

Traffic Safety Facts 1995

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



Pedalcyclists



The first automobile crash in the United States occurred in New York City in 1896, when a motor vehicle collided with a pedalcycle rider (*Famous First Facts*, by Joseph Kane).

Nearly 44,000 pedalcyclists have died in traffic crashes in the United States since 1932—the first year in which estimates of pedalcyclist fatalities were recorded. The 350 pedalcyclists killed in 1932 accounted for 1.3 percent of the 27,979 persons who died in traffic crashes that year.

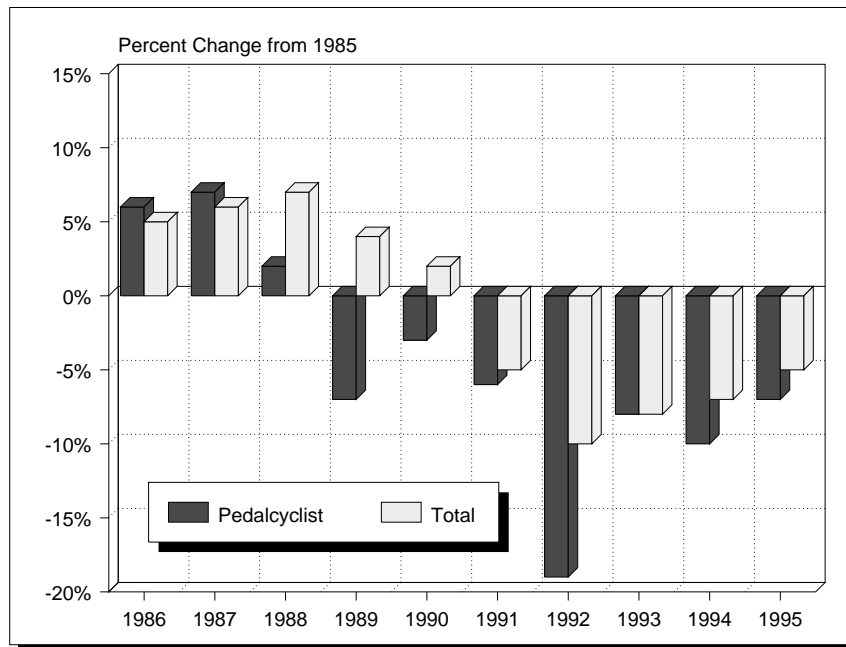
In 1995, 61,000 pedalcyclists were injured and 830 were killed in traffic crashes. Pedalcyclists made up 2 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes, and pedalcyclist deaths accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities during the year.

The number of pedalcyclist fatalities in 1995 was 7 percent lower than the 890 fatalities reported in 1985. The highest number of pedalcyclist fatalities ever recorded in the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) was 1,003 in 1975.

In 1985, the average age of pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes was 23.3 years; in 1995 the average age of those killed was 29.6 years, and the average age of those injured was 22.1 years.

“The 830 pedalcyclist deaths in 1995 accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities during the year.”

Figure 1. Trends in Pedalcyclist and Total Traffic Fatalities, 1985-1995



Pedalcyclists accounted for 13 percent of all nonmotorist traffic fatalities in 1995. Pedestrians accounted for 86 percent, and the remaining 2 percent were skateboard riders, roller skaters, etc.

Table 1. Nonoccupant Traffic Fatalities, 1985-1995

Year	Pedestrian	Pedalcyclist	Other	Total
1985	6,808	890	84	7,782
1986	6,779	941	133	7,853
1987	6,745	948	132	7,825
1988	6,870	911	136	7,917
1989	6,556	832	107	7,495
1990	6,482	859	124	7,465
1991	5,801	843	124	6,768
1992	5,549	723	98	6,370
1993	5,649	816	111	6,576
1994	5,489	802	107	6,398
1995	5,585	830	109	6,524

Pedalcyclist fatalities occurred more frequently in urban areas (66 percent), at nonintersection locations (68 percent), between the hours of 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM (33 percent), and during the months of June, July, and August (37 percent).

