

# Traffic Safety Facts 1997

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

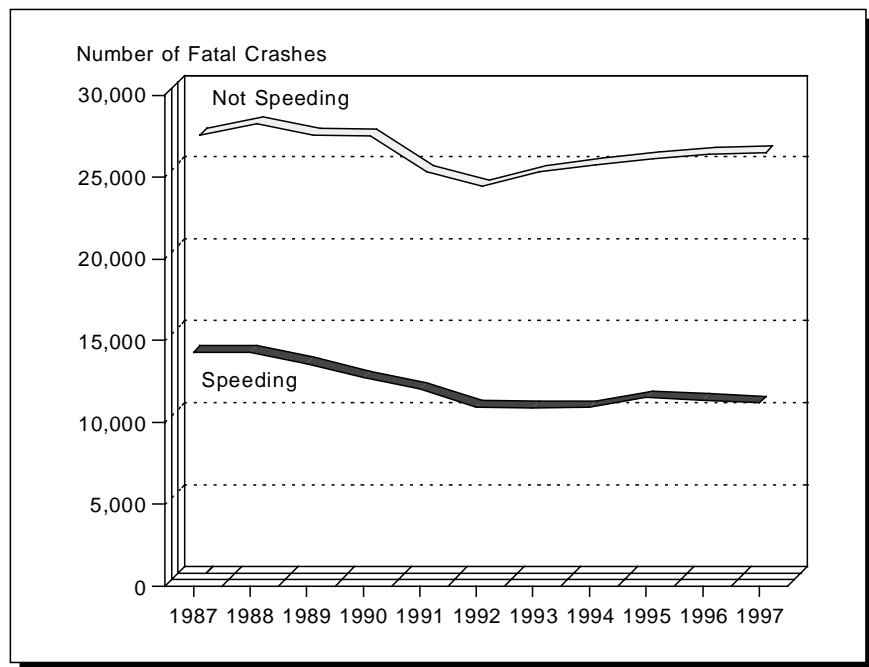


## Speeding



Speeding — exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions — is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. The economic cost to society of speeding-related crashes is estimated by NHTSA to be \$28.9 billion per year. In 1997, speeding was a contributing factor in 30 percent of all fatal crashes, and 13,036 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes.

Figure 1. Fatal Crashes by Speeding Status, 1987-1997



*“The economic cost of speeding-related crashes is estimated to be \$28.9 billion each year.”*

Motor vehicle crashes cost society an estimated \$4,800 per second. The total economic cost of crashes was estimated at \$150.5 billion in 1994. The 1997 costs of **speeding-related** crashes were estimated to be \$28.9 billion — \$54,964 per minute or \$916 per second.

Table 1. Estimated Annual Economic Costs of Speeding-Related Crashes (1994 Dollars per Year)

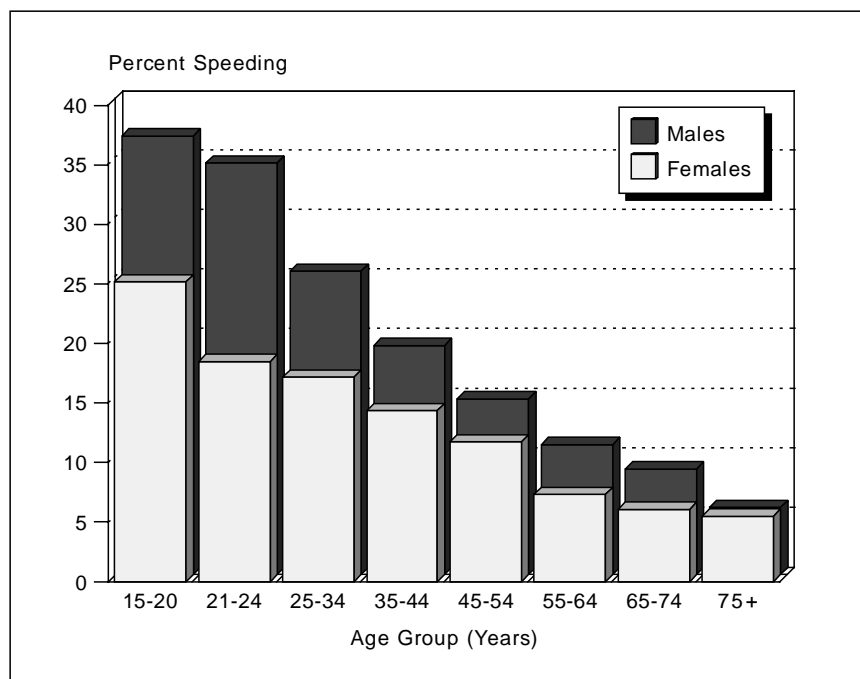
Crash Type	Cost
Fatal	\$10.8 billion
Injury (Non-Fatal)	\$14.0 billion
Property-Damage-Only	\$4.0 billion
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28.9 billion</b>

