

# Traffic Safety Facts 1997

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



## Pedalcyclists



The first automobile crash in the United States occurred in New York City in 1896, when a motor vehicle collided with a pedalcycle rider (*Famous First Facts*, by Joseph Kane).

More than 44,000 pedalcyclists have died in traffic crashes in the United States since 1932 — the first year in which estimates of pedalcyclist fatalities were recorded. The 350 pedalcyclists killed in 1932 accounted for 1.3 percent of the 27,979 persons who died in traffic crashes that year.

In 1997, 813 pedalcyclists were killed and an additional 58,000 were injured in traffic crashes. Pedalcyclist deaths accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities, and pedalcyclists made up 2 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes during the year.

The number of pedalcyclist fatalities in 1997 was 14 percent lower than the 948 fatalities reported in 1987. The highest number of pedalcyclist fatalities ever recorded in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) was 1,003 in 1975.

In 1987, the average age of pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes was 23.0 years; in 1997 the average age of those killed was 30.8 years, and the average age of those injured was 24.1 years.

Pedalcyclists accounted for 13 percent of all nonmotorist traffic fatalities in 1997. Pedestrians accounted for 85 percent, and the remaining 2 percent were skateboard riders, roller skaters, etc.

**“The 813 pedalcyclist deaths in 1997 accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities during the year.”**

**Figure 1. Trends in Pedalcyclist and Total Traffic Fatalities, 1987-1997**

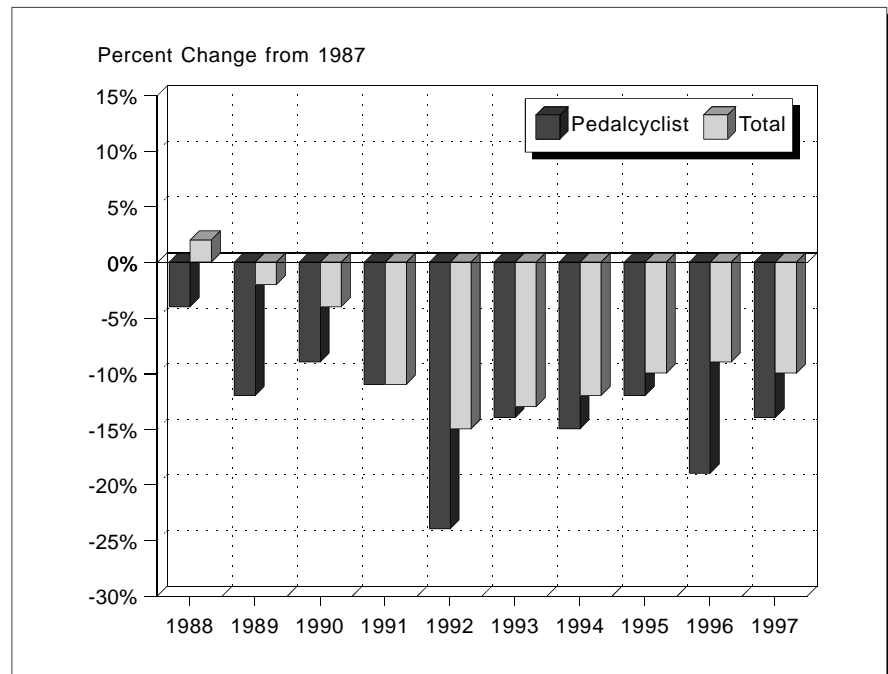


Table 1. Nonoccupant Traffic Fatalities, 1987-1997

Year	Pedestrian	Pedalcyclist	Other	Total
1987	6,745	948	132	7,825
1988	6,870	911	136	7,917
1989	6,556	832	107	7,495
1990	6,482	859	124	7,465
1991	5,801	843	124	6,768
1992	5,549	723	98	6,370
1993	5,649	816	111	6,576
1994	5,489	802	107	6,398
1995	5,584	833	109	6,526
1996	5,449	765	154	6,368
1997	5,307	813	154	6,274

Pedalcyclist fatalities occurred more frequently in urban areas (64 percent), at nonintersection locations (67 percent), between the hours of 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM (34 percent), and during the months of June, July, and August (35 percent).

