

Early Estimates of 2019 Motor Vehicle Traffic Data Show Reduced Fatalities for Third Consecutive Year

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The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration today released preliminary estimates for the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2019 data on highway crashes showing a continued decline in traffic fatalities. The nation saw a decline in traffic deaths during 2018 and 2017, and these newest estimates suggest a continuing decline in traffic-related deaths.

"Safety is our top priority so this report that traffic fatalities appear to have decreased again for the third year is great news," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Fatalities decreased in most major traffic safety categories:

- Drivers (down 3%)
- Passengers (down 4%)
- Motorcyclists (down 1%)
- Pedestrians (down 2%)
- Pedalcyclists (down 3%)

[View the 2019 Early Estimates](#)

A statistical projection of traffic fatalities for 2019 shows that an estimated 36,120 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes. This represents an estimated decrease of about 440 (down 1.2%) from the reported 36,560 fatalities in 2018, even though Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) increased by 0.9%. As a result, the fatality rate for 2019 was 1.10 fatalities per 100 million VMT, down from 1.13 fatalities per 100 million VMT in 2018. If these estimates are reflected in the final data, the fatality rate per 100 million VMT would be the second lowest since NHTSA started recording fatal crash data.

This new data also shows that nine out of 10 NHTSA regions are estimated to have decreases in traffic-related fatalities in 2019.

"Providing effective behavioral safety programs is one of NHTSA's top safety missions," said NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens. "And we know that without the unyielding efforts from our determined and passionate safety partners at the state and local levels, we could never achieve the projected drop in traffic-related fatalities that have been announced today."

Fatalities in crashes involving at least one large truck are projected to increase slightly by 1%. The FARS data do not distinguish whether trucks are privately owned