



# Traffic Safety Facts 2001

## Older Population



### *A Public Information Fact Sheet on Motor Vehicle and Traffic Safety Published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis*

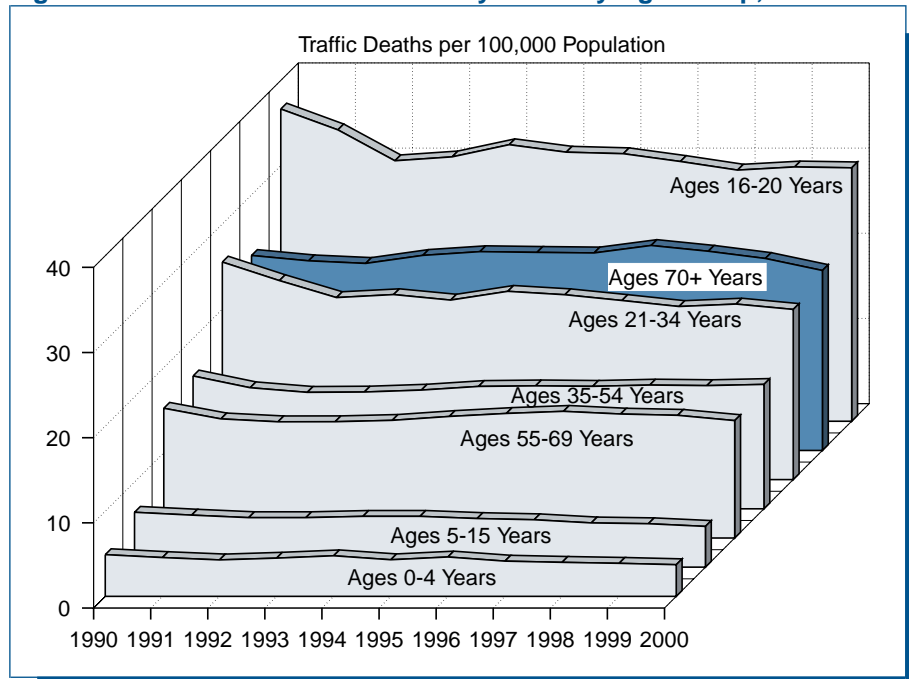
There are more than 25 million people age 70 years and older in the United States. In 2000, this age group made up 9.1 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 8.5 percent in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, this older segment of the population grew nearly twice as fast as the total population (2001 population data by age group not available).

There were 18.9 million older licensed drivers in 2000 (2001 data not available) — a 36 percent increase from the number in 1990. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 14 percent from 1990 to 2000. Older drivers made up 10 percent of all licensed drivers in 2000, compared with 8 percent in 1990.

In 2001, 159,000 older individuals were injured in traffic crashes, accounting for 5 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes during the year. 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 2001 occurred during the daytime (82 percent), on weekdays (71 percent), and involved another vehicle (73 percent).

**Figure 1. Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates by Age Group, 1990-2000**



Note: 2001 population data by age group not available.

***“In 2001, older people accounted for 13 percent of all traffic fatalities and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.”***

In 2001, NHTSA began using a revised method — **multiple imputation** — to estimate missing information about blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels for persons involved in fatal crashes. The alcohol estimates in this fact sheet are based on the new imputation method. More information on the new multiple imputation method, including detailed tabulations of alcohol involvement in various categories (age, sex, time of day, etc.), is available in NHTSA Technical Report DOT HS 809 403, *Transitioning to Multiple Imputation: A New Method to Estimate Missing Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Values in FARS*.

Older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest proportion of intoxication — with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.08 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.