In 1997, 626,000 people received minor injuries in speeding-related crashes. An additional 75,000 people received moderate injuries, and 41,000 received critical injuries in speeding-related crashes (based on methodology from *The Economic Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes 1994*, NHTSA).

Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the roadway, extends the distance necessary to stop a vehicle, and increases the distance a vehicle travels while the driver reacts to a dangerous situation.

For drivers involved in fatal crashes, young males are the most likely to be speeding. The relative proportion of speeding-related crashes to all crashes decreases with increasing driver age. In 1997, 37 percent of the male drivers 15 to 20 years old who were involved in fatal crashes were speeding at the time of the crash.

**Figure 2. Speeding Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 1997**



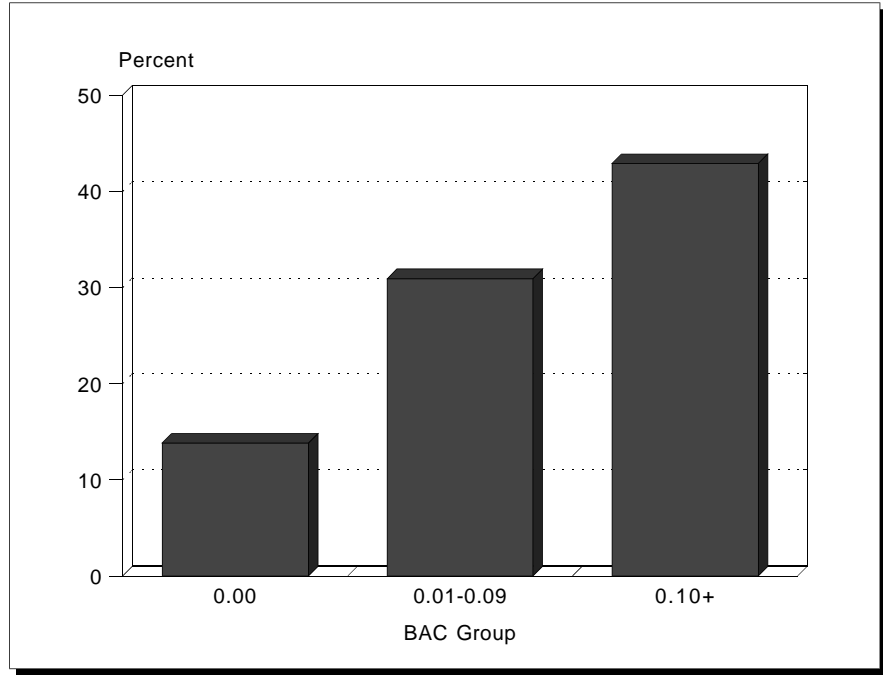
**“In 1997, 37 percent of male drivers 15 to 20 years old involved in fatal crashes were speeding.”**

Alcohol and speeding seem to go hand in hand. In 1997, 23 percent of the **speeding** drivers under 21 years old who were involved in fatal crashes were also intoxicated, with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.10 (grams per deciliter [g/dl]) or greater. In contrast, only 9 percent of the **nonspeeding** drivers under age 21 involved in fatal crashes in 1997 were intoxicated.

