



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration



Research Note

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Older Driver Fatality Rates by State, 1998

Introduction

Older drivers age 65 and over are increasing in number. The number of fatal crashes in which they are involved is also increasing. This research note takes a look at the latest data available to formulate fatality rates for this segment of the population.

Older Population

Between 1988 and 1998 the number of people aged 65 and older grew from 30 to 34 million, a nationwide increase of about 14%. During that time period, every state but the District of Columbia (-5%) showed an increase. Twenty-seven states had population increases at a rate less than that of the nation, or less than a 14% change, while 23 states had percent increases greater than or equal to that of the nation. States whose population remained relatively flat (5% increase or less) include: Iowa (+2%), North Dakota (+2%), Nebraska (+4%), Kansas (+5%), West Virginia (+5%), South Dakota (+5%), Rhode Island (+5%) and New York (+5%). States that showed the highest percent change were Nevada (+79%), Alaska (+70%), Arizona (+38%), Hawaii (+37%) and Utah (+30%).

In terms of the total population, persons 65 years old and older make up 13% of the population (see Table). On a state by state basis, older people make up as little as 5% of the population in some states (Alaska) to as much as 18% of the population in others (Florida). The five states with the highest percentage of older persons are: Florida (18%), Pennsylvania (16%), Rhode Island (16%), West Virginia (15%) and Iowa (15%). The states with the lowest percentage of older persons are: Alaska (5%), Utah (9%), Texas (10%), Georgia (10%) and Colorado (10%).

Includes revised driver fatality rate per 100,000 registered vehicles for California.

Table 1. Population Estimates, Licensed Drivers, Registered Vehicles, Driver Fatality Rates, and Older Driver Fatality Rates