Most of the pedalcyclists killed or injured in 1997 were males (88 percent and 82 percent, respectively), and most were between the ages of 5 and 44 years (76 percent and 88 percent, respectively).

The pedalcyclist fatality rate per capita was more than 7 times as high for males as for females, and the injury rate per capita was more than 4 times as high for males as for females.

Pedalcyclists under age 16 accounted for 31 percent of all pedalcyclists killed and 43 percent of those injured in traffic crashes in 1997. In comparison, pedalcyclists under age 16 accounted for 47 percent of all those killed in 1987.

Pedalcyclists 25 years of age and older have made up an increasing proportion of all pedalcyclist deaths since 1987. The proportion of pedalcyclist fatalities age 25 to 64 was 1.7 times as high in 1997 as in 1987 (46 percent and 27 percent, respectively).

Almost one-third (30 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1997 were between 5 and 15 years old. The pedalcyclist fatality rate for this age group was 5.7 per million population — nearly double the rate for all pedalcyclists (3.0 per million population). The injury rate for this age group was 582 per million population, compared with 216 per million population for pedalcyclists of all ages.

Alcohol involvement — either for the driver or the pedalcyclist — was reported in one-third of the traffic crashes that resulted in pedalcyclist fatalities in 1997. In 25.0 percent of the crashes, either the driver or the cyclist was intoxicated, with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater. Lower alcohol levels (BAC 0.01 to 0.09 g/dl) were reported in an additional 8.1 percent. Nearly one-fourth (22.8 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed had a BAC of 0.01 g/dl or greater, and nearly one-fifth (17.3 percent) were intoxicated.

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Table 2. Pedalcyclist Fatalities and Injuries and Fatality and Injury Rates by Age and Sex, 1997

Age (years)	Male			Female			Total		
	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*
0-4	6	9,801	0.61	1	9,349	0.11	7	19,150	0.37
5-9	72	10,104	7.13	16	9,634	1.66	88	19,738	4.46
10-15	129	11,745	10.98	26	11,164	2.33	155	22,910	6.77
16-20	79	9,763	8.09	8	9,173	0.87	87	18,936	4.59
21-24	30	7,054	4.25	4	6,720	0.60	34	13,774	2.47
25-34	97	19,810	4.90	10	19,799	0.51	107	39,610	2.70
35-44	118	21,883	5.39	21	22,115	0.95	139	43,998	3.16
45-54	80	16,457	4.86	5	17,176	0.29	85	33,633	2.53
55-64	37	10,391	3.56	5	11,422	0.44	42	21,813	1.93
65-69	11	4,461	2.47	0	5,301	0.00	11	9,762	1.13
70-79	35	6,723	5.21	3	9,077	0.33	38	15,799	2.41
80+	13	2,825	4.60	1	5,688	0.18	14	8,514	1.64
Unknown	4	--	--	--	--	--	6	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>131,018</b>	<b>5.43</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>136,618</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>267,636</b>	<b>3.04</b>

Age (years)	Male			Female			Total		
	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*	Injuries	Population (thousands)	Injury Rate*
0-4	**	9,801	22	**	9,349	9	**	19,150	16
5-9	5,000	10,104	457	2,000	9,634	192	6,000	19,738	327
10-15	14,000	11,745	1,222	4,000	11,164	360	18,000	22,910	802
16-20	6,000	9,763	565	1,000	9,173	123	7,000	18,936	351
21-24	3,000	7,054	366	1,000	6,720	114	3,000	13,774	243
25-34	7,000	19,810	359	2,000	19,799	76	9,000	39,610	217
35-44	7,000	21,883	313	1,000	22,115	29	7,000	43,998	170
45-54	3,000	16,457	184	**	17,176	15	3,000	33,633	97
55-64	2,000	10,391	145	**	11,422	17	2,000	21,813	78
65-69	**	4,461	98	**	5,301	7	**	9,762	49
70-79	1,000	6,723	113	**	9,077	19	1,000	15,799	59
80+	**	2,825	74	**	5,688	7	**	8,514	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>131,018</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>136,618</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>267,636</b>	<b>216</b>

\* Rate per million population.

