



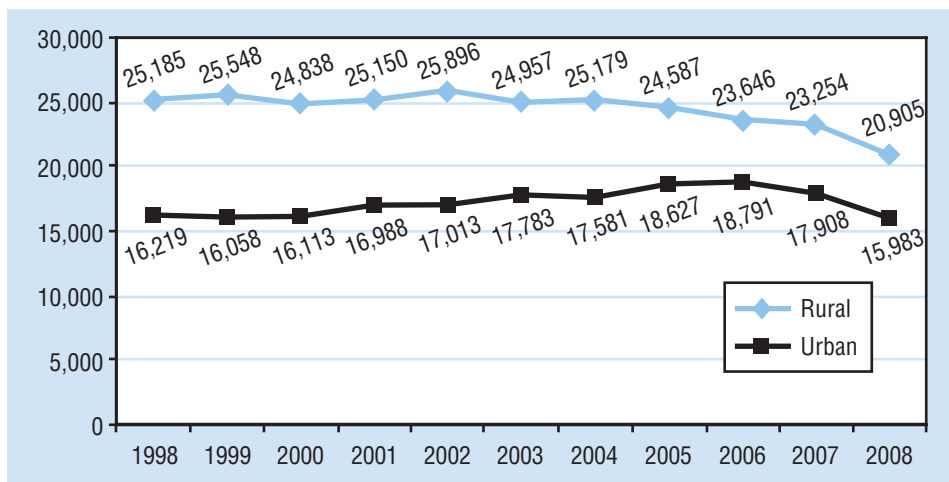
Rural/Urban Comparison

Overview

This fact sheet contains statistics on motor vehicle fatal crashes based on data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). FARS is a census of fatal crashes within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (although Puerto Rico is not included in the national totals). Rural and urban boundaries are determined by the State highway departments and approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

In 2008, there were 34,017 fatal crashes resulting in 37,261 fatalities. Where land use was known, rural areas accounted for 55 percent (18,762) of the fatal crashes and 56 percent (20,905) of the fatalities as compared to urban areas which accounted for 44 percent (14,911) of the fatal crashes and 43 percent (15,983) of the fatalities.

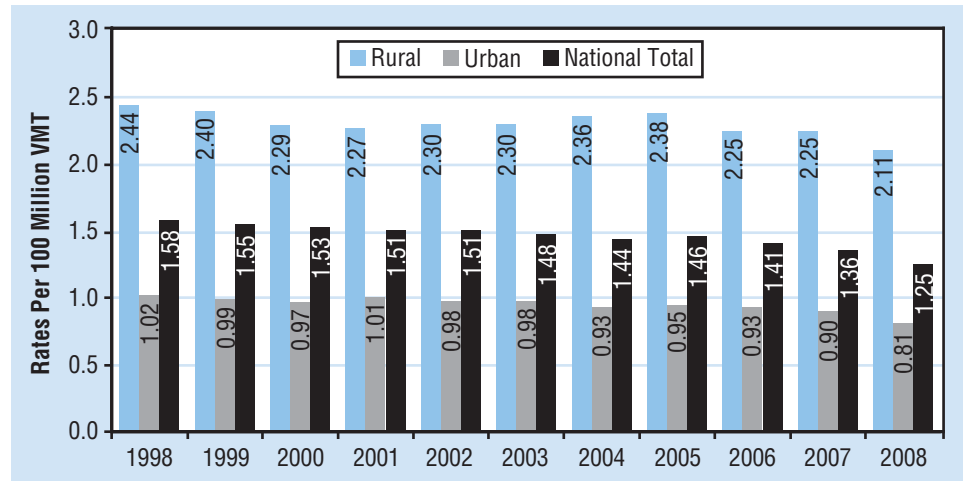
Figure 1
Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities by Year and Location, 1998–2008



Although 23 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas in 2008, rural fatalities accounted for 56 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2008. From 1998 to 2008, rural fatalities decreased 17 percent whereas urban fatalities decreased by 1 percent.

According to the 2008 Census, 23 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas, however, rural fatalities accounted for 56 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2008. From 1998 to 2008, rural fatalities decreased 17 percent whereas urban fatalities decreased by 1 percent.

