

Traffic Safety Facts 1993

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



Alcohol

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines a fatal traffic crash as being alcohol-related if either a driver or a nonoccupant (e.g., pedestrian) had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater in a police-reported traffic crash. Persons with a BAC of 0.10 g/dl or greater involved in fatal crashes are considered to be intoxicated. This is the legal limit of intoxication in most states.

Traffic fatalities in alcohol-related crashes dropped by 2 percent from 1992 to 1993. The 17,461 alcohol-related fatalities in 1993 (44 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year) represent a 26 percent reduction from the 23,646 alcohol-related fatalities reported in 1983 (56 percent of the total).

NHTSA estimates that alcohol was involved in 44 percent of fatal crashes and in 7 percent of all crashes in 1993.

The 17,461 fatalities in alcohol-related crashes during 1993 represent an average of one alcohol-related fatality every 30 minutes.

About 289,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present—an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes.

More than 1.6 million drivers were arrested in 1992 for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This is an arrest rate of 1 for every 108 licensed drivers in the United States (1993 data not yet available).

About 2 in every 5 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

In 1993, 35 percent of all traffic fatalities occurred in crashes in which at least one driver or nonoccupant had a BAC of 0.10 g/dl or higher. More than two-thirds of the 13,984 people killed in such crashes were themselves intoxicated. The remaining one-third were passengers, nonintoxicated drivers, or nonintoxicated nonoccupants.

Table 1. Types of Fatalities in Fatal Crashes Involving at Least One Intoxicated Driver or Nonoccupant, 1993

Type of Fatality	Number	Percent of Total
Intoxicated Drivers	7,578	54
Nonintoxicated Drivers	938	7
Passengers	2,917	21
Intoxicated Nonoccupants (Pedestrians and Pedalcyclists)	1,936	14
Nonintoxicated Nonoccupants	615	4
Total Fatalities	13,984	100

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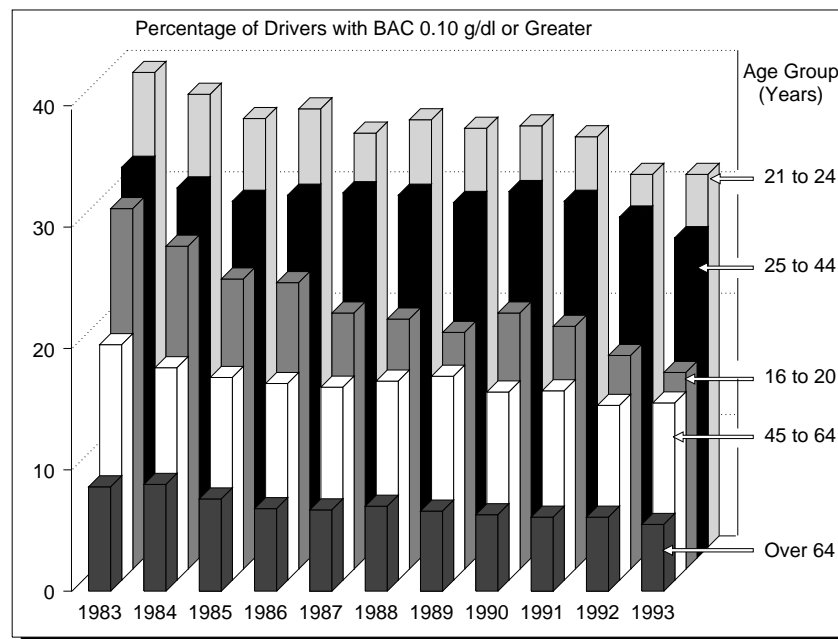
The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is over 3 times as high at night as during the day (65.3 percent vs. 19.5 percent). For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is 6 times as high at night (14.7 percent vs. 2.5 percent).

In 1993, 33.5 percent of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 56.9 percent on weekends. For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate was 4 percent during the week and 12 percent during the weekend.

From 1983 to 1993, intoxication rates decreased for drivers of all age groups involved in fatal crashes, with the youngest and oldest drivers experiencing the largest decreases. For drivers 65 and older, intoxication rates dropped from 9.8 percent in 1983 to 5.5 percent in 1993, a decline of 44 percent; for drivers 16 to 20 years of age, intoxication rates dropped by 47 percent, from 30.3 percent in 1983 to 16.2 percent in 1993.

“From 1983 to 1993, intoxication rates decreased for drivers of all age groups involved in fatal crashes.”

