

# Traffic Safety Facts 1997

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



## Large Trucks



In 1997, 444,000 large trucks (gross vehicle weight rating greater than 10,000 pounds) were involved in traffic crashes in the United States; 4,871 were involved in fatal crashes. A total of 5,355 people died (13 percent of all the traffic fatalities reported in 1997) and an additional 133,000 were injured in those crashes.

Large trucks accounted for 3 percent of all registered vehicles, 7 percent of total vehicle miles traveled, 9 percent of all vehicles involved in fatal crashes, and 3 percent of all vehicles involved in injury and property-damage-only crashes in 1996 (1997 registered vehicle and vehicle miles traveled data not available).

One out of eight traffic fatalities in 1997 resulted from a collision involving a large truck.

**Table 1. Involvement in Fatal and Injury Crashes and Involvement Rates for Large Trucks, 1987-1997**

Year	Number of Large Trucks Involved in Fatal Crashes	Number of Large Trucks Registered	Vehicle Involvement Rate *	Vehicle Miles Traveled (millions)	Vehicle Involvement Rate **
1987	5,108	5,303,094	96.3	135,601	3.8
1988	5,241	5,433,560	96.5	141,397	3.7
1989	4,984	5,840,466	85.3	148,318	3.4
1990	4,776	5,854,337	81.6	149,810	3.2
1991	4,347	5,854,673	74.2	150,729	2.9
1992	4,035	5,970,925	67.6	152,803	2.6
1993	4,328	6,191,889	69.9	159,402	2.7
1994	4,644	6,303,314	73.7	170,216	2.7
1995	4,472	6,719,421	66.6	178,156	2.5
1996	4,755	7,006,408	67.9	182,756	2.6
1997	4,871	--	--	--	--

Year	Number of Large Trucks Involved in Injury Crashes	Number of Large Trucks Registered	Vehicle Involvement Rate *	Vehicle Miles Traveled (millions)	Vehicle Involvement Rate **
1988	96,000	5,433,560	1,764	141,397	68
1989	110,000	5,840,466	1,887	148,318	74
1990	107,000	5,854,337	1,830	149,810	72
1991	78,000	5,854,673	1,332	150,729	52
1992	95,000	5,970,925	1,586	152,803	62
1993	97,000	6,191,889	1,564	159,402	61
1994	96,000	6,303,314	1,523	170,216	56
1995	84,000	6,719,421	1,250	178,156	47
1996	94,000	7,006,408	1,342	182,756	51
1997	97,000	--	--	--	--

\* Rate per 100,000 registered vehicles.

\*\* Rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

-- = not available.

Source: Vehicle miles traveled and registered vehicles — Federal Highway Administration.

***“One out of eight traffic fatalities in 1997 resulted from a collision involving a large truck.”***

Of the fatalities that resulted from crashes involving large trucks, 78 percent were occupants of another vehicle, 8 percent were nonoccupants, and 13 percent were occupants of a large truck.

Of the injuries that resulted from crashes involving large trucks, 75 percent were occupants of another vehicle, 2 percent were nonoccupants, and 24 percent were occupants of a large truck.

**Table 2. Fatalities and Injuries in Crashes Involving Large Trucks, 1997**

Type of Fatality	Number	Percentage of Total
Occupants of Large Trucks	717	13
<i>Single-Vehicle Crashes</i>	496	9
<i>Multiple-Vehicle Crashes</i>	221	4
Occupants of Other Vehicles in Crashes Involving Large Trucks	4,189	78
Nonoccupants (Pedestrians, Pedalcyclists, etc.)	449	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,355</b>	<b>100</b>

Type of Injury	Number	Percentage of Total
Occupants of Large Trucks	31,000	24
<i>Single-Vehicle Crashes</i>	14,000	11
<i>Multiple-Vehicle Crashes</i>	17,000	13
Occupants of Other Vehicles in Crashes Involving Large Trucks	99,000	75
Nonoccupants (Pedestrians, Pedalcyclists, etc.)	2,000	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,000</b>	<b>100</b>

***“In 1997, large trucks were 3 times as likely as other vehicles to be struck in the rear in two-vehicle fatal crashes.”***

Large trucks were much more likely to be involved in a fatal multiple-vehicle crash — as opposed to a fatal single-vehicle crash — than were passenger vehicles (82 percent of all large trucks involved in fatal crashes, compared with 62 percent of all passenger vehicles).