Figure 2
Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled by Year and Location, 1998–2008



Source: Vehicle Miles Traveled – Federal Highway Administration

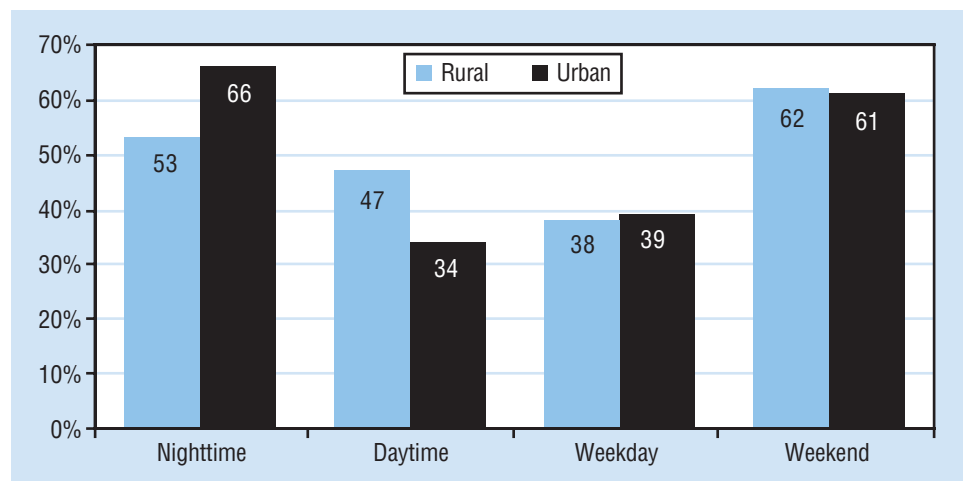
In 2008, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled was 2.6 times higher in rural areas than in urban areas (2.11 and 0.81 respectively).

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According to recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data, people killed in speeding-related crashes represented almost one-third (11,674) of the fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes. NHTSA considers a crash to be speeding-related if the driver was charged with a speed-related offense or if an officer indicated that racing, driving too fast for conditions, or exceeding the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in the crash.

In rural areas, 33 percent (6,825) of the fatalities occurred in speeding-related crashes as compared to 30 percent (4,758) in urban areas.

Figure 3
Percentages of Speeding-Related Fatalities in Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes by Time of Day, Day of the Week, and Location, 2008



Data also showed that in 2008, over half (53%) of rural area speeding-related fatalities occurred at night (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) and 62 percent occurred over the weekend, whereas in urban areas, two-thirds (66%) of speeding-related fatalities occurred at night and 61 percent took place over the weekend.

In rural areas, 52 percent of the fatal crashes occurred during the day, while 47 percent occurred at night. On the other hand, 57 percent of the urban crashes occurred during the night (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) and 43 percent occurred during the daytime (6 a.m. to 5:59 p.m.).

In 2008, 69 percent of all urban fatal crashes occurred on roadways where the posted speed limit was 50 mph or less. On rural roadways, 66 percent of fatal crashes occurred when the posted speed limit was 55 mph or higher.

In 2008, 11,773 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Rural areas accounted for 57 percent (6,678) of these fatalities as compared to 43 percent (4,984) in urban areas (percentages are based on known land use). Data has also shown that over the past 10 years, alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities decreased by 6 percent nationwide. In rural areas alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities decreased by 15 percent whereas urban areas showed a 6-percent increase.

Table 1

Fatalities in Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes by Location and the Highest Driver or Motorcycle Rider (Operator) BAC in the Crash, 1998 and 2008

Location	1998			2008		
	Total Fatalities	Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatalities BAC=.08+ g/dL		Total Fatalities	Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatalities BAC=.08+ g/dL	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Rural	25,185	7,820	31	20,905	6,678	32
Urban	16,219	4,704	29	15,983	4,984	31
Total	41,501	12,546	30	37,261	11,773	32

Total Includes fatalities in crashes in which there was no driver or motorcycle rider (operator) present.

In 2008, 50,186 drivers were involved in fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those drivers 22 percent (10,946) were found to be driving with a BAC of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Drivers in rural areas accounted for 54 percent of the alcohol-impaired drivers versus 45 percent in urban areas.

In fatal crashes, the highest percentages of drivers with BAC levels of .08 g/dL or higher were recorded for drivers 21 to 24 years old (34%), followed by ages 25 to 34 (31%) and 35 to 44 (25%). Rural and urban drivers followed this trend with 21- to 24-year-olds (34% and 36%) having the highest percentage followed by 25- to 34-year-olds (32% and 29%) and 35- to 44-year-olds (27% and 23%).

In cases where drivers had one or more previous DWI convictions, data shows in rural areas 61 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes were discovered to be alcohol-impaired as compared to 57 percent in urban areas.

The 2008 National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) shows that the seat belt use rate among occupants of vehicles in urban areas was 84 percent and rural occupants were observed to have a use rate of 79 percent (see NOPUS in 2008, NHTSA Research Note, DOT HS 811 036 September 2008).