Most of the pedalcyclists injured or killed in 1995 were males (80 percent and 85 percent, respectively), and most were between the ages of 5 and 44 years (91 percent and 77 percent).

The pedalcyclist injury rate per capita was more than 4 times as high for males as for females, and the fatality rate per capita was nearly 6 times as high for males as for females.

Pedalcyclists under age 16 accounted for 47 percent of all pedalcyclists injured and 34 percent of those killed in traffic crashes in 1995. In comparison, pedalcyclists under age 16 accounted for 49 percent of all those killed in 1985.

Pedalcyclists 25 years of age and older have made up an increasing proportion of all pedalcyclist deaths since 1985. The proportion of pedalcyclist fatalities age 25 to 64 was nearly twice as high in 1995 as in 1985 (46 percent and 25 percent, respectively).

Almost one-third (32 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1995 were between 5 and 15 years old. The pedalcyclist fatality rate for this age group was 6.3 per million population—twice the rate for all pedalcyclists (3.2 per million population). The injury rate for this age group was 664 per million population, compared with 233 per million population for pedalcyclists of all ages.

For 72 percent of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1995, police reported one or more errors or other factors related to the cyclist's behavior. The factor most often noted was "failure to yield right-of-way" (24 percent), followed by "walking with or against traffic, playing, working, sitting, lying, standing, etc., in roadway" (17 percent), and "improper crossing of the roadway or intersection" (14 percent). Fewer than half of the drivers involved were cited by police for driving errors or other factors related to driver behavior. The factors most often noted for drivers were "driving too fast for conditions or exceeding the speed limit" (12 percent), "inattentive (talking, eating, etc.)" (8 percent), and "failure to keep in proper lane or running off road" (8 percent).

“Nearly one-third of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1995 were between 5 and 15 years old.”

“Alcohol involvement was reported in more than one-third of the pedalcyclist fatalities in 1995.”

Alcohol involvement—either for the driver or the pedalcyclist—was reported in more than one-third of the traffic crashes that resulted in pedalcyclist fatalities in 1995. In 29 percent of the crashes, either the driver or the cyclist was intoxicated, with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater. Lower alcohol levels (BAC 0.01 to 0.09 g/dl) were reported in an additional 8 percent. Nearly one-fourth (24.7 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed had a BAC of 0.01 g/dl or greater, and nearly one-fifth (19.6 percent) were intoxicated.

Table 2. Pedalcyclist Fatalities and Injuries and Fatality and Injury Rates by Age and Sex, 1995

Age (years)	Male			Female			Total		
	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*
0-4	12	10,025	1.20	2	9,566	0.21	14	19,591	0.71
5-9	76	9,843	7.72	25	9,377	2.67	101	19,220	5.25
10-15	136	11,629	11.70	29	11,076	2.62	165	22,704	7.27
16-20	52	9,142	5.69	7	8,696	0.80	59	17,839	3.31
21-24	37	7,266	5.09	7	7,052	0.99	44	14,318	3.07
25-34	113	20,432	5.53	15	20,441	0.73	128	40,873	3.13
35-44	123	21,062	5.84	19	21,406	0.89	142	42,468	3.34
45-54	58	15,182	3.82	11	15,897	0.69	69	31,079	2.22
55-64	42	10,044	4.18	2	11,087	0.18	44	21,131	2.08
65-69	12	4,506	2.66	2	5,422	0.37	14	9,928	1.41
70-79	21	6,557	3.20	4	8,956	0.45	25	15,512	1.61
80+	13	2,626	4.95	2	5,466	0.37	15	8,092	1.85
Unknown	8	--	--	1	--	--	** 10	--	--
Total	703	128,314	5.48	126	134,441	0.94	830	262,755	3.16

