



Traffic Safety Facts 2000

Older Population



There are more than 25 million people age 70 years and older in the United States. In 2000, this age group made up 9.2 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 8.5 percent in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, this older segment of the population grew nearly twice as fast as the total population.

There were 18.5 million older licensed drivers in 1999 (2000 data not available) — a 39 percent increase from the number in 1989. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 13 percent from 1989 to 1999. Older drivers made up 10 percent of all licensed drivers in 1999, compared with 8 percent in 1989.

In 2000, 181,000 older individuals were injured in traffic crashes, accounting for 6 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes during the year. These older individuals made up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities, 12 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 17 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 2000 occurred during the daytime (81 percent), on weekdays (71 percent), and involved another vehicle (76 percent).

In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was more than 3 times as likely to be the one that was struck (57 percent and 18 percent, respectively). In 44 percent of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 27 percent, the older driver was turning left — 6 times as often as the younger driver.

Older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest proportion of intoxication — with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater — of all adult drivers. Fatally injured older pedestrians also had the lowest intoxication rate of all adult pedestrian fatalities.

Table 1. Age and Alcohol, 2000

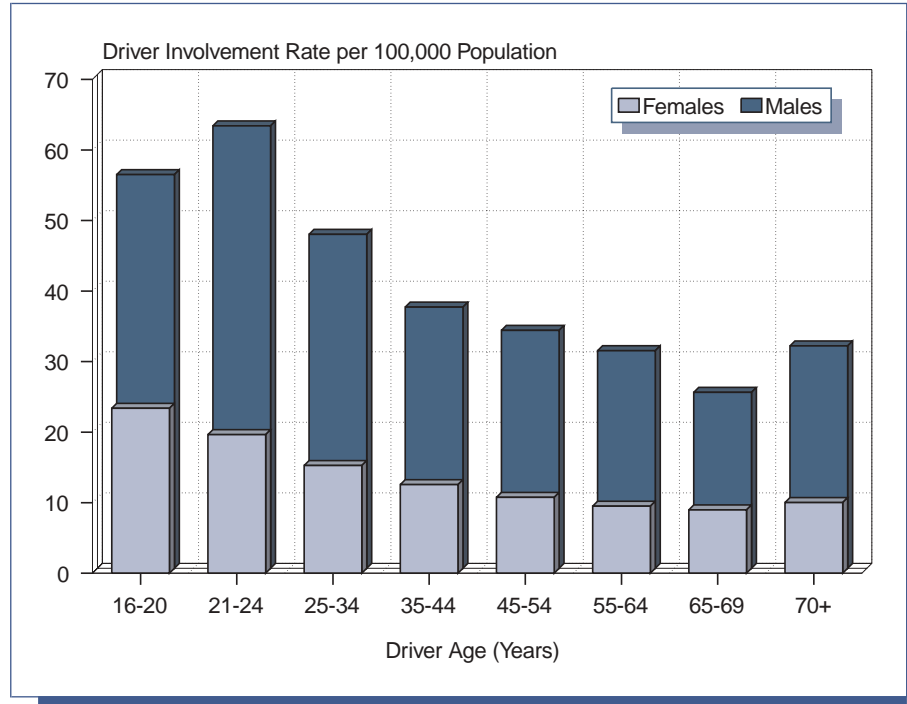
Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated
<16	317	11	4	517	20	4
16-20	7,956	1,162	15	260	79	30
21-34	17,525	4,417	25	835	405	48
35-54	19,178	3,700	19	1,604	685	43
55-69	6,253	609	10	650	164	25
70+	4,691	197	4	804	55	7
Total	*57,090	10,408	18	**4,739	1,438	30

*Includes 1,170 drivers of unknown age.

**Includes 69 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

“In 2000, older people made up 9 percent of the resident population but accounted for 13 percent of all traffic fatalities and 17 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.”

Figure 1. Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 2000

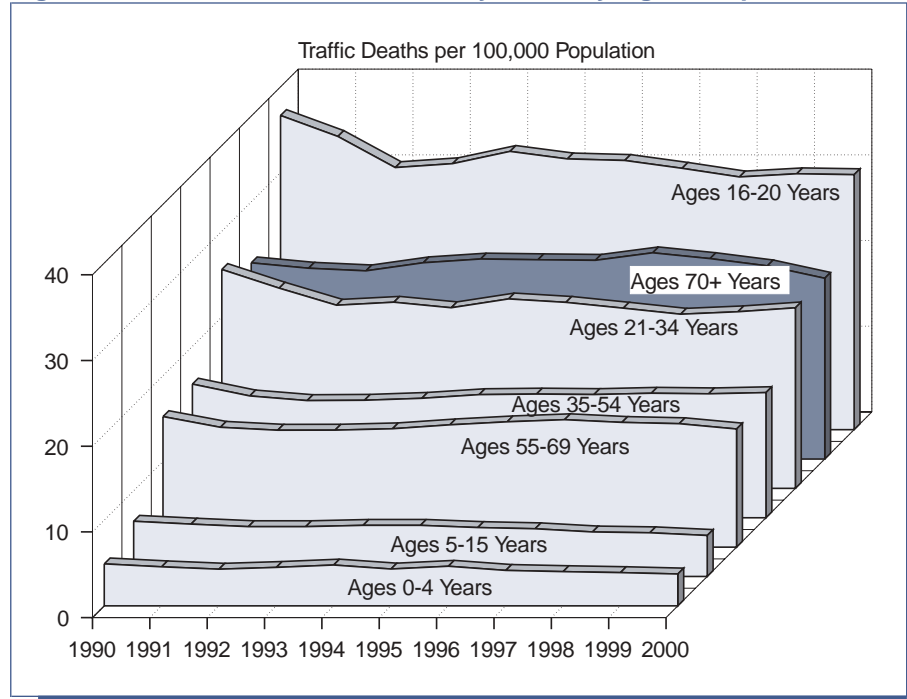


“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2000 had the lowest proportion of intoxication of all adult drivers.”