In 30 percent of the two-vehicle fatal crashes involving a large truck and another type of vehicle, both vehicles were impacted in the front. The truck was struck in the rear 3 times as often as the other vehicle (18 percent and 6 percent, respectively).

**Table 3. Principal Impact Points in Two-Vehicle Fatal Crashes Involving Large Trucks, 1997**

Impact Point on Large Truck	Impact Point on Other Vehicle				
	Front	Left Side	Right Side	Rear	Total
Front	30%	17%	13%	6%	66%
Left Side	9%	<1%	<1%	<1%	10%
Right Side	4%	<1%	<1%	<1%	6%
Rear	17%	<1%	<1%	<1%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>

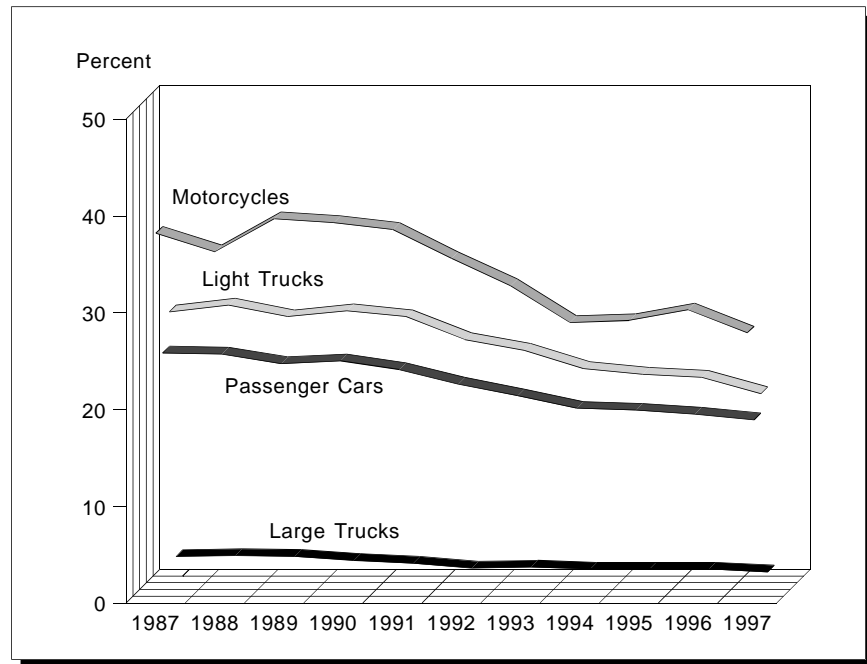
In half of the two-vehicle fatal crashes involving a large truck and another type of vehicle, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the crash. In 10 percent of the crashes, the other vehicle was turning. In 9 percent, either the truck or the other vehicle was negotiating a curve. In 8 percent, either the truck or the other vehicle was stopped or parked in a traffic lane (6 percent and 2 percent, respectively).

Most of the fatal crashes involving large trucks occurred in rural areas (67 percent), during the daytime (66 percent), and on weekdays (79 percent). During the week, 73 percent of the crashes occurred during the daytime (6:00 AM to 5:59 PM). On weekends, 62 percent occurred at night (6:00 PM to 5:59 AM).

The percentage of large truck drivers involved in fatal crashes who were intoxicated — with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater — was 1.1 percent in 1997. These drivers have also shown the largest decrease in intoxication rates since 1987 (59 percent). Intoxication rates for drivers of other types of vehicles involved in fatal crashes in 1997 were 18.2 percent for passenger cars, 20.2 percent for light trucks, and 27.9 percent for motorcycles.