Age (years)	Male			Female			Total		
	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*
0-4	***	10,025	25	1,000	9,566	68	1,000	19,591	46
5-9	5,000	9,843	477	2,000	9,377	221	7,000	19,220	352
10-15	17,000	11,629	1,472	4,000	11,076	356	21,000	22,704	927
16-20	6,000	9,142	650	2,000	8,696	182	8,000	17,839	422
21-24	4,000	7,266	616	1,000	7,052	159	6,000	14,318	391
25-34	6,000	20,432	292	1,000	20,441	65	7,000	40,873	178
35-44	6,000	21,062	291	1,000	21,406	44	7,000	42,468	167
45-54	2,000	15,182	162	***	15,897	22	3,000	31,079	91
55-64	1,000	10,044	56	***	11,087	4	1,000	21,131	29
65-69	***	4,506	45	***	5,422	9	***	9,928	25
70-79	1,000	6,557	155	***	8,956	0	1,000	15,512	65
80+	***	2,626	37	***	5,466	14	***	8,092	21
Total	49,000	128,314	381	12,000	134,441	91	61,000	262,755	233

* Rate per million population.
 ** Includes one fatality of unknown sex.
 *** Less than 500 injuries.
 Source: Population—Bureau of the Census projections.

For more information:

Information on pedalcyclist 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 3. Pedalcyclist Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rates by State, 1995

State	Total Traffic Fatalities	Resident Population (thousands)	Pedalcyclist Fatalities	Percent of Total	Pedalcyclist Fatalities per Million Population
Alabama	1,113	4,253	6	0.5	1.41
Alaska	87	604	2	2.3	3.31
Arizona	1,031	4,218	30	2.9	7.11
Arkansas	631	2,484	5	0.8	2.01
California	4,192	31,589	136	3.2	4.31
Colorado	645	3,747	10	1.6	2.67
Connecticut	317	3,275	7	2.2	2.14
Delaware	121	717	1	0.8	1.39
District of Columbia	58	554	1	1.7	1.80
Florida	2,805	14,166	148	5.3	10.45
Georgia	1,488	7,201	19	1.3	2.64
Hawaii	130	1,187	5	3.8	4.21
Idaho	262	1,163	2	0.8	1.72
Illinois	1,586	11,830	27	1.7	2.28
Indiana	960	5,803	14	1.5	2.41
Iowa	527	2,842	7	1.3	2.46
Kansas	442	2,565	6	1.4	2.34
Kentucky	849	3,860	4	0.5	1.04
Louisiana	883	4,342	27	3.1	6.22
Maine	187	1,241	1	0.5	0.81
Maryland	671	5,042	8	1.2	1.59
Massachusetts	444	6,074	8	1.8	1.32
Michigan	1,530	9,549	30	2.0	3.14
Minnesota	597	4,610	5	0.8	1.08
Mississippi	868	2,697	6	0.7	2.22
Missouri	1,109	5,324	10	0.9	1.88
Montana	215	870	1	0.5	1.15
Nebraska	254	1,637	4	1.6	2.44
Nevada	313	1,530	3	1.0	1.96
New Hampshire	118	1,148	0	0.0	0.00
New Jersey	773	7,945	19	2.5	2.39
New Mexico	485	1,685	6	1.2	3.56
New York	1,674	18,136	50	3.0	2.76
North Carolina	1,448	7,195	35	2.4	4.86
North Dakota	74	641	1	1.4	1.56
Ohio	1,366	11,151	20	1.5	1.79
Oklahoma	669	3,278	3	0.4	0.92
Oregon	572	3,141	9	1.6	2.87
Pennsylvania	1,480	12,072	19	1.3	1.57
Rhode Island	69	990	0	0.0	0.00
South Carolina	881	3,673	11	1.2	2.99
South Dakota	158	729	1	0.6	1.37
Tennessee	1,259	5,256	14	1.1	2.66
Texas	3,181	18,724	52	1.6	2.78
Utah	326	1,951	9	2.8	4.61
Vermont	106	585	0	0.0	0.00
Virginia	900	6,618	16	1.8	2.42
Washington	653	5,431	13	2.0	2.39
West Virginia	376	1,828	1	0.3	0.55
Wisconsin	745	5,123	17	2.3	3.32
Wyoming	170	480	1	0.6	2.08
U.S. Total	41,798	262,755	830	2.0	3.16
Puerto Rico	595	3,755	12	2.0	3.20

Note: Totals may not equal sum of components due to independent rounding.

Sources: Fatalities—Fatal Accident Reporting System, NHTSA. Population—Bureau of the Census.