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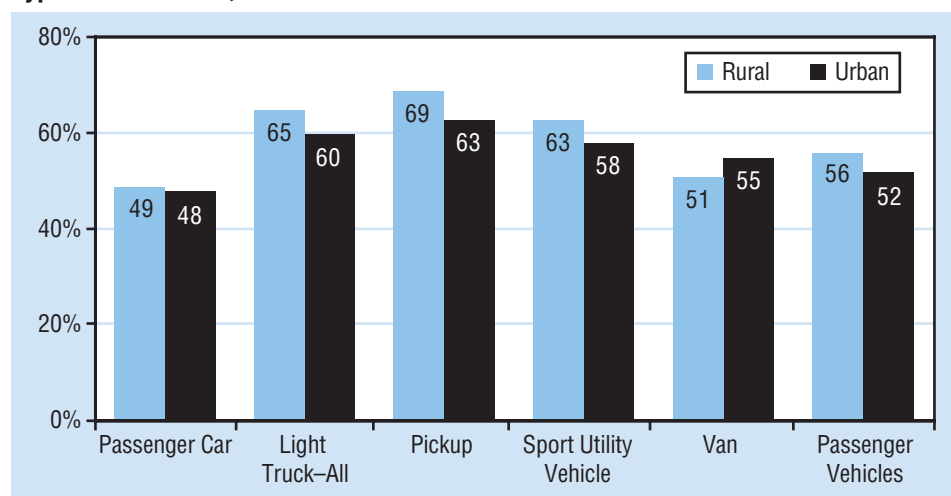
In 2008, 56 percent of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in rural areas were unrestrained compared to 52 percent of urban passenger vehicle occupants killed.

In fatal crashes in 2008, 25,351 passenger vehicle occupants were killed. Rural areas accounted for 63 percent of these deaths where land use is known. As shown in Figure 4, 56 percent of rural passenger vehicle occupants killed were unrestrained as compared to 52 percent of urban passenger vehicle occupants killed. Over two-thirds of rural pickup truck occupants killed were unrestrained – the highest percentage of any passenger vehicle occupants killed among both rural and urban areas.

Of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in rural areas, 41 percent were in a vehicle which rolled over versus 27 percent in urban areas. Data further shows that 67 percent of rural and 63 percent of urban passenger vehicle occupants killed were unrestrained in rollover vehicles (based on known restraint use).

Figure 4

Percentages of Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities by Vehicle Type and Location, 2008



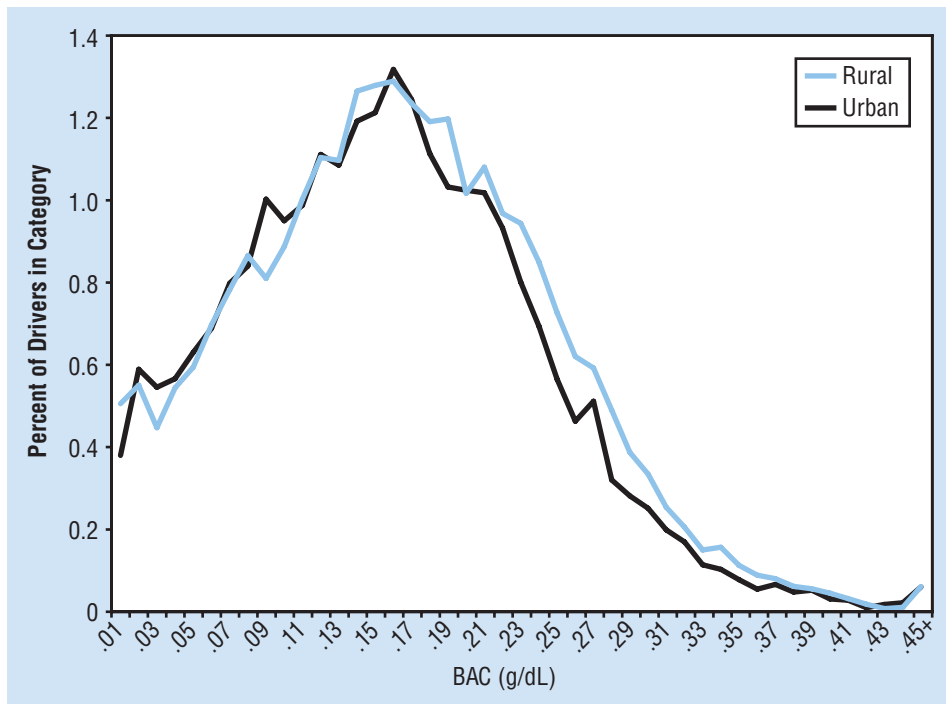
Restraint use percentages based on known use.

