

Alcohol-Impaired Driving

Fatal Crashes and Fatalities Involving Alcohol-Impaired Drivers

In 2006, 13,470 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 32 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States.

Traffic fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes fell by 0.8 percent, from 13,582 in 2005 to 13,470 in 2006. The 13,470 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in 2006 were almost the same as compared to 13,451 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities reported in 1996.

Drivers are considered to be alcohol-impaired when their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Thus, any fatality occurring in a crash involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher is considered to be an alcohol-impaired-driving fatality. The term "driver" refers to the operator of any motor vehicle, including a motorcycle.

Estimates of alcohol-impaired driving are generated using BAC values reported to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and imputed BAC values when they are not reported. The term "alcohol-impaired" does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was caused by alcohol impairment.

The 13,470 fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes during 2006 represent an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 39 minutes.

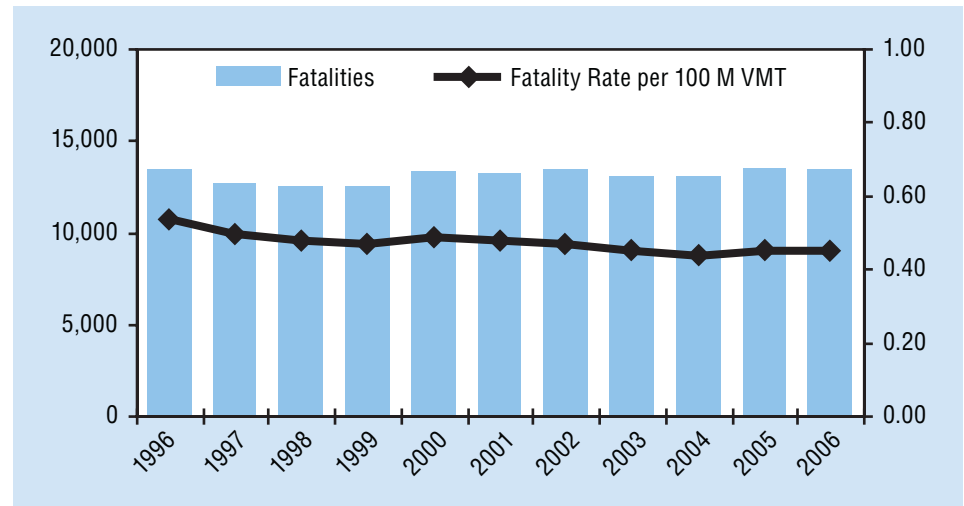
In 2006, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had by law created a threshold making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. Of the 13,470 people who died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2006, 8,615 (64%) were drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher. The remaining fatalities consisted of 4,030 (30%) motor vehicle occupants and 825 (6%) nonoccupants.

Table 1
Fatalities, by Role, in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With a BAC of .08 or Higher, 2006

Role	Number	Percent of Total
Driver With BAC=.08+	8,615	64.0%
Passenger Riding w/Driver With BAC=.08+	2,429	18.0%
Subtotal	11,044	82.0%
Occupants of Other Vehicles	1,601	11.9%
Nonoccupants	825	6.1%
Total Fatalities	13,470	100.0%

"In 2006, there were 13,470 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher – 32 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year."

Figure 1
Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in Crashes Involving at Least One Driver With BAC=.08+, 1996-2006



The national rate of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in 2006 was 0.45 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel.

“In 2006, 17 percent of child (age 14 and younger) traffic fatalities occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.”

Children

In 2006, 1,794 children age 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Of those 1,794 fatalities, 306 (17%) occurred in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Children riding in vehicles with drivers who had a BAC level of .08 or higher accounted for half (153) of these deaths.

Another 45 children age 14 and younger who were killed in traffic crashes in 2006, were pedestrians or pedalcyclists who were struck by drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher.

For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NVS-424, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted on 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 www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/nca. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236.

Other fact sheets available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis are *Overview, African American, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists* (formerly titled *Pedalcyclists*), *Children, Hispanic, Large Trucks, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection, Older Population, Pedestrians, Race and Ethnicity, Rural/Urban Comparisons, School Transportation-Related Crashes, Speeding, State Alcohol Estimates, State Traffic Data*, and *Young Drivers*. Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System*. The fact sheets and annual Traffic Safety Facts report can be accessed online at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CMSWeb/index.aspx.

Time of Day and Day of Week

The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night than during the day (36% versus 9%).