For drivers between 21 and 24 years of age who were involved in fatal crashes in 1997, 45 percent of **speeding** drivers were intoxicated, compared with only 18 percent of **nonspeeding** drivers.

Alcohol and speeding are clearly a deadly combination. Alcohol involvement is prevalent for drivers involved in speeding-related crashes. In 1997, 43 percent of the **intoxicated** drivers (BAC = 0.10 or higher) involved in fatal crashes were speeding, compared with only 14 percent of the **sober** drivers (BAC = 0.00) involved in fatal crashes (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of All Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes That Were Speeding, by BAC Level, 1997



**“Between midnight and 3 am, 77 percent of speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.”**

For both speeding and nonspeeding drivers involved in fatal crashes, the percentage of those who had been drinking, with BAC 0.01 or greater, at the time the crash occurred was higher at night than during the day. Between midnight and 3 am, 77 percent of **speeding** drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.

Figure 4. Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Alcohol Involvement, Speeding Status, and Time of Day, 1997

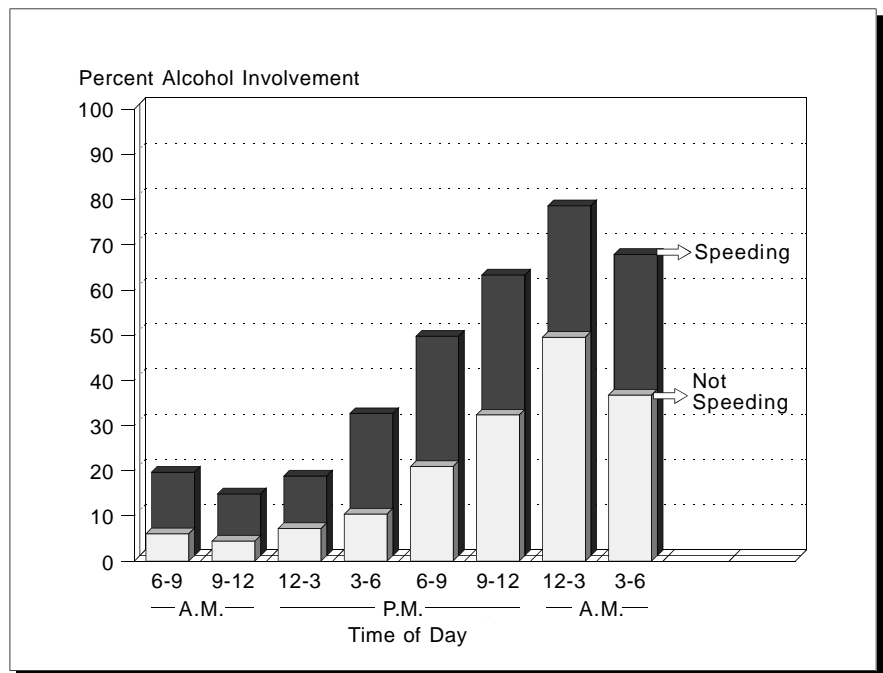
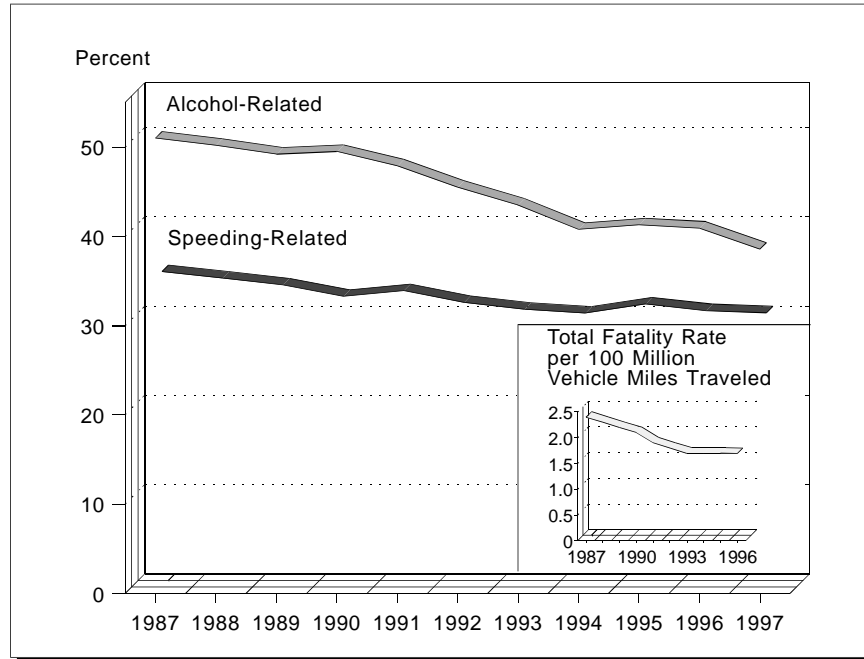


