Driver	22	1	23
Motorcycle Passenger	-	-	-
Other Mode	1	0	1
Pedestrian	18	12	30
Totals	127	65	192
Percent	66%	34%	100%

Table 7-4 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Use of Restraint / Helmet / KCME / 2004²

CIRCUMSTANCES	Use of Restraint / Helmet			TOTAL
	Used Safety Device	No Safety Device Used	Unknown	
Vehicle Driver	43	25	10	78
Vehicle Passenger	33	16	5	54
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	1	1
Bicyclist	2	3	0	5
Motorcycle Driver	20	1	2	23
Motorcycle Passenger	-	-	-	-
Other Mode	0	1	0	1
Totals	98	46	18	162
Percent	61%	28%	11%	100%

² Does not include pedestrian deaths.

Table 7-5 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / Blood Alcohol / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	TESTED		NOT TESTED	TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE		
Vehicle Driver	21	33	24	78
Vehicle Passenger	16	23	15	54
Vehicle Unknown	0	1	0	1
Bicyclist	2	3	0	5
Motorcycle Driver	5	15	3	23
Motorcycle Passenger	-	-	-	0
Other Mode	0	1	0	1
Pedestrian	9	16	5	30
Totals	53	92	47	192
Percent	28%	48%	24%	100%

Table 7-6 Blood Alcohol Levels of Traffic Fatalities who died AT THE SCENE of the Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL (G%)					TOTAL
	NONE	.01-.09	.10-.19	.20-.29	.30+	
Vehicle Driver	12	2	4	8	0	26
Vehicle Passenger	10	2	5	0	0	17
Vehicle Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bicyclist	1	0	0	0	0	1
Motorcycle Driver	4	0	1	0	0	5
Motorcycle Passenger	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Mode	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pedestrian	6	0	2	2	1	11
Totals	33	4	12	10	1	60
Percent	55%	6.5%	20%	17%	1.5%	100%

Graph 7-4 Blood Alcohol Levels of Traffic Fatalities who Died AT THE SCENE / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

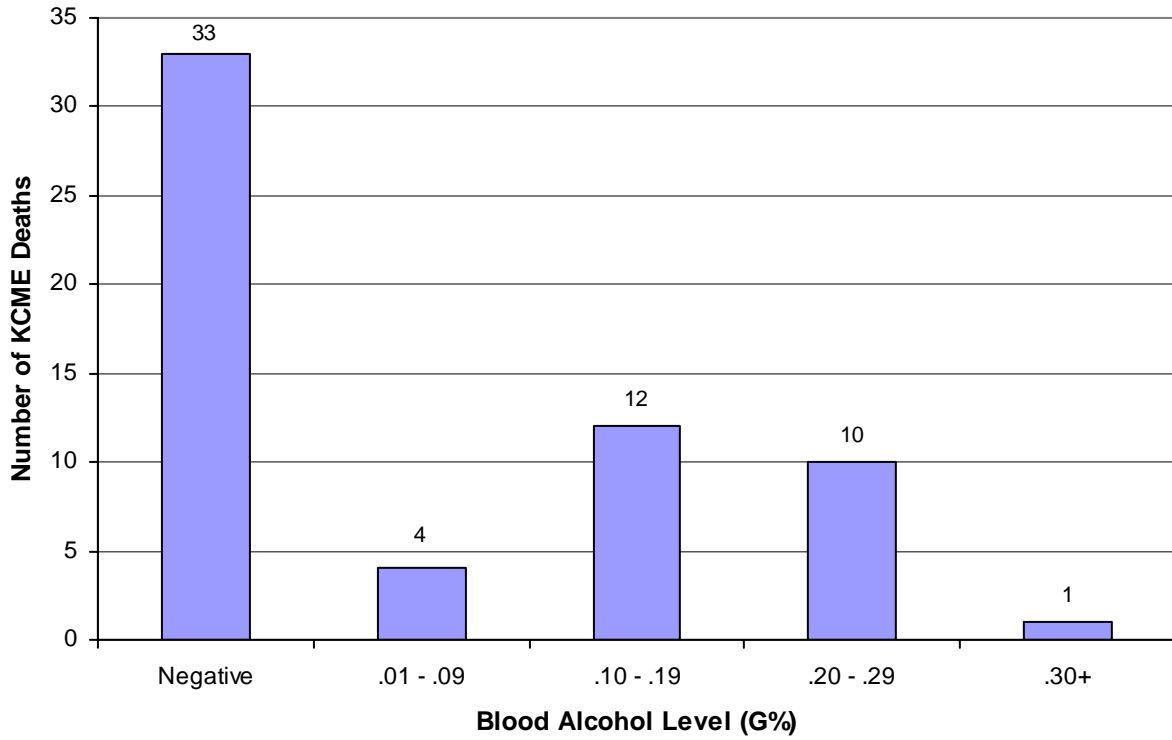


Table 7-7 Time of Fatal Traffic Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

TIME OF DAY	TOTAL	PERCENT
12:01 AM - 3:00 AM	33	17%
3:01 AM - 6:00 AM	16	8%
6:01 AM - 9:00 AM	16	8%
9:01 AM - Noon	20	11%
12:01 PM - 3:00 PM	28	15%
3:01 PM - 6:00 PM	35	18%
6:01 PM - 9:00 PM	24	13%
9:01 PM -Midnight	16	8%
Unknown	4	2%
TOTALS	192	100%

Graph 7-5 Time of Fatal Traffic Collision / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