**Table 1. Age and Alcohol, 2001**

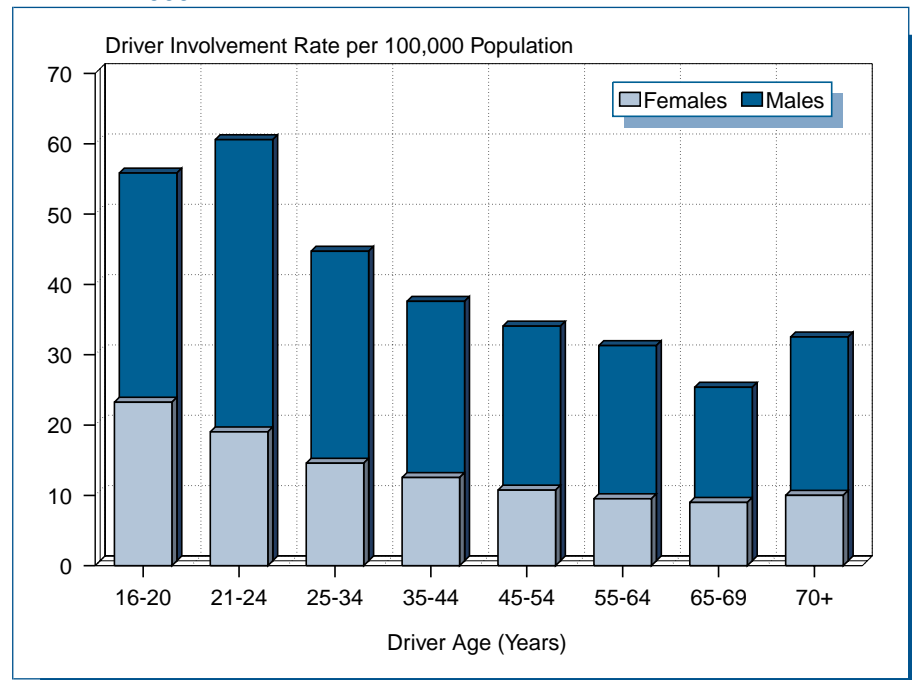
Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated
<16	290	33	11	484	13	3
16–20	7,963	1,419	18	297	86	29
21–34	17,550	5,203	30	837	414	49
35–54	19,508	4,447	23	1,694	814	48
55–69	6,311	677	11	638	175	27
70+	4,808	239	5	870	60	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>*57,480</b>	<b>12,293</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>**4,882</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>33</b>

\*Includes 1,050 drivers of unknown age.

\*\*Includes 62 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

**“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2001 had the lowest proportion of intoxication of all adult drivers.”**

**Figure 2. Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 2000**



Note: 2001 population data by age group not available.

**“In two-vehicle fatal crashes with an older and a younger driver, the older driver’s vehicle was 3 times as likely to be the one that was struck.”**

Three-fourths (75 percent) of all older occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes were using restraints at the time of the crash, compared to 59 percent for other adult occupants (18 to 69 years old).

For older people, 64 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 2001 occurred at non-intersection locations. For other pedestrians, 82 percent of fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations. In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was almost 3 times as likely to be the one that was struck (56 percent and 20 percent, respectively). In 46 percent of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 26 percent, the older driver was turning left — 6 times as often as the younger driver.

**Table 2. Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1991 and 2001**

	1991			2001			Percentage Change, 1991-2001		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<i>Population (thousands)*</i>									
Total	249,464	21,164	8.5	281,422	25,458	9.0	+13%	+20%	+6%
Male	121,626	8,053	6.6	138,054	10,009	7.3	+14%	+24%	+11%
Female	127,838	13,111	10.3	143,368	15,449	10.8	+12%	+18%	+5%
<i>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</i>									
Total	54,391	3,865	7.1	57,480	4,808	8.4	+6%	+24%	+18%
Male	40,731	2,716	6.7	41,711	3,257	7.8	+2%	+20%	+16%
Female	12,825	1,149	9.0	14,867	1,551	10.4	+16%	+35%	+16%
<i>Driver Fatalities</i>									
Total	23,930	2,494	10.4	25,840	3,164	12.2	+8%	+27%	+17%
Male	18,125	1,750	9.7	19,184	2,112	11.0	+6%	+21%	+13%
Female	5,805	744	12.8	6,617	1,052	15.9	+14%	+41%	+24%
<i>Total Traffic Fatalities</i>									
Total	41,508	4,843	11.7	42,116	5,394	12.8	+1%	+11%	+9%
Male	28,545	2,678	9.4	28,878	3,026	10.5	+1%	+13%	+12%
Female	12,953	2,165	16.7	13,168	2,368	18.0	+2%	+9%	+8%
<i>Occupant Fatalities</i>									
Total	34,740	3,750	10.8	36,386	4,470	12.3	+5%	+19%	+14%
Male	23,745	2,068	8.7	24,735	2,476	10.0	+4%	+20%	+15%
Female	10,987	1,682	15.3	11,590	1,994	17.2	+5%	+19%	+12%
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities</i>									
Total	5,801	1,044	18.0	4,882	870	17.8	-16%	-17%	-1%
Male	3,985	568	14.3	3,400	502	14.8	-15%	-12%	+3%
Female	1,815	476	26.2	1,474	368	25.0	-19%	-23%	-5%