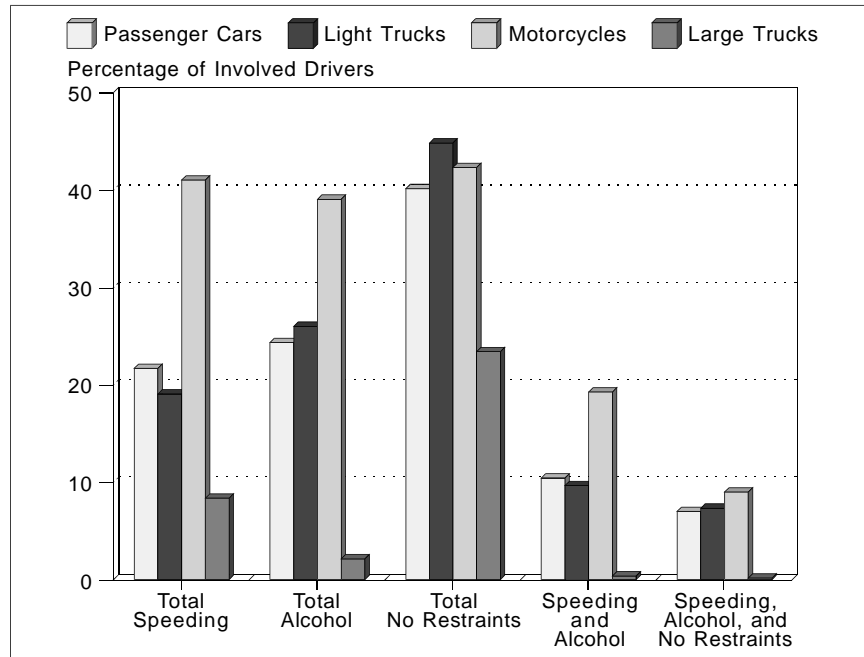
Figure 5. Percentages of Fatalities Related to Speeding and to Alcohol, 1987-1997



**“Speeding involvement for motorcyclists in fatal crashes was twice as high as for car and light truck drivers.”**

In 1997, 41 percent of all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes were speeding. The percentage of speeding involvement in fatal crashes was approximately twice as high for motorcyclists as for drivers of passenger cars or light trucks, and the percentage of alcohol involvement was more than 50 percent higher for motorcyclists.

Figure 6. Speeding, Alcohol Involvement, and Failure To Use Restraints Among Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes by Vehicle Type, 1997



**“Among drivers in fatal crashes in 1997, those who were not speeding were twice as likely to be wearing safety belts as those who were speeding at the time of the crash.”**

In 1997, only 37 percent of **speeding** passenger vehicle drivers under 21 years old who were involved in fatal crashes were wearing safety belts at the time of the crash. In contrast, 60 percent of **nonspeeding** drivers in the same age group were restrained. For drivers 21 years and older, the percentage of **speeding** drivers involved in fatal crashes who were using restraints at the time of the crash was 35 percent, but 65 percent of **nonspeeding** drivers in fatal crashes were restrained.