| State | 1998 Total Population (Thousands) | 1988 Older Population (Thousands) | 1998 Older Population (Thousands) | Percent Change (1988 vs 1998) | Older Drivers as % of Total Population | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Older Population | Licensed Drivers (Thousands) | Total Driver Fatalities | Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers | Older Driver Fatalities | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers | Registered Vehicles (Thousands) | Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Alabama | 4,352 | 507 | 568 | +12 | 13 | 20.1 | 3,434 | 726 | 21.1 | 114 | 3.3 | 3,903 | 18.6 | 2.9 |
| Alaska | 614 | 20 | 34 | +70 | 6 | 8.8 | 456 | 39 | 8.6 | 3 | 0.7 | 560 | 7.0 | 0.5 |
| Arizona | 4,669 | 446 | 618 | +39 | 13 | 13.6 | 3,198 | 473 | 14.8 | 84 | 2.6 | 2,998 | 15.8 | 2.8 |
| Arkansas | 2,538 | 343 | 363 | +6 | 14 | 18.2 | 1,918 | 398 | 20.8 | 66 | 3.4 | 1,775 | 22.4 | 3.7 |
| California | 32,667 | 3,003 | 3,615 | +20 | 11 | 6.7 | 20,499 | 1,707 | 8.3 | 242 | 1.2 | 26,004 | 6.6* | 0.9 |
| Colorado | 3,971 | 311 | 402 | +29 | 10 | 11.9 | 2,946 | 370 | 12.6 | 48 | 1.6 | 3,563 | 10.4 | 1.4 |
| Connecticut | 3,274 | 432 | 469 | +9 | 14 | 8.3 | 2,349 | 220 | 9.4 | 40 | 1.7 | 2,751 | 8.0 | 1.5 |
| Delaware | 744 | 77 | 96 | +25 | 13 | 19.8 | 546 | 79 | 14.5 | 19 | 3.5 | 627 | 12.6 | 3.0 |
| D.C. | 523 | 77 | 73 | -5 | 14 | 5.5 | 350 | 24 | 6.9 | 4 | 1.1 | 230 | 10.4 | 1.7 |
| Florida | 14,916 | 2,223 | 2,734 | +23 | 18 | 12.9 | 12,027 | 1,552 | 12.9 | 354 | 2.9 | 11,498 | 13.5 | 3.1 |
| Georgia | 7,642 | 627 | 755 | +20 | 10 | 21.5 | 5,316 | 1,000 | 18.8 | 162 | 3.0 | 6,980 | 14.3 | 2.3 |
| Hawaii | 1,193 | 115 | 158 | +37 | 13 | 3.8 | 746 | 71 | 9.5 | 6 | 0.8 | 724 | 9.8 | 0.8 |
| Idaho | 1,229 | 117 | 139 | +19 | 11 | 18.7 | 863 | 160 | 18.5 | 26 | 3.0 | 1,153 | 13.9 | 2.3 |
| Illinois | 12,045 | 1,404 | 1,496 | +7 | 12 | 8.3 | 7,701 | 831 | 10.8 | 124 | 1.6 | 9,510 | 8.7 | 1.3 |
| Indiana | 5,899 | 675 | 740 | +10 | 13 | 15.3 | 3,976 | 661 | 16.6 | 113 | 2.8 | 5,475 | 12.1 | 2.1 |
| Iowa | 2,862 | 421 | 431 | +2 | 15 | 16.5 | 1,950 | 290 | 14.9 | 71 | 3.6 | 3,182 | 9.1 | 2.2 |
| Kansas | 2,629 | 336 | 354 | +5 | 14 | 16.4 | 1,851 | 335 | 18.1 | 58 | 3.1 | 2,169 | 15.4 | 2.7 |
| Kentucky | 3,936 | 456 | 493 | +8 | 13 | 17.6 | 2,640 | 566 | 21.4 | 87 | 3.3 | 2,885 | 19.6 | 3.0 |
| Louisiana | 4,369 | 458 | 504 | +10 | 12 | 14.1 | 2,736 | 545 | 19.9 | 71 | 2.6 | 3,470 | 15.7 | 2.1 |
| Maine | 1,244 | 159 | 175 | +10 | 14 | 17.1 | 913 | 127 | 13.9 | 30 | 3.3 | 958 | 13.3 | 3.1 |
| Maryland | 5,135 | 495 | 592 | +20 | 12 | 9.1 | 3,178 | 334 | 11 | 54 | 1.7 | 3,793 | 8.8 | 1.4 |
| Massachusetts | 6,147 | 802 | 861 | +7 | 14 | 4.4 | 4,394 | 226 | 5.1 | 38 | 0.9 | 5,259 | 4.3 | 0.7 |
| Michigan | 9,817 | 1,071 | 1,223 | +14 | 13 | 12.1 | 6,803 | 832 | 12.2 | 148 | 2.2 | 8,283 | 10.0 | 1.8 |
| Minnesota | 4,725 | 536 | 583 | +9 | 12 | 15.1 | 2,868 | 403 | 14.1 | 88 | 3.1 | 4,306 | 9.4 | 2.0 |
| Mississippi | 2,752 | 316 | 336 | +6 | 12 | 32.4 | 1,758 | 633 | 36.0 | 109 | 6.2 | 2,287 | 27.7 | 4.8 |
| Missouri | 5,439 | 702 | 745 | +6 | 14 | 16.9 | 3,798 | 732 | 19.3 | 126 | 3.3 | 4,431 | 16.5 | 2.8 |
| Montana | 880 | 103 | 117 | +14 | 13 | 23.9 | 647 | 154 | 23.8 | 28 | 4.3 | 1,010 | 15.3 | 2.8 |
| Nebraska | 1,663 | 220 | 229 | +4 | 14 | 12.2 | 1,186 | 192 | 16.2 | 28 | 2.4 | 1,545 | 12.4 | 1.8 |