In 2008, sport utility vehicles (SUVs) involved in rural fatal crashes experienced the highest rollover percentage of 42 percent. Other vehicle rollover percentages included: 33 percent for pickups, 23 percent for vans, 23 percent for passenger cars, and 16 percent for large trucks. In urban areas vehicles experienced a much lower percentage which included: 23 percent for SUVs, 18 percent for pickups, 10 percent for vans, 11 percent for passenger cars, and 9 percent for large trucks.

When license status was known, rural drivers involved in fatal crashes were found to have a slightly higher percentage of drivers with valid driver's licenses than urban drivers, (89% versus 88%, respectively).

In 2008, 24,175 drivers were killed in fatal crashes. Of those, 64 percent of rural and 51 percent of urban drivers died at the scene. Data also shows that 39 percent of all drivers killed were transported to the hospital and 6 percent of these drivers died en route. Unfortunately, rural drivers represented 52 percent of drivers who died en route to the hospital versus 48 percent of urban drivers.

Figure 5
Distribution of Blood Alcohol Concentration of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Location, 2008



For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NVS-421, 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, Alcohol, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists, Children, Large Trucks, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection, Older Population, Pedestrians, Race and Ethnicity, 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/CATS/index.aspx.

Table 2
Total Fatalities by State and Location, 2008

State	Location						Total	
	Rural		Urban		Unknown			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	597	62	331	34	38	4	966	100
Alaska	47	76	15	24	-	-	62	100
Arizona	473	50	464	50	-	-	937	100
Arkansas	443	74	157	26	-	-	600	100
California	1,324	39	2,110	61	-	-	3,434	100
Colorado	296	54	252	46	-	-	548	100
Connecticut	51	19	213	81	-	-	264	100
Delaware	73	60	47	39	1	1	121	100
Dist of Columbia	2	6	32	94	-	-	34	100
Florida	1,113	37	1,750	59	115	4	2,978	100
Georgia	700	47	687	46	106	7	1,493	100
Hawaii	58	54	49	46	-	-	107	100
Idaho	180	78	52	22	-	-	232	100
Illinois	433	42	609	58	1	0	1,043	100
Indiana	527	65	287	35	-	-	814	100
Iowa	343	83	69	17	-	-	412	100
Kansas	296	77	89	23	-	-	385	100
Kentucky	634	77	192	23	-	-	826	100
Louisiana	501	55	411	45	-	-	912	100
Maine	139	90	16	10	-	-	155	100
Maryland	222	38	368	62	1	0	591	100
Massachusetts	36	10	327	90	-	-	363	100
Michigan	586	60	394	40	-	-	980	100
Minnesota	317	70	139	30	-	-	456	100
Mississippi	627	80	156	20	-	-	783	100
Missouri	604	63	356	37	-	-	960	100
Montana	211	92	18	8	-	-	229	100
Nebraska	182	88	26	13	-	-	208	100
Nevada	123	38	200	62	1	0	324	100
New Hampshire	128	92	11	8	-	-	139	100
New Jersey	72	12	515	87	3	1	590	100
New Mexico	265	72	101	28	-	-	366	100
New York	622	51	609	49	-	-	1,231	100
North Carolina	1,013	71	420	29	-	-	1,433	100
North Dakota	92	88	12	12	-	-	104	100
Ohio	762	64	428	36	-	-	1,190	100
Oklahoma	524	70	224	30	1	0	749	100
Oregon	300	72	116	28	-	-	416	100
Pennsylvania	828	56	640	44	-	-	1,468	100
Rhode Island	13	20	45	69	7	11	65	100
South Carolina	877	95	43	5	-	-	920	100
South Dakota	106	89	13	11	-	-	119	100
Tennessee	607	59	428	41	-	-	1,035	100
Texas	1,745	52	1,552	46	85	3	3,382	100
Utah	176	64	99	36	-	-	275	100
Vermont	60	82	13	18	-	-	73	100
Virginia	479	58	339	41	6	1	824	100
Washington	284	55	233	45	4	1	521	100
West Virginia	264	69	112	29	4	1	380	100
Wisconsin	413	68	192	32	-	-	605	100
Wyoming	137	86	22	14	-	-	159	100
National	20,905	56	15,983	43	373	1	37,261	100
Puerto Rico	208	52	191	48	-	-	399	100