In 2006, 15 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-impaired, compared to 31 percent on weekends.

Table 2

Drivers in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .08 or Higher, by Time of Day and Day of Week, 1996 and 2006

Total Drivers							
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	1996			2006			Change in Percentage with BAC .08 or Higher 1996-2006
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC .08 or Higher		Total Number of Drivers	BAC .08 or Higher		
		Number	Percent of Total		Number	Percent of Total	
Total	57,001	12,348	22%	57,695	12,491	22%	0%
Drivers by Crash Type and Time of Day							
Single-Vehicle Crash							
Total	21,021	7,834	37%	22,627	8,391	37%	0%
Daytime*	8,019	1,366	17%	8,811	1,560	18%	+6%
Nighttime**	12,699	6,285	49%	13,525	6,672	49%	0%
Multiple Vehicle Crash							
Total	35,980	4,514	13%	35,068	4,100	12%	-8%
Daytime*	22,783	1,240	5%	21,690	1,102	5%	0%
Nighttime**	13,165	3,266	25%	13,334	2,990	22%	-12%
Drivers by Time of Day							
Daytime*	30,802	2,606	8%	30,501	2,662	9%	+13%
Nighttime**	25,864	9,552	37%	26,859	9,662	36%	-3%
Drivers by Day of Week and Time of Day							
Weekday***	34,973	5,268	15%	34,363	5,218	15%	0%
Daytime*	22,916	1,512	7%	22,030	1,469	7%	0%
Nighttime**	11,953	3,703	31%	12,223	3,702	30%	-3%
Weekend****	21,921	7,025	32%	23,240	7,234	31%	-3%
Daytime*	7,886	1,094	14%	8,471	1,193	14%	0%
Nighttime**	13,911	5,848	42%	14,636	5,960	41%	-2%

“The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night than during the day.”

*6 a.m. to 6 p.m. **6 p.m. to 6 a.m. ***Monday 6 a.m. to Friday 6 p.m.

****Friday 6 p.m. to Monday 6 a.m.

Table 3

Drivers in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .08 or Higher, by Age, Gender, and Vehicle Type, 1996 and 2006

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	Total Drivers						Change in Percentage with BAC .08 or Higher 1996-2006
	1996			2006			
	Total Number of Drivers	BAC .08 or Higher		Total Number of Drivers	BAC .08 or Higher		
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	
Total	57,001	12,348	22%	57,695	12,491	22%	0%
Drivers by Age Group (Years)							
16-20	7,824	1,359	17%	7,286	1,350	19%	+12%
21-24	6,205	1,950	31%	6,454	2,145	33%	+6%
25-34	12,889	3,837	30%	11,223	3,259	29%	-3%
35-44	10,955	2,765	25%	10,310	2,595	25%	0%
45-54	7,127	1,272	18%	9,201	1,746	19%	+6%
55-64	4,237	512	12%	5,864	753	13%	+8%
65-74	3,319	275	8%	3,022	229	8%	0%
75+	3,068	145	5%	2,954	139	5%	0%
Drivers by Sex							
Male	41,376	10,240	25%	41,975	10,078	24%	-4%
Female	14,850	1,963	13%	14,655	2,168	15%	+15%
Drivers by Vehicle Type							
Passenger Cars	30,595	6,948	23%	23,988	5,430	23%	0%
Light Trucks	18,118	4,341	24%	22,185	5,255	24%	0%
Large Trucks	4,703	98	2%	4,695	69	1%	-50%
Motorcycles	2,175	768	35%	4,933	1,313	27%	-23%

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

Drivers

In fatal crashes in 2006, the highest percentage of drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher was for drivers ages 21-24 (33%), followed by ages 25-34 (29%) and 35-44 (25%).

The percentages of drivers involved in fatal crashes with a BAC level of .08 or higher in 2006 were 27 percent for motorcycle operators, 24 percent for light trucks, and 23 percent for passenger cars. The percentage of drivers with BAC levels of .08 or higher in fatal crashes was the lowest for large trucks (1%).