**“The intoxication rate for drivers of large trucks involved in fatal crashes in 1997 was 1.1 percent.”**

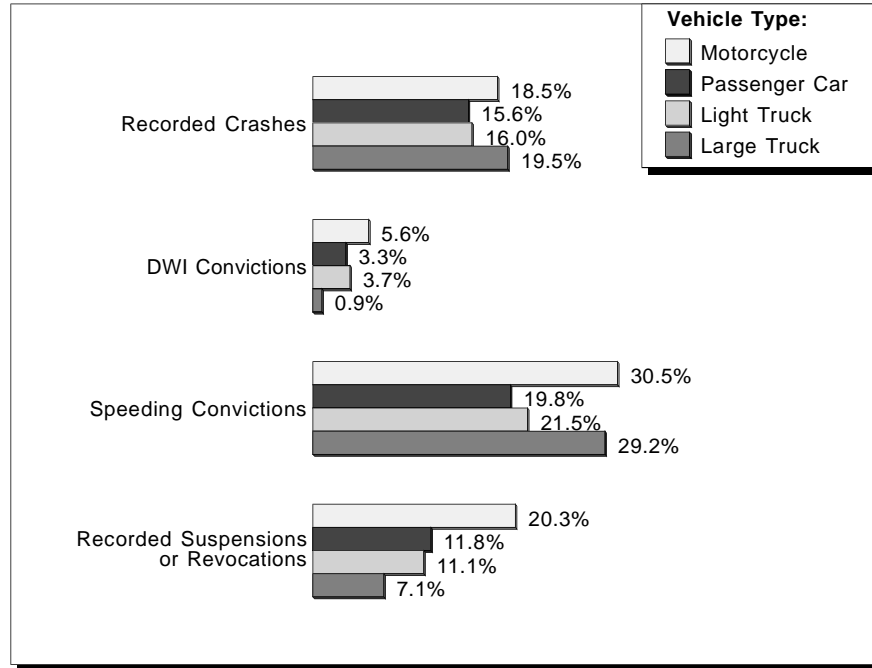
**Figure 1. Estimated Proportions of Drivers in Fatal Crashes With BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater, 1987-1997**



Drivers of large trucks were less likely to have a previous license suspension or revocation than were passenger car drivers (7 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

Almost 30 percent of all large truck drivers involved in fatal crashes in 1997 had at least one prior speeding conviction, compared to just under 20 percent of the passenger car drivers involved in fatal crashes.

**Figure 2. Previous Driving Records of Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes, by Type of Vehicle, 1997**



**For more information:**

Information on large truck 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 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/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 4. Large Truck Involvement in Fatal Crashes by State, 1997

State	Total Vehicles Involved in Fatal Crashes	Large Trucks Involved in Fatal Crashes		
		Number	Percentage of Total Vehicles	Percentage of U.S. Total for Large Trucks
Alabama	1,633	166	10.2	3.4
Alaska	94	7	7.4	0.1
Arizona	1,263	72	5.7	1.5
Arkansas	859	113	13.2	2.3
California	4,909	369	7.5	7.6
Colorado	813	75	9.2	1.5
Connecticut	450	23	5.1	0.5
Delaware	189	15	7.9	0.3
District of Columbia	96	3	3.1	0.1
Florida	3,968	284	7.2	5.8
Georgia	2,178	218	10.0	4.5
Hawaii	181	3	1.7	0.1
Idaho	305	30	9.8	0.6
Illinois	1,915	166	8.7	3.4
Indiana	1,353	159	11.8	3.3
Iowa	652	75	11.5	1.5
Kansas	652	80	12.3	1.6
Kentucky	1,165	108	9.3	2.2
Louisiana	1,189	122	10.3	2.5
Maine	267	21	7.9	0.4
Maryland	920	88	9.6	1.8
Massachusetts	589	38	6.5	0.8
Michigan	2,065	127	6.2	2.6
Minnesota	848	88	10.4	1.8
Mississippi	1,110	99	8.9	2.0
Missouri	1,612	139	8.6	2.9
Montana	298	24	8.1	0.5
Nebraska	404	46	11.4	0.9
Nevada	486	27	5.6	0.6
New Hampshire	173	12	6.9	0.2
New Jersey	1,072	77	7.2	1.6
New Mexico	571	51	8.9	1.0
New York	2,219	142	6.4	2.9
North Carolina	2,017	195	9.7	4.0
North Dakota	131	12	9.2	0.2
Ohio	1,999	203	10.2	4.2
Oklahoma	1,105	96	8.7	2.0
Oregon	673	76	11.3	1.6
Pennsylvania	2,203	166	7.5	3.4
Rhode Island	100	2	2.0	0.0
South Carolina	1,186	89	7.5	1.8
South Dakota	180	15	8.3	0.3
Tennessee	1,673	129	7.7	2.6
Texas	4,732	410	8.7	8.4
Utah	460	46	10.0	0.9
Vermont	141	15	10.6	0.3
Virginia	1,350	117	8.7	2.4
Washington	882	77	8.7	1.6
West Virginia	528	52	9.8	1.1
Wisconsin	967	80	8.3	1.6
Wyoming	153	24	15.7	0.5
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>56,978</b>	<b>4,871</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Puerto Rico	739	31	4.2	--

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