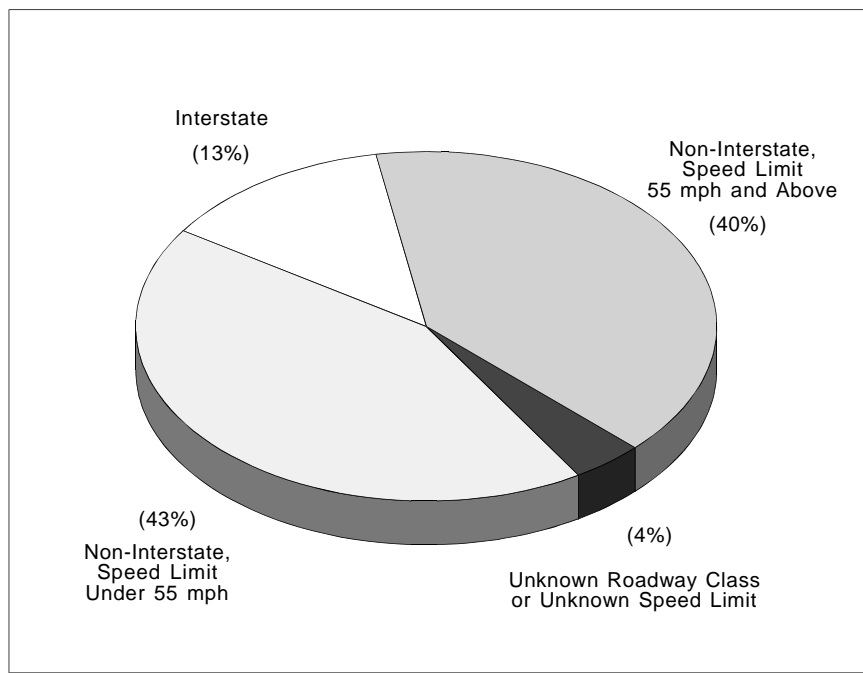
In 1997, 20 percent of **speeding** drivers involved in fatal crashes had an invalid license at the time of the crash, compared with 9 percent of **nonspeeding** drivers.

Speeding was a factor in 29 percent of the fatal crashes that occurred on dry roads in 1997 and in 32 percent of those that occurred on wet roads. Speeding was a factor in 50 percent of the fatal crashes that occurred when there was snow or slush on the road and in 57 percent of those that occurred on icy roads.

Speeding was involved in more than one-third of the fatal crashes that occurred in construction/maintenance zones in 1997.

In 1997, 86 percent of speeding-related fatalities occurred on roads that were not Interstate highways.

**Figure 7. Speeding-Related Fatalities by Road Type, 1997**



**“Only 13 percent of speeding-related fatalities occur on Interstate highways.”**

**For more information:**

Information on speeding involvement in 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/nscsa>. 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 2. Speeding-Related Traffic Fatalities and Costs by Road Type and Speed Limit, 1997