| State | 1998 Total Population (Thousands) | 1988 Older Population (Thousands) | 1998 Older Population (Thousands) | Percent Change (1988 vs 1998) | Older Drivers as % of Total Population | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Older Population | Licensed Drivers (Thousands) | Total Driver Fatalities | Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers | Older Driver Fatalities | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Licensed Drivers | Registered Vehicles (Thousands) | Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles | Older Driver Fatalities per 100,000 Registered Vehicles |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Nevada | 1,747 | 112 | 200 | +79 | 11 | 13.0 | 1,246 | 189 | 15.2 | 26 | 2.1 | 1,245 | 15.2 | 2.1 |
| New Hampshire | 1,185 | 121 | 142 | +17 | 12 | 12.0 | 907 | 90 | 9.9 | 17 | 1.9 | 1,085 | 8.3 | 1.6 |
| New Jersey | 8,115 | 1,002 | 1,106 | +10 | 14 | 7.8 | 5,563 | 403 | 7.2 | 86 | 1.6 | 5,881 | 6.9 | 1.5 |
| New Mexico | 1,737 | 153 | 198 | +29 | 11 | 15.2 | 1,204 | 214 | 17.8 | 30 | 2.5 | 1,627 | 13.2 | 1.8 |
| New York | 18,175 | 2,316 | 2,424 | +5 | 13 | 6.6 | 10,554 | 770 | 7.3 | 160 | 1.5 | 10,561 | 7.3 | 1.5 |
| North Carolina | 7,546 | 765 | 947 | +24 | 13 | 19.2 | 5,534 | 980 | 17.7 | 182 | 3.3 | 5,937 | 16.5 | 3.1 |
| North Dakota | 638 | 90 | 92 | +2 | 14 | 9.8 | 455 | 55 | 12.1 | 9 | 2.0 | 688 | 8.0 | 1.3 |
| Ohio | 11,209 | 1,362 | 1,501 | +10 | 13 | 9.9 | 7,941 | 920 | 11.6 | 148 | 1.9 | 10,269 | 9.0 | 1.4 |
| Oklahoma | 3,347 | 413 | 448 | +9 | 13 | 19.4 | 2,305 | 481 | 20.9 | 87 | 3.8 | 2,973 | 16.2 | 2.9 |
| Oregon | 3,282 | 374 | 433 | +16 | 13 | 15.7 | 2,417 | 307 | 12.7 | 68 | 2.8 | 3,045 | 10.1 | 2.2 |
| Pennsylvania | 12,001 | 1,777 | 1,904 | +7 | 16 | 9.3 | 8,405 | 952 | 11.3 | 178 | 2.1 | 9,170 | 10.4 | 1.9 |
| Rhode Island | 988 | 146 | 154 | +6 | 16 | 4.5 | 682 | 43 | 6.3 | 7 | 1.0 | 733 | 5.9 | 1.0 |
| South Carolina | 3,836 | 375 | 468 | +25 | 12 | 16.2 | 2,679 | 638 | 23.8 | 76 | 2.8 | 2,934 | 21.8 | 2.6 |
| South Dakota | 738 | 101 | 106 | +5 | 14 | 17.0 | 535 | 105 | 19.6 | 18 | 3.4 | 794 | 13.2 | 2.3 |
| Tennessee | 5,431 | 600 | 679 | +13 | 13 | 19.1 | 4,073 | 831 | 20.4 | 130 | 3.2 | 4,529 | 18.4 | 2.9 |
| Texas | 19,760 | 1,640 | 2,000 | +22 | 10 | 14.9 | 13,323 | 2,084 | 15.6 | 298 | 2.2 | 13,473 | 15.5 | 2.2 |
| Utah | 2,100 | 142 | 184 | +30 | 9 | 12.5 | 1,393 | 178 | 12.8 | 23 | 1.7 | 1,557 | 11.4 | 1.5 |
| Vermont | 591 | 65 | 73 | +12 | 12 | 12.3 | 497 | 58 | 11.7 | 9 | 1.8 | 513 | 11.3 | 1.8 |
| Virginia | 6,791 | 633 | 767 | +21 | 11 | 14.3 | 4,668 | 593 | 12.7 | 110 | 2.4 | 5,876 | 10.1 | 1.9 |
| Washington | 5,689 | 547 | 652 | +19 | 12 | 8.4 | 4,079 | 397 | 9.7 | 55 | 1.4 | 4,930 | 8.1 | 1.1 |
| West Virginia | 1,811 | 263 | 275 | +5 | 15 | 13.1 | 1,281 | 227 | 17.7 | 36 | 2.8 | 1,400 | 16.2 | 2.6 |
| Wisconsin | 5,224 | 637 | 691 | +9 | 13 | 11.9 | 3,710 | 452 | 12.2 | 82 | 2.2 | 4,374 | 10.3 | 1.9 |
| Wyoming | 481 | 45 | 56 | +24 | 12 | 21.4 | 359 | 96 | 26.7 | 12 | 3.3 | 575 | 16.7 | 2.1 |
| Total | 270,299 | 30,123 | 34,401 | +14 | 13 | 12.2 | 184,861 | 24,743 | 13.4 | 4,188 | 2.3 | 215,496 | 11.5 | 1.9 |