\*Population data are for 1990 and 2000. Population data by age group for 2001 were not available at the time of publication.

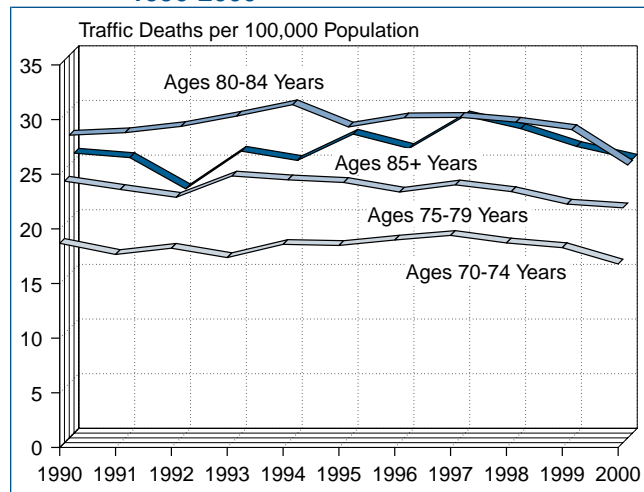
### Older Population Age Groups

The following table and graphs provide data for subgroups of the older population: 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, and 85+ years.

**Table 3. Driver Involvement in Fatal Crashes and Pedestrian Fatalities in the Older Population by Age Group, 2001**

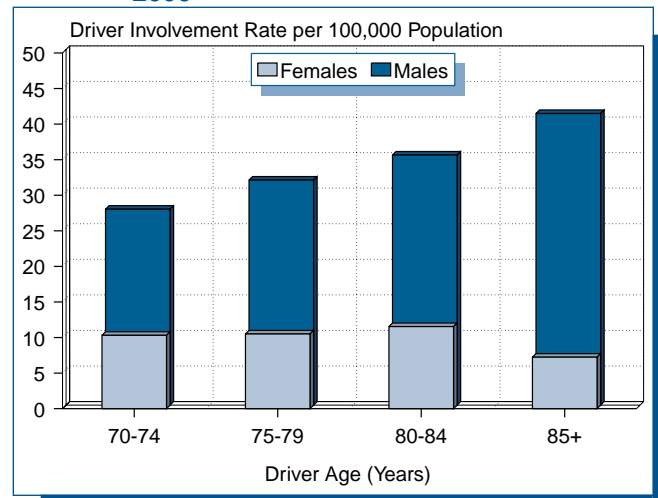
	Age Group (years)				
	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Total
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	1,527	1,493	1,072	716	<b>4,808</b>
Pedestrian Fatalities	222	224	249	175	<b>870</b>

**Figure 3. Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates in the Older Population by Age Group, 1990-2000**



Note: 2001 population data by age group not available.

**Figure 4. Involvement Rates for Older Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Age Group and Sex, 2000**



Note: 2001 population data by age group not available.

#### For more information:

Information on the older population is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NPO-121, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. NCSA information can also be obtained by telephone or by fax-on-demand 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-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nca>. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

Other fact sheets available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis are *Overview, Alcohol, Occupant Protection, Speeding, Children, Young Drivers, Pedestrians, Pedalcyclists, Motorcycles, Large Trucks, School Transportation-Related Crashes, State Traffic Data, and State Alcohol Estimates*. Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System*.