State	Total Traffic Fatalities	Speeding-Related Fatalities by Road Type and Speed Limit									Estimated Costs of Speeding-Related Crashes by Road Type (Million 1994 Dollars)		
		Total	Interstate		Non-Interstate						Total	Interstate	Non-Interstate
			>55 mph	≤55 mph	55 mph	50 mph	45 mph	40 mph	35 mph	<35 mph			
AL	1,189	417	48	1	118	9	133	24	40	25	476	60	416
AK	77	27	1	5	5	5	3	4	1	3	62	11	52
AZ	951	353	42	13	80	24	51	47	26	38	551	81	469
AR	660	198	15	2	114	1	19	4	16	18	283	33	251
CA	3,688	1,294	211	32	328	47	127	83	167	127	2,996	467	2,529
CO	613	259	29	26	58	8	23	25	29	38	429	75	354
CT	338	141	0	25	4	3	18	16	16	58	436	66	370
DE	143	48	0	3	5	25	1	4	4	6	86	9	77
DC	60	32	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	31	104	9	95
FL	2,782	768	73	24	97	28	113	55	85	91	1,677	245	1,432
GA	1,577	356	27	12	158	4	58	20	48	24	784	100	684
HI	131	42	0	8	4	4	8	1	9	8	121	19	103
ID	259	96	17	0	18	11	4	6	11	12	121	19	102
IL	1,395	452	41	33	206	1	28	12	56	75	1,201	175	1,025
IN	935	243	18	9	69	18	28	31	28	31	533	69	464
IA	468	61	4	1	29	2	4	0	6	15	210	26	183
KS	481	115	18	0	36	3	4	4	10	14	232	34	198
KY	857	247	14	7	170	0	10	0	31	11	413	48	364
LA	913	155	7	7	79	2	27	3	18	7	448	57	391
ME	192	69	6	0	3	10	24	6	11	5	135	16	119
MD	608	162	14	7	13	21	9	27	15	21	588	86	502
MA	442	156	12	4	7	10	16	29	17	61	723	94	628
MI	1,446	367	25	16	166	8	35	19	33	38	997	133	863
MN	600	136	3	8	83	4	7	1	2	15	341	40	300
MS	861	234	35	2	74	28	34	5	18	15	273	40	233
MO	1,192	460	59	17	184	1	23	23	35	35	701	107	594
MT	265	131	6	1	42	1	4	0	10	4	131	24	107
NE	302	70	7	0	8	24	4	2	4	6	161	20	141
NV	347	127	20	4	13	4	21	1	23	16	230	37	192
NH	125	37	3	1	3	3	1	3	13	10	85	11	75
NJ	774	74	0	3	4	11	9	14	10	22	1,004	131	874
NM	484	165	32	2	27	4	17	5	17	21	231	39	192
NY	1,643	452	4	13	157	12	36	37	15	111	2,280	273	2,008
NC	1,483	515	15	12	303	5	104	0	66	5	960	100	860
ND	105	58	5	0	40	0	0	2	1	6	64	7	57
OH	1,441	330	30	4	186	2	20	14	35	31	1,220	159	1,061
OK	838	358	53	3	85	8	64	17	22	10	434	64	370
OR	523	151	7	5	94	5	12	4	11	13	280	32	248
PA	1,557	449	27	16	136	11	82	64	63	43	1,042	128	914
RI	75	31	1	2	3	1	1	3	7	13	89	11	77
SC	903	446	32	12	159	12	95	17	64	24	521	62	459
SD	148	65	9	0	26	0	4	4	1	3	85	12	73
TN	1,223	323	18	9	80	16	58	38	50	51	566	65	501
TX	3,510	1,315	172	44	208	39	100	62	104	114	2,365	355	2,010
UT	366	113	35	0	14	7	7	11	5	5	179	37	142
VT	96	35	7	0	0	14	3	3	7	1	50	9	42
VA	984	277	32	14	132	0	40	8	33	18	633	94	539
WA	676	242	31	1	25	42	15	11	52	35	629	86	543
WV	379	99	10	2	44	5	11	11	9	5	183	24	159
WI	725	208	7	3	134	2	14	6	12	23	462	49	413
WY	137	77	22	0	9	0	2	1	1	3	85	20	64
<b>USA*</b>	<b>41,967</b>	<b>13,036</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>4,040</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>28,889</b>	<b>3,970</b>	<b>24,919</b>
PR	591	297	0	77	11	9	70	36	63	31	652	166	485

\*Of the total number of speeding-related fatalities in 1997, 6,054 occurred on roads with posted speed limits between 55 and 65 mph, and 844 occurred on roads with speed limits above 65 mph.

Notes: Totals may not equal sum of components due to independent rounding. The total column for speeding-related fatalities includes fatalities that occurred on roads for which the speed limit was unknown. The total column for costs of speeding-related crashes includes costs for crashes that occurred on unknown road types. Costs are based on preliminary estimates.