



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration



Research Note

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Older Driver Fatality Rates by State, 1998

Introduction

Older drivers age 65 and over are increasing in number. The number of fatal crashes in which they are involved is also increasing. This research note takes a look at the latest data available to formulate fatality rates for this segment of the population.

Older Population

Between 1988 and 1998 the number of people aged 65 and older grew from 30 to 34 million, a nationwide increase of about 14%. During that time period, every state but the District of Columbia (-5%) showed an increase. Twenty-seven states had population increases at a rate less than that of the nation, or less than a 14% change, while 23 states had percent increases greater than or equal to that of the nation. States whose population remained relatively flat (5% increase or less) include: Iowa (+2%), North Dakota (+2%), Nebraska (+4%), Kansas (+5%), West Virginia (+5%), South Dakota (+5%), Rhode Island (+5%) and New York (+5%). States that showed the highest percent change were Nevada (+79%), Alaska (+70%), Arizona (+38%), Hawaii (+37%) and Utah (+30%).

In terms of the total population, persons 65 years old and older make up 13% of the population (see Table). On a state by state basis, older people make up as little as 5% of the population in some states (Alaska) to as much as 18% of the population in others (Florida). The five states with the highest percentage of older persons are: Florida (18%), Pennsylvania (16%), Rhode Island (16%), West Virginia (15%) and Iowa (15%). The states with the lowest percentage of older persons are: Alaska (5%), Utah (9%), Texas (10%), Georgia (10%) and Colorado (10 %).

Includes revised driver fatality rate per 100,000 registered vehicles for California.

Table 1. Population Estimates, Licensed Drivers, Registered Vehicles, Driver Fatality Rates, and Older Driver Fatality Rates

State	1998 Total Population (Thousands)	1988 Older Population (Thousands)	1998 Older Population (Thousands)	Percent Change (1988 vs 1998)	Older Drivers as % of Total Population	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Older Population	Licensed Drivers (Thousands)	Total Driver Fatalities	Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Older Driver Fatalities	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Registered Vehicles (Thousands)	Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles
Alabama	4,352	507	568	+12	13	20.1	3,434	726	21.1	114	3.3	3,903	18.6	2.9
Alaska	614	20	34	+70	6	8.8	456	39	8.6	3	0.7	560	7.0	0.5
Arizona	4,669	446	618	+39	13	13.6	3,198	473	14.8	84	2.6	2,998	15.8	2.8
Arkansas	2,538	343	363	+6	14	18.2	1,918	398	20.8	66	3.4	1,775	22.4	3.7
California	32,667	3,003	3,615	+20	11	6.7	20,499	1,707	8.3	242	1.2	26,004	6.6*	0.9
Colorado	3,971	311	402	+29	10	11.9	2,946	370	12.6	48	1.6	3,563	10.4	1.4
Connecticut	3,274	432	469	+9	14	8.3	2,349	220	9.4	40	1.7	2,751	8.0	1.5
Delaware	744	77	96	+25	13	19.8	546	79	14.5	19	3.5	627	12.6	3.0
D.C.	523	77	73	-5	14	5.5	350	24	6.9	4	1.1	230	10.4	1.7
Florida	14,916	2,223	2,734	+23	18	12.9	12,027	1,552	12.9	354	2.9	11,498	13.5	3.1
Georgia	7,642	627	755	+20	10	21.5	5,316	1,000	18.8	162	3.0	6,980	14.3	2.3
Hawaii	1,193	115	158	+37	13	3.8	746	71	9.5	6	0.8	724	9.8	0.8
Idaho	1,229	117	139	+19	11	18.7	863	160	18.5	26	3.0	1,153	13.9	2.3
Illinois	12,045	1,404	1,496	+7	12	8.3	7,701	831	10.8	124	1.6	9,510	8.7	1.3
Indiana	5,899	675	740	+10	13	15.3	3,976	661	16.6	113	2.8	5,475	12.1	2.1
Iowa	2,862	421	431	+2	15	16.5	1,950	290	14.9	71	3.6	3,182	9.1	2.2
Kansas	2,629	336	354	+5	14	16.4	1,851	335	18.1	58	3.1	2,169	15.4	2.7
Kentucky	3,936	456	493	+8	13	17.6	2,640	566	21.4	87	3.3	2,885	19.6	3.0
Louisiana	4,369	458	504	+10	12	14.1	2,736	545	19.9	71	2.6	3,470	15.7	2.1
Maine	1,244	159	175	+10	14	17.1	913	127	13.9	30	3.3	958	13.3	3.1
Maryland	5,135	495	592	+20	12	9.1	3,178	334	11	54	1.7	3,793	8.8	1.4
Massachusetts	6,147	802	861	+7	14	4.4	4,394	226	5.1	38	0.9	5,259	4.3	0.7
Michigan	9,817	1,071	1,223	+14	13	12.1	6,803	832	12.2	148	2.2	8,283	10.0	1.8
Minnesota	4,725	536	583	+9	12	15.1	2,868	403	14.1	88	3.1	4,306	9.4	2.0
Mississippi	2,752	316	336	+6	12	32.4	1,758	633	36.0	109	6.2	2,287	27.7	4.8
Missouri	5,439	702	745	+6	14	16.9	3,798	732	19.3	126	3.3	4,431	16.5	2.8
Montana	880	103	117	+14	13	23.9	647	154	23.8	28	4.3	1,010	15.3	2.8

