

# Traffic Safety Facts 1993

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



## Older Population

There are almost 23 million people age 70 years and older in the United States. In 1993, this age group made up 8.8 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 7.8 percent in 1983. From 1983 to 1993, this older segment of the population grew 2.5 times as fast as the total population.

There were 15.6 million older licensed drivers in 1993—a 55 percent increase from the number in 1983. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 14 percent from 1983 to 1993. Older drivers made up 8.9 percent of all licensed drivers in 1993, compared with 6.5 percent in 1983.

In 1993, these older individuals made up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities, 12 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 1993 occurred during the daytime (83 percent), on weekdays (56 percent), and involved another vehicle (73 percent).

In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was 2.5 times as likely to be the one that was struck (52 percent and 20 percent, respectively). In nearly half (46 percent) of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 25 percent, the older driver was turning left—8 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 1993, 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.”***

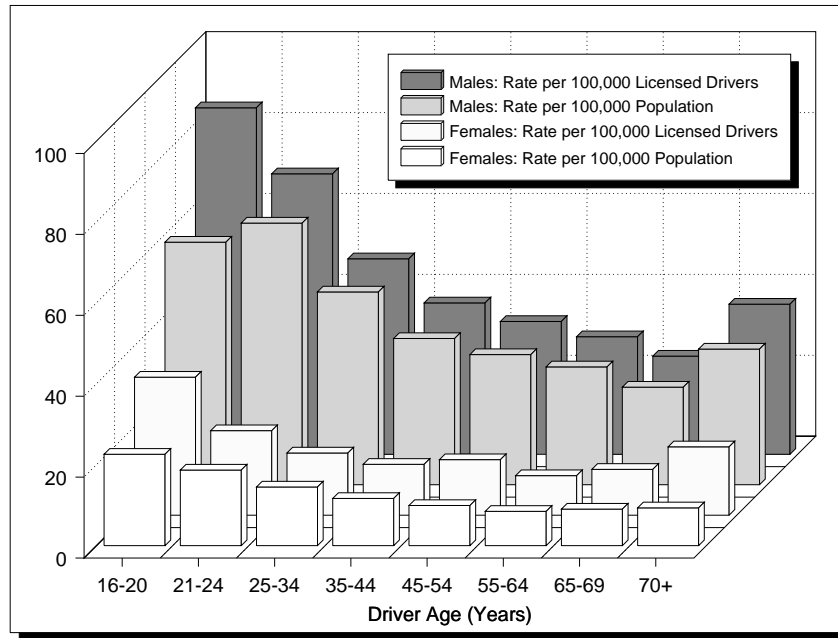
**Table 1. Age and Alcohol, 1993**

Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated
<16	380	13	3.5	818	42	5.1
16–20	7,245	1,175	16.2	280	95	33.8
21–34	19,424	5,677	29.2	1,232	647	52.5
35–54	15,685	3,237	20.6	1,481	688	46.5
55–69	5,413	610	11.3	722	201	27.8
70+	4,247	189	4.5	1,008	73	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>* 53,343</b>	<b>11,227</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>** 5,638</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>31.7</b>

\* Includes 949 drivers of unknown age.

\*\* Includes 97 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

Figure 1. Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 1993



***“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 1993 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 51 percent for other adult occupants.

For older people, 67 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 1993 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, 1983-1993

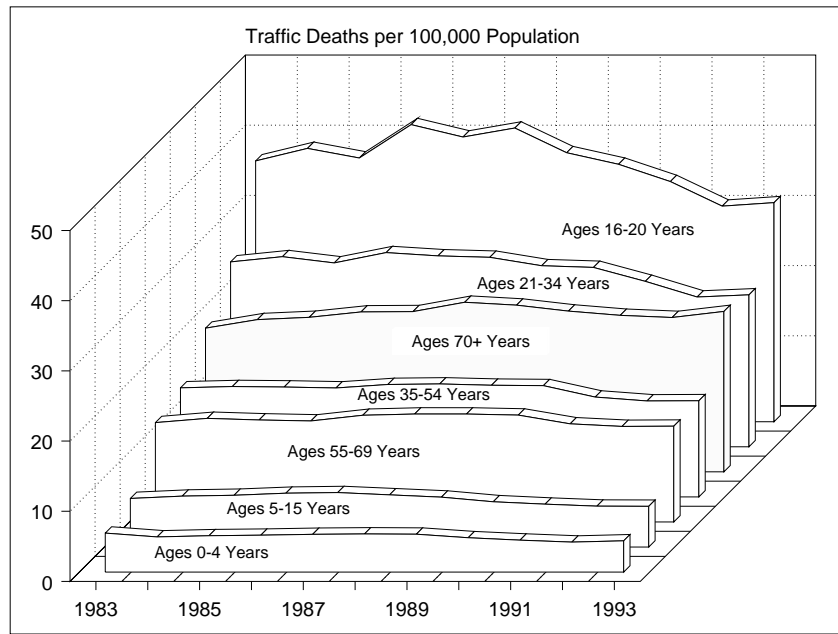


Table 2. Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1983 and 1993

	1983			1993			Percentage Change, 1983-1993		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<i>Population (thousands)</i>									
Total	234,284	18,242	7.8	257,909	22,772	8.8	+10%	+25%	+13%
Male	113,919	6,947	6.1	125,899	8,784	7.0	+11%	+26%	+14%
Female	120,365	11,295	9.4	132,010	13,988	10.6	+10%	+24%	+13%
<i>Licensed Drivers (thousands)</i>									
Total	154,221	10,096	6.5	175,878	15,645	9.0	+12%	+55%	+38%
Male	80,807	5,648	7.0	89,786	7,930	8.8	+11%	+40%	+26%
Female	73,414	4,448	6.1	86,092	7,715	9.0	+14%	+73%	+53%
<i>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</i>									
Total	54,656	2,668	4.9	53,343	4,247	8.0	-2%	+59%	+63%
Male	42,812	1,996	4.7	39,514	2,943	7.4	-8%	+47%	+60%
Female	10,958	672	6.1	13,064	1,304	10.0	+19%	+94%	+63%
<i>Driver Fatalities</i>									
Total	24,138	1,696	7.0	23,132	2,777	12.0	-4%	+64%	+71%
Male	19,322	1,279	6.6	17,297	1,909	11.0	-10%	+49%	+67%
Female	4,813	417	8.7	5,834	868	14.9	+21%	+108%	+72%
<i>Total Traffic Fatalities</i>									
Total	42,589	3,734	8.8	40,115	5,203	13.0	-6%	+39%	+48%
Male	30,499	2,184	7.2	27,293	2,878	10.5	-11%	+32%	+47%
Female	12,084	1,550	12.8	12,803	2,325	18.2	+6%	+50%	+42%
<i>Occupant Fatalities</i>									
Total	34,843	2,626	7.5	33,553	4,154	12.4	-4%	+58%	+64%
Male	24,957	1,541	6.2	22,590	2,279	10.1	-9%	+48%	+63%
Female	9,881	1,085	11.0	10,946	1,875	17.1	+11%	+73%	+56%
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities</i>									
Total	6,826	1,081	15.8	5,638	1,008	17.9	-17%	-7%	+13%
Male	4,775	619	13.0	3,923	560	14.3	-18%	-10%	+10%
Female	2,050	462	22.5	1,713	448	26.2	-16%	-3%	+16%

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”***