Figure 1. Intoxicated Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Age Group, 1983-1993



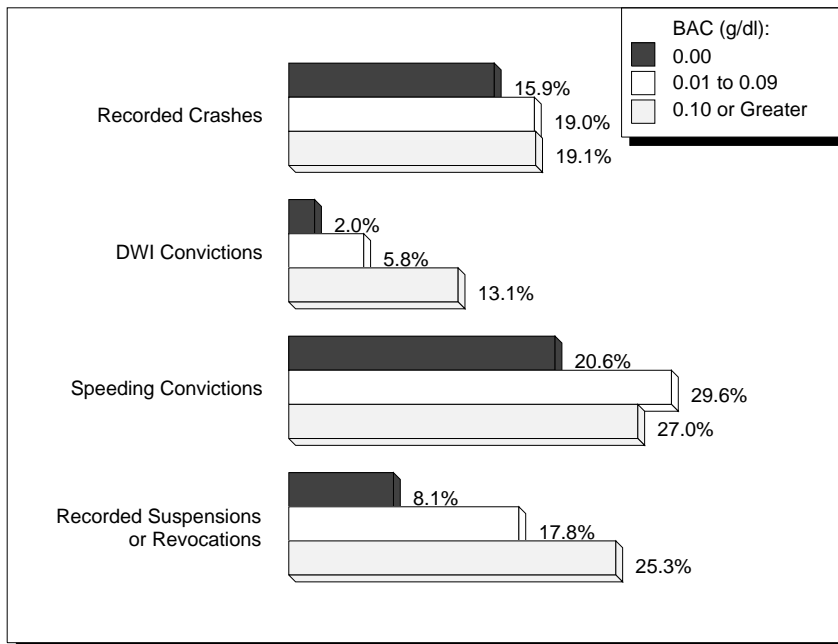
The highest intoxication rates in fatal crashes in 1993 were recorded for drivers 21 to 24 years old (30.7 percent), followed by ages 25 to 34 (28.5 percent) and 35 to 44 (23.6 percent). These three groups have also shown the smallest reductions since 1983 (21.5 percent, 18.1 percent, and 14.5 percent, respectively).

Intoxication rates in 1993 were highest for motorcycle operators (32.9 percent) and lowest for drivers of large trucks (1.7 percent). The intoxication rate for drivers of light trucks was higher than that for passenger car drivers (24.9 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively).

Safety belts were used by only about 16.0 percent of the fatally injured *intoxicated* drivers (BAC of 0.10 g/dl or greater), compared to 26.4 percent of fatally injured *impaired* drivers (BAC between 0.01 g/dl and 0.09 g/dl) and 41.5 percent of fatally injured sober drivers.

Fatally injured drivers with BAC levels of 0.10 g/dl or greater were about 6 times as likely to have a prior conviction for driving while intoxicated compared to fatally injured sober drivers (13.1 percent and 2.0 percent, respectively).

Figure 2. Previous Driving Records of Drivers Killed in Traffic Crashes, by Blood Alcohol Concentration, 1993



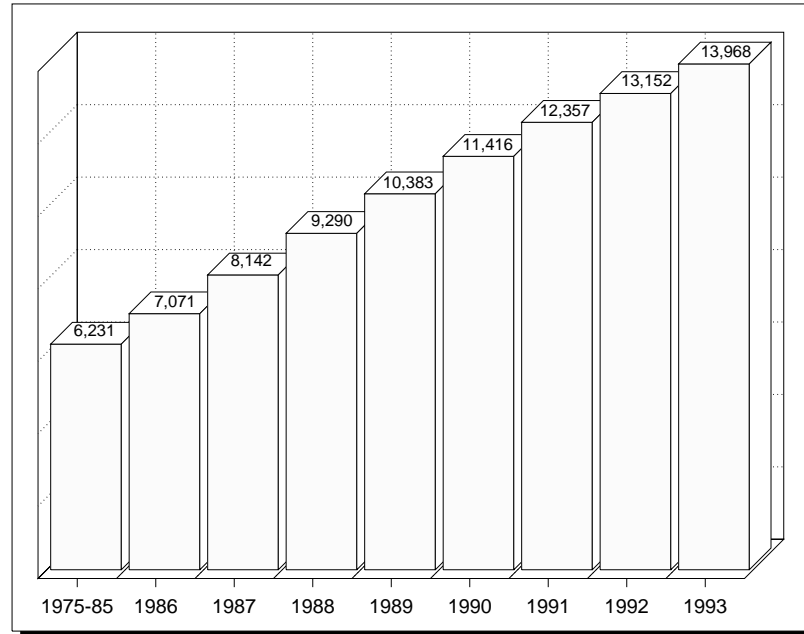
“More than one-third of all pedestrians 16 years of age or older killed in traffic crashes in 1993 were intoxicated.”

More than one-third of all pedestrians 16 years of age or older killed in traffic crashes in 1993 were intoxicated. By age group, the percentages ranged from a low of 10.6 for pedestrians 65 years and older to a high of 53.2 percent for those 25 to 34 years old.

The driver, pedestrian, or both were intoxicated in 40.1 percent of all fatal pedestrian crashes in 1993. In these crashes, the intoxication rate for pedestrians was more than twice the rate for drivers—32.0 percent and 15.1 percent, respectively. Both the pedestrian and the driver were intoxicated in 7.0 percent of the crashes that resulted in a pedestrian fatality.