Sources: Fatalities - NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS),
1988 Population - Bureau of the Census,
Registered Vehicles & Licensed Drivers - Federal Highway Administration

Driver Fatality Rates

Resident Population

Sixty-five year old and older driver fatality rates give another picture of the states. The following states have the lowest older driver fatality rates per 100,000 older population: Hawaii (3.8), Massachusetts (4.4), Rhode Island (4.5), the District of Columbia (5.5) and New York (6.6). States with the highest fatality rates for this group of drivers include: Mississippi (32.4), Montana (23.9), Georgia (21.4), Wyoming (21.4) and Alabama (20.1).

Licensed Drivers

Comparing fatality rates for the older drivers with fatality rates for all drivers by state and licensed drivers, the states with the lowest rates for all drivers are not the same as for older drivers (see Table 1). In the case of all drivers killed per 100,000 licensed drivers, Massachusetts is lowest (5.1), followed closely by Rhode Island (6.3), the District of Columbia (6.9), New Jersey (7.2) and New York (7.3). For older drivers killed, Alaska (0.7), Hawaii (0.8) and Massachusetts (0.9) all have rates below 1 older driver per 100,000 licensed drivers. States that exceeded the national rate of 13.4 the most are Mississippi (36.0), Wyoming (26.7), Montana (23.8), South Carolina (23.8) and Kentucky (31.4). For the older drivers, rates are highest in two of the same states. In Mississippi, 6.2 older drivers were killed per 100,000 licensed drivers and in Montana the rate was 4.3 (see Table).

Registered Vehicles

The table shows the number of registered vehicles as well as the fatality rates for older drivers and all drivers per 100,000 registered vehicles within states. Massachusetts (4.3), Rhode Island (5.9), New Jersey (6.9), Alaska (7.0) and New York (7.3) are the states with the lowest fatality rates for all drivers. Three of these states - Alaska (0.5), Massachusetts (0.7), and Rhode Island (1.0) - also show the lowest rates for older drivers. Hawaii (0.8) and California (0.9) also have rates under one for these drivers. At the high end for all drivers are Mississippi (27.7), Arkansas (22.4), South Carolina (21.8), Kentucky (19.6) and Alabama (18.6). States with the highest rates for older drivers were Mississippi (4.8), Arkansas (3.7), Florida (3.1), Maine (3.1) and North Carolina (3.1).

For additional copies of this research note, please call (202)366-4198 or (toll free) 1-800-934-8517. For questions on data reported in this research, please contact Keith Poindexter at (202)366-0018. This research note and other general information on traffic safety may be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nscsa>.

National Center for Statistics & Analysis - Research & Development - 400 Seventh St. SW Washington, DC 20590

U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W., NRD-31
Washington, D.C. 20590