

Traffic Safety Facts 1994

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



Older Population



There are more than 23.2 million people age 70 years and older in the United States. In 1994, this age group made up 8.9 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 7.9 percent in 1984. From 1984 to 1994, this older segment of the population grew 2.4 times as fast as the total population.

There were 15.7 million older licensed drivers in 1994—a 45 percent increase from the number in 1984. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 13 percent from 1984 to 1994. Older drivers made up 9 percent of all licensed drivers in 1994, compared with 7 percent in 1984.

In 1994, these older individuals made up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities, 13 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 1994 occurred during the daytime (84 percent), on weekdays (74 percent), and involved another vehicle (74 percent).

In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was 3.6 times as likely to be the one that was struck (58 percent and 16 percent, respectively). In 44 percent of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 28 percent, the older driver was turning left—9 times as often as the younger driver.

Older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest proportion of intoxication—with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater—of all adult drivers. Fatally injured older pedestrians also had the lowest intoxication rate of all adult pedestrian fatalities.

“In 1994, older people made up 9 percent of the resident population but accounted for 13 percent of all traffic fatalities and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.”

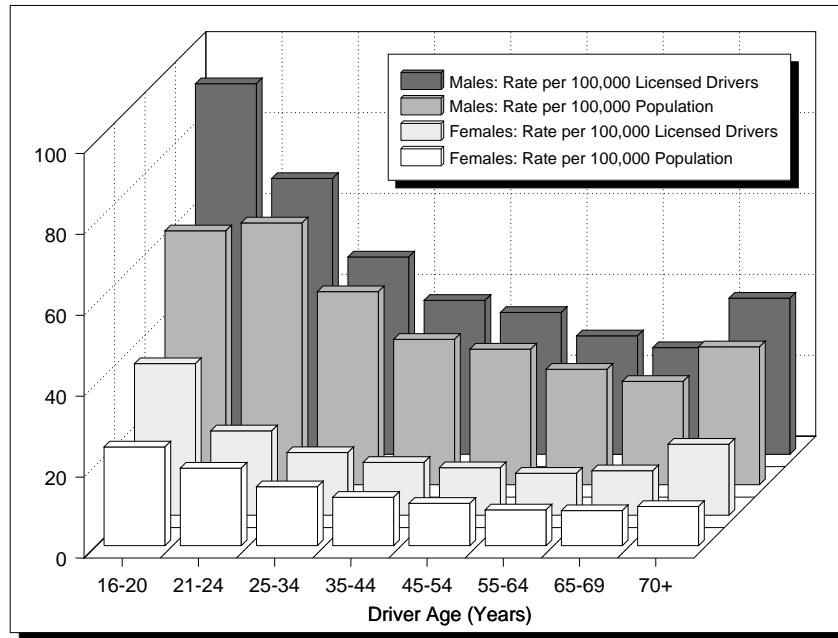
Table 1. Age and Alcohol, 1994

Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated
<16	399	25	6.3	806	21	2.6
16–20	7,711	1,087	14.1	270	69	25.4
21–34	19,162	5,219	27.2	1,126	558	49.5
35–54	16,421	3,216	19.6	1,508	684	45.4
55–69	5,450	550	10.1	695	199	28.7
70+	4,431	184	4.1	1,011	73	7.2
Total	54,514	10,509	19.3	5,472	1,621	29.6

* Includes 940 drivers of unknown age.

** Includes 56 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

Figure 1. Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 1994



“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 1994 had the lowest proportion of intoxication of all adult drivers.”

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of all older occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes were using restraints at the time of the crash, compared to 52 percent for other adult occupants.

For older people, 69 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 1994 occurred at non-intersection locations. For other pedestrians, 84 percent of fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations.