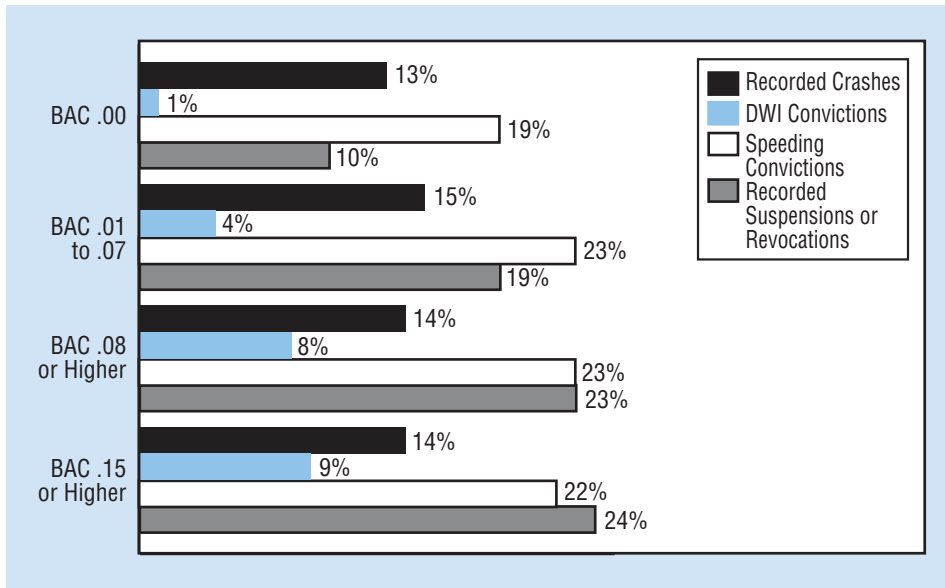
Seat belts were used by only 26 percent of fatally injured drivers with BAC levels of .08 or higher, compared to 39 percent of fatally injured drivers with BAC levels between .01 and .07, and 57 percent of fatally injured drivers with no alcohol (BAC = .00).

Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers with no alcohol (8% and 1%, respectively).

“The highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes who had BAC levels of .08 or higher was for drivers ages 21 to 24.”

“The percentage of drivers with BAC of .08 or above in fatal crashes was highest for motorcycle operators.”

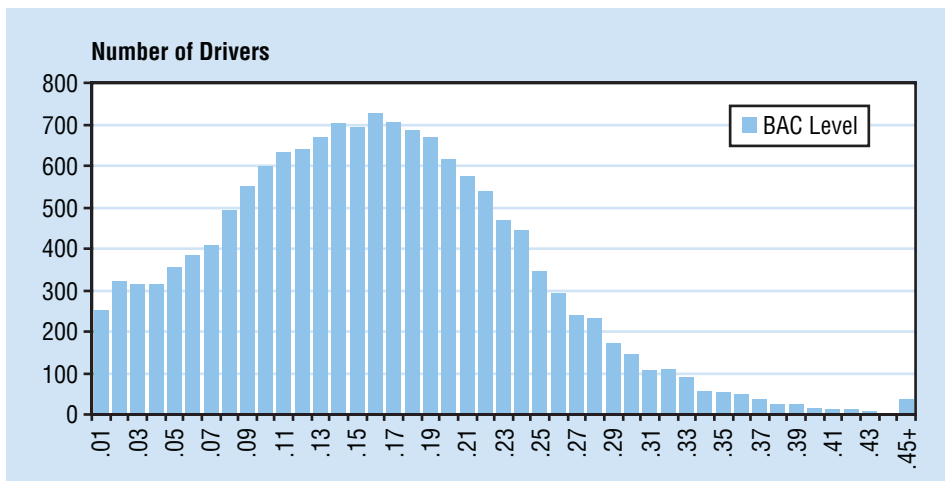
Figure 2
Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Blood Alcohol Concentration, 2006



“Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were drivers with no alcohol.”

In 2006, 84 percent (12,491) of the 14,840 drivers with a BAC of .01 or higher who were involved in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or above .08, and 55 percent (8,201) had BAC levels at or above .15. The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers in fatal crashes was .16.

Figure 3
Distribution of BAC Levels for Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes With a BAC of .01 or Higher, 2006



“In 2006, more than 8,200 (55%) of the drivers involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking had a BAC of .15 or greater.”