\*\* Less than 500 injuries.

Source: Population — Bureau of the Census projections.

**For more information:**

Information on pedalcyclist 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 3. Pedalcyclist Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rates by State, 1997

State	Total Traffic Fatalities	Resident Population (thousands)	Pedalcyclist Fatalities	Percent of Total	Pedalcyclist Fatalities per Million Population
Alabama	1,189	4,319	10	0.8	2.32
Alaska	77	609	1	1.3	1.64
Arizona	951	4,555	31	3.3	6.81
Arkansas	660	2,523	5	0.8	1.98
California	3,688	32,268	110	3.0	3.41
Colorado	613	3,893	8	1.3	2.05
Connecticut	338	3,270	5	1.5	1.53
Delaware	143	732	3	2.1	4.10
District of Columbia	60	529	0	0.0	0.00
Florida	2,782	14,654	123	4.4	8.39
Georgia	1,577	7,486	19	1.2	2.54
Hawaii	131	1,187	1	0.8	0.84
Idaho	259	1,210	1	0.4	0.83
Illinois	1,395	11,896	35	2.5	2.94
Indiana	935	5,864	13	1.4	2.22
Iowa	468	2,852	6	1.3	2.10
Kansas	481	2,595	9	1.9	3.47
Kentucky	857	3,908	10	1.2	2.56
Louisiana	913	4,352	30	3.3	6.89
Maine	192	1,242	1	0.5	0.81
Maryland	608	5,094	13	2.1	2.55
Massachusetts	442	6,118	10	2.3	1.63
Michigan	1,446	9,774	31	2.1	3.17
Minnesota	600	4,686	7	1.2	1.49
Mississippi	861	2,731	6	0.7	2.20
Missouri	1,192	5,402	6	0.5	1.11
Montana	265	879	1	0.4	1.14
Nebraska	302	1,657	7	2.3	4.22
Nevada	347	1,677	8	2.3	4.77
New Hampshire	125	1,173	3	2.4	2.56
New Jersey	774	8,053	21	2.7	2.61
New Mexico	484	1,730	5	1.0	2.89
New York	1,643	18,137	49	3.0	2.70
North Carolina	1,483	7,425	31	2.1	4.18
North Dakota	105	641	1	1.0	1.56
Ohio	1,441	11,186	21	1.5	1.88
Oklahoma	838	3,317	5	0.6	1.51
Oregon	523	3,243	18	3.4	5.55
Pennsylvania	1,557	12,020	17	1.1	1.41
Rhode Island	75	987	1	1.3	1.01
South Carolina	903	3,760	16	1.8	4.26
South Dakota	148	738	1	0.7	1.36
Tennessee	1,223	5,368	9	0.7	1.68
Texas	3,510	19,439	55	1.6	2.83
Utah	366	2,059	3	0.8	1.46
Vermont	96	589	0	0.0	0.00
Virginia	984	6,734	20	2.0	2.97
Washington	676	5,610	16	2.4	2.85
West Virginia	379	1,816	5	1.3	2.75
Wisconsin	725	5,170	5	0.7	0.97
Wyoming	137	480	1	0.7	2.08
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>41,967</b>	<b>267,636</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.04</b>
Puerto Rico	591	3,818	23	3.9	6.02

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

Sources: Fatalities — Fatality Analysis Reporting System, NHTSA. Population — Bureau of the Census.