All states and the District of Columbia now have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws. NHTSA estimates that these laws have reduced traffic fatalities involving drivers 18 to 20 years old by 13 percent and have saved an estimated 13,968 lives since 1975.

Figure 3. Cumulative Estimated Number of Lives Saved by Minimum Drinking Age Laws, 1975-1993



“NHTSA estimates that minimum drinking age laws have saved 13,968 lives since 1975.”

On the following pages, Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present summary data on alcohol involvement in fatal crashes in 1993, compared with 1983 data.

For more information:

Information on alcohol 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 (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”

Table 2. Alcohol Involvement in Fatal Crashes, 1983 and 1993

	1983		1993		Change in Percentage, 1983-1993
	Number	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater *	Number	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater *	
Fatal Crashes	37,976	44.7	35,747	35.0	-22%
Total Fatalities	42,589	45.0	40,115	34.9	-22%

* For any person (occupant or nonoccupant) involved in the fatal crash.

Table 3. Alcohol Involvement for Drivers in Fatal Crashes, 1983 and 1993

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	1983		1993		Change in Percentage, 1983-1993
	Number of Drivers	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Drivers	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Total Drivers</i>					
Total *	54,656	29.0	53,343	21.0	-28%
<i>Drivers by Age Group (Years)</i>					
16-20	9,334	29.7	7,245	16.2	-45%
21-24	8,432	39.1	6,395	30.7	-21%
25-34	14,470	34.8	13,029	28.5	-18%
35-44	8,068	27.6	9,721	23.6	-14%
45-64	8,854	19.4	9,791	14.6	-25%
Over 64	4,026	8.6	5,833	5.5	-36%
<i>Drivers by Sex</i>					
Male	42,812	31.4	39,514	23.7	-25%
Female	10,958	18.5	13,064	12.1	-35%
<i>Drivers by Vehicle Type</i>					
Passenger Cars	33,069	29.7	29,941	20.7	-30%
Light Trucks	11,017	33.3	15,151	24.9	-25%
Large Trucks	4,790	4.5	4,263	1.7	-62%
Motorcycles	4,288	40.8	2,465	32.9	-19%

* Numbers shown for groups of drivers do not add to the total number of drivers due to unknown or other data not included.

Table 4. Alcohol Involvement for Drivers Killed in Fatal Crashes, 1983 and 1993

Driver Fatalities	1983		1993		Change in Percentage, 1983-1993
	Number of Driver Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Driver Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Total Driver Fatalities</i>					
Total	24,138	42.5	23,132	32.9	-23%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Crash Type and Time of Day</i>					
Single-Vehicle	12,160	58.1	11,152	48.9	-16%
Daytime *	3,743	30.5	4,062	23.1	-24%
Nighttime **	8,226	70.6	6,879	63.9	-10%
Multiple-Vehicle	11,978	26.6	11,980	18.0	-32%
Daytime *	6,267	11.4	7,295	7.0	-39%
Nighttime **	5,710	43.3	4,670	35.1	-19%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Day of Week</i>					
Weekday ***	13,424	34.3	13,524	24.8	-28%
Weekend ****	10,707	52.7	9,600	44.4	-16%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Time of Day</i>					
Daytime *	10,010	18.5	11,357	12.8	-31%
Nighttime **	13,936	59.4	11,549	52.3	-12%
<i>Driver Fatalities by Day of Week and Time of Day</i>					
Weekday ***					
Daytime *	7,186	15.2	8,305	10.4	-32%
Nighttime **	6,170	56.4	5,125	47.2	-16%
Weekend ****					
Daytime *	2,823	27.1	3,052	19.1	-29%
Nighttime **	7,766	61.8	6,424	56.2	-9%

* 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

** 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

*** Monday 6:00 AM to Friday 6:00 PM.

**** Friday 6:00 PM to Monday 6:00 AM.

Table 5. Alcohol Involvement for Nonoccupants Killed in Fatal Crashes, 1983 and 1993

Nonoccupant Fatalities	1983		1993		Change in Percentage, 1983-1993
	Number of Nonoccupant Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	Number of Nonoccupant Fatalities	Percentage with BAC 0.10 g/dl or Greater	
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities by Age Group (Years)</i>					
16-20	601	40.9	280	33.8	-17%
21-24	585	56.1	290	50.4	-10%
25-34	1,081	54.8	942	53.2	-3%
35-44	679	48.4	907	50.6	+5%
45-64	1,248	40.3	1,052	35.0	-13%
Over 64	1,388	13.5	1,252	10.6	-21%
Total *	6,826	33.2	5,638	31.7	-4%
<i>Pedalcyclist Fatalities</i>					
Total	839	14.3	814	17.5	+22%

* Includes pedestrians under 16 years old and pedestrians of unknown age.