Nebraska	1,663	220	229	+4	14	12.2	1,186	192	16.2	28	2.4	1,545	12.4	1.8
State	1998 Total Population (Thousands)	1988 Older Population (Thousands)	1998 Older Population (Thousands)	Percent Change (1988 vs 1998)	Older Drivers as % of Total Population	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Older Population	Licensed Drivers (Thousands)	Total Driver Fatalities	Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Older Driver Fatalities	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	Registered Vehicles (thousands)	Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles	Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles
Nevada	1,747	112	200	+79	11	13.0	1,246	189	15.2	26	2.1	1,245	15.2	2.1
New Hampshire	1,185	121	142	+17	12	12.0	907	90	9.9	17	1.9	1,085	8.3	1.6
New Jersey	8,115	1,002	1,106	+10	14	7.8	5,563	403	7.2	86	1.6	5,881	6.9	1.5
New Mexico	1,737	153	198	+29	11	15.2	1,204	214	17.8	30	2.5	1,627	13.2	1.8
New York	18,175	2,316	2,424	+5	13	6.6	10,554	770	7.3	160	1.5	10,561	7.3	1.5
North Carolina	7,546	765	947	+24	13	19.2	5,534	980	17.7	182	3.3	5,937	16.5	3.1
North Dakota	638	90	92	+2	14	9.8	455	55	12.1	9	2.0	688	8.0	1.3
Ohio	11,209	1,362	1,501	+10	13	9.9	7,941	920	11.6	148	1.9	10,269	9.0	1.4
Oklahoma	3,347	413	448	+9	13	19.4	2,305	481	20.9	87	3.8	2,973	16.2	2.9
Oregon	3,282	374	433	+16	13	15.7	2,417	307	12.7	68	2.8	3,045	10.1	2.2
Pennsylvania	12,001	1,777	1,904	+7	16	9.3	8,405	952	11.3	178	2.1	9,170	10.4	1.9
Rhode Island	988	146	154	+6	16	4.5	682	43	6.3	7	1.0	733	5.9	1.0
South Carolina	3,836	375	468	+25	12	16.2	2,679	638	23.8	76	2.8	2,934	21.8	2.6
South Dakota	738	101	106	+5	14	17.0	535	105	19.6	18	3.4	794	13.2	2.3
Tennessee	5,431	600	679	+13	13	19.1	4,073	831	20.4	130	3.2	4,529	18.4	2.9
Texas	19,760	1,640	2,000	+22	10	14.9	13,323	2,084	15.6	298	2.2	13,473	15.5	2.2
Utah	2,100	142	184	+30	9	12.5	1,393	178	12.8	23	1.7	1,557	11.4	1.5
Vermont	591	65	73	+12	12	12.3	497	58	11.7	9	1.8	513	11.3	1.8
Virginia	6,791	633	767	+21	11	14.3	4,668	593	12.7	110	2.4	5,876	10.1	1.9
Washington	5,689	547	652	+19	12	8.4	4,079	397	9.7	55	1.4	4,930	8.1	1.1
West Virginia	1,811	263	275	+5	15	13.1	1,281	227	17.7	36	2.8	1,400	16.2	2.6
Wisconsin	5,224	637	691	+9	13	11.9	3,710	452	12.2	82	2.2	4,374	10.3	1.9
Wyoming	481	45	56	+24	12	21.4	359	96	26.7	12	3.3	575	16.7	2.1
Total	270,299	30,123	34,401	+14	13	12.2	184,861	24,743	13.4	4,188	2.3	215,496	11.5	1.9

Sources: Fatalities - NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS),
1988 Population, 1998 Population - Bureau of the Census,
Registered Vehicles & Licensed Drivers - Federal Highway Administration

Driver Fatality Rates

Resident Population

Sixty-five year old and older driver fatality rates give another picture of the states. The following states have the lowest older driver fatality rates per 100,000 older population: Hawaii (3.8), Massachusetts (4.4), Rhode Island (4.5), the District of Columbia (5.5) and New York (6.6). States with the highest fatality rates for this group of drivers include: Mississippi (32.4), Montana (23.9), Georgia (21.4), Wyoming (21.4) and Alabama (20.1).

Licensed Drivers

Comparing fatality rates for the older drivers with fatality rates for all drivers by state and licensed drivers, the states with the lowest rates for all drivers are not the same as for older drivers (see Table 1). In the case of all drivers killed per 100,000 licensed drivers, Massachusetts is lowest (5.1), followed closely by Rhode Island (6.3), the District of Columbia (6.9), New Jersey (7.2) and New York (7.3). For older drivers killed, Alaska (0.7), Hawaii (0.8) and Massachusetts (0.9) all have rates below 1 older driver per 100,000 licensed drivers. States that exceeded the national rate of 13.4 the most are Mississippi (36.0), Wyoming (26.7), Montana (23.8), South Carolina (23.8) and Kentucky (31.4). For the older drivers, rates are highest in two of the same states. In Mississippi, 6.2 older drivers were killed per 100,000 licensed drivers and in Montana the rate was 4.3 (see Table).

Registered Vehicles

The table shows the number of registered vehicles as well as the fatality rates for older drivers and all drivers per 100,000 registered vehicles within states. Massachusetts (4.3), Rhode Island (5.9), New Jersey (6.9), Alaska (7.0) and New York (7.3) are the states with the lowest fatality rates for all drivers. Three of these states - Alaska (0.5), Massachusetts (0.7), and Rhode Island (1.0) - also show the lowest rates for older drivers. Hawaii (0.8) and California (0.9) also have rates under one for these drivers. At the high end for all drivers are Mississippi (27.7), Arkansas (22.4), South Carolina (21.8), Kentucky (19.6) and Alabama (18.6). States with the highest rates for older drivers were Mississippi (4.8), Arkansas (3.7), Florida (3.1), Maine (3.1) and North Carolina (3.1).

For additional copies of this research note, please call (202)366-4198 or (toll free) 1-800-934-8517. For questions on data reported in this research, please contact Keith Poindexter at (202)366-0018. This research note and other general information on traffic safety may be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/ncsa>.