Almost three-fourths (73 percent) of all older occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes were using restraints at the time of the crash, compared to 57 percent for other adult occupants (18 to 69 years old).

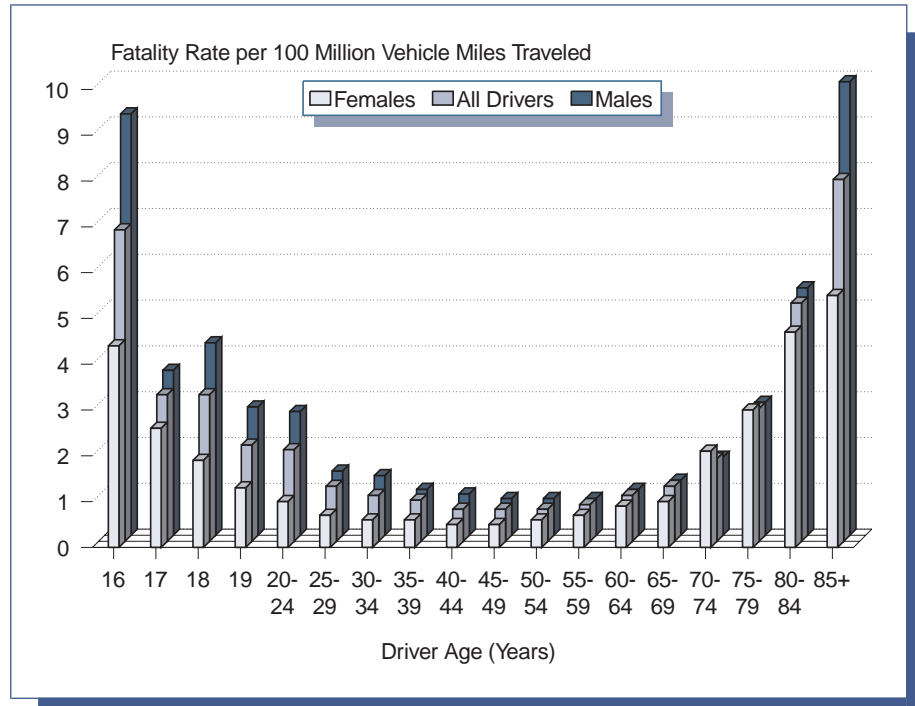
For older people, 66 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 2000 occurred at non-intersection locations. For other pedestrians, 80 percent of fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations.

Figure 2. Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates by Age Group, 1990-2000



When driver fatality rates are calculated on the basis of estimated annual travel, the highest rates are found among the youngest and oldest drivers. Compared with the fatality rate for drivers 25 through 69 years old, the rate for drivers in the oldest group is 9 times as high.

Figure 3. Driver Fatality Rates by Age and Sex, 1996



“On the basis of estimated annual travel, the fatality rate for drivers 85 and over is 9 times as high as the rate for drivers 25 through 69 years old.”

For more information:

Information on the older population is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. NCSA information can also be obtained by telephone or by fax-on-demand at 1-800-934-8517. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at <http://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 1-800-424-9393.

Table 2. Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1990 and 2000

	1990			2000			Percentage Change, 1990-2000		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<i>Population (thousands)</i>									
Total	249,464	21,164	8.5	274,634	25,300	9.2	+10%	+20%	+8%
Male	121,626	8,053	6.6	134,181	10,025	7.5	+10%	+24%	+14%
Female	127,838	13,111	10.3	140,453	15,275	10.9	+10%	+17%	+6%
<i>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</i>									
Total	58,893	3,793	6.4	57,090	4,691	8.2	-3%	+24%	+28%
Male	44,281	2,614	5.9	41,407	3,161	7.6	-6%	+21%	+29%
Female	13,726	1,179	8.6	14,654	1,530	10.4	+7%	+30%	+21%
<i>Driver Fatalities</i>									
Total	25,750	2,393	9.3	25,492	3,136	12.3	-1%	+31%	+32%
Male	19,610	1,632	8.3	18,762	2,100	11.2	-4%	+29%	+35%
Female	6,137	761	12.4	6,566	1,036	15.8	+7%	+36%	+27%
<i>Total Traffic Fatalities</i>									
Total	44,599	4,844	10.9	41,821	5,335	12.8	-6%	+10%	+17%
Male	30,916	2,647	8.6	28,280	2,984	10.6	-9%	+13%	+23%
Female	13,665	2,197	16.1	13,285	2,351	17.7	-3%	+7%	+10%
<i>Occupant Fatalities</i>									
Total	37,134	3,598	9.7	36,249	4,474	12.3	-2%	+24%	+27%
Male	25,605	1,958	7.6	24,343	2,489	10.2	-5%	+27%	+34%
Female	11,513	1,640	14.2	11,675	1,985	17.0	+1%	+21%	+20%
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities</i>									
Total	6,482	1,195	18.4	4,739	804	17.0	-27%	-33%	-8%
Male	4,495	649	14.4	3,220	445	13.8	-28%	-31%	-4%
Female	1,985	546	27.5	1,500	359	23.9	-24%	-34%	-13%