Table 5.
Traffic Fatalities by State and the Highest Driver BAC in the Crash, 2006

State	Total Fatalities	BAC=.00		BAC=.01-.07		BAC=.08+		BAC=.15+		BAC=.01+	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	1,206	761	63%	61	5%	384	32%	253	21%	445	37%
Alaska	73	50	69%	3	4%	20	27%	15	21%	23	31%
Arizona	1,280	778	61%	94	7%	409	32%	268	21%	502	39%
Arkansas	665	420	63%	48	7%	197	30%	134	20%	245	37%
California	4,229	2,720	64%	233	6%	1,276	30%	793	19%	1,509	36%
Colorado	533	326	61%	31	6%	177	33%	129	24%	207	39%
Connecticut	301	180	60%	12	4%	109	36%	83	28%	121	40%
Delaware	148	98	66%	7	4%	43	29%	34	23%	50	34%
Dist of Columbia	37	24	64%	2	5%	12	32%	7	20%	14	36%
Florida	3,363	2,252	67%	152	5%	959	29%	626	19%	1,111	33%
Georgia	1,688	1,149	68%	76	4%	464	27%	311	18%	539	32%
Hawaii	160	83	52%	14	9%	63	40%	41	26%	77	48%
Idaho	267	165	62%	18	7%	84	31%	60	22%	102	38%
Illinois	1,254	714	57%	96	8%	444	35%	301	24%	540	43%
Indiana	896	606	68%	43	5%	247	28%	168	19%	290	32%
Iowa	439	297	68%	20	5%	122	28%	74	17%	142	32%
Kansas	466	304	65%	27	6%	135	29%	95	20%	162	35%
Kentucky	913	656	72%	35	4%	222	24%	133	15%	257	28%
Louisiana	982	557	57%	61	6%	364	37%	232	24%	425	43%
Maine	188	118	63%	19	10%	51	27%	26	14%	70	37%
Maryland	651	416	64%	42	6%	193	30%	118	18%	235	36%
Massachusetts	422	263	62%	22	5%	137	32%	87	21%	159	38%
Michigan	1,081	691	64%	58	5%	332	31%	226	21%	390	36%
Minnesota	493	318	64%	25	5%	151	31%	103	21%	175	36%
Mississippi	911	553	61%	37	4%	320	35%	209	23%	358	39%
Missouri	1,087	619	57%	88	8%	380	35%	242	22%	469	43%
Montana	255	141	55%	11	4%	103	40%	69	27%	114	45%
Nebraska	266	181	68%	15	6%	70	26%	57	21%	86	32%
Nevada	432	264	61%	25	6%	142	33%	103	24%	168	39%
New Hampshire	127	76	60%	4	3%	47	37%	32	25%	51	40%
New Jersey	771	486	63%	61	8%	224	29%	140	18%	285	37%
New Mexico	484	329	68%	19	4%	136	28%	97	20%	155	32%
New York	1,454	971	67%	87	6%	397	27%	254	17%	483	33%
North Carolina	1,558	1,068	69%	70	5%	420	27%	287	18%	490	31%
North Dakota	111	64	58%	6	5%	41	37%	30	27%	47	42%
Ohio	1,235	784	63%	74	6%	377	31%	253	20%	451	37%
Oklahoma	765	522	68%	41	5%	201	26%	147	19%	243	32%
Oregon	477	300	63%	30	6%	148	31%	105	22%	177	37%
Pennsylvania	1,517	961	63%	69	5%	487	32%	353	23%	556	37%
Rhode Island	81	44	54%	8	10%	29	36%	19	24%	37	46%
South Carolina	1,037	560	54%	57	6%	420	40%	291	28%	477	46%
South Dakota	191	114	59%	9	5%	69	36%	52	27%	78	41%
Tennessee	1,286	808	63%	70	5%	408	32%	267	21%	478	37%
Texas	3,466	1,922	55%	190	5%	1,354	39%	886	26%	1,544	45%
Utah	284	221	78%	9	3%	54	19%	36	13%	63	22%
Vermont	86	58	67%	3	3%	26	30%	20	23%	28	33%
Virginia	961	614	64%	47	5%	300	31%	196	20%	347	36%
Washington	630	361	57%	44	7%	225	36%	151	24%	269	43%
West Virginia	408	253	62%	26	6%	129	32%	82	20%	155	38%
Wisconsin	722	370	51%	47	7%	305	42%	225	31%	352	49%
Wyoming	195	117	60%	11	6%	67	35%	51	26%	78	40%
National	42,532	26,705	63%	2,356	6%	13,470	32%	8,969	21%	15,827	37%
Puerto Rico	507	331	65%	33	6%	144	28%	86	17%	176	35%

Note: Only includes fatalities in crashes where there was a driver or motorcycle operator present.