Figure 2. Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates by Age Group, 1984-1994

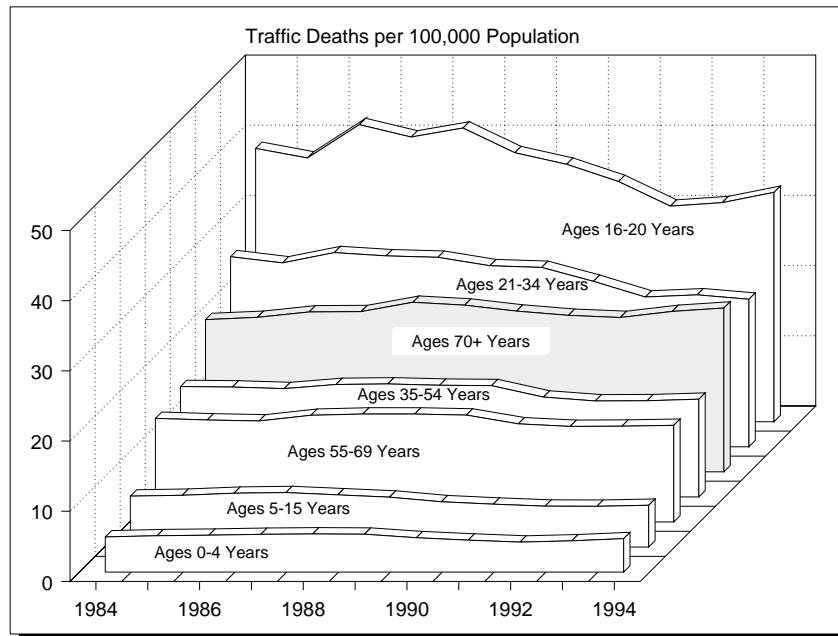


Table 2. Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1984 and 1994

	1984			1994			Percentage Change, 1984-1994		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<i>Population (thousands)</i>									
Total	236,477	18,685	7.9	260,266	23,137	8.9	+10%	+24%	+13%
Male	115,022	7,115	6.2	127,044	8,966	7.1	+10%	+26%	+14%
Female	121,455	11,570	9.5	133,222	14,171	10.6	+10%	+22%	+12%
<i>Licensed Drivers (thousands)</i>									
Total	158,224	11,079	7.0	175,127	15,736	9.0	+11%	+42%	+28%
Male	82,489	6,091	7.4	89,000	7,922	8.9	+8%	+30%	+21%
Female	75,735	4,988	6.6	86,127	7,814	9.1	+14%	+57%	+38%
<i>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</i>									
Total	57,512	2,848	5.0	54,514	4,429	8.1	-5%	+56%	+64%
Male	44,723	2,029	4.5	40,195	3,057	7.6	-10%	+51%	+68%
Female	11,907	819	6.9	13,550	1,372	10.1	+14%	+68%	+47%
<i>Driver Fatalities</i>									
Total	25,589	1,813	7.1	23,695	2,911	12.3	-7%	+61%	+73%
Male	20,088	1,290	6.4	17,551	1,958	11.2	-13%	+52%	+74%
Female	5,500	523	9.5	6,139	953	15.5	+12%	+82%	+63%
<i>Total Traffic Fatalities</i>									
Total	44,257	4,051	9.2	40,676	5,409	13.3	-8%	+34%	+45%
Male	31,541	2,293	7.3	27,383	2,964	10.8	-13%	+29%	+49%
Female	12,709	1,758	13.8	13,269	2,445	18.4	+4%	+39%	+33%
<i>Occupant Fatalities</i>									
Total	36,284	2,835	7.8	34,293	4,358	12.7	-5%	+54%	+63%
Male	25,768	1,559	6.1	22,873	2,356	10.3	-11%	+51%	+70%
Female	10,514	1,276	12.1	11,399	2,002	17.6	+8%	+57%	+45%
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities</i>									
Total	7,025	1,164	16.6	5,472	1,011	18.5	-22%	-13%	+12%
Male	5,016	690	13.8	3,742	569	15.2	-25%	-18%	+11%
Female	2,005	474	23.6	1,727	442	25.6	-14%	-7%	+8%

Sources: Licensed drivers—Federal Highway Administration. Population—Bureau of the Census.

For more information:

Information on the older population 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. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

“Serving the Highway Safety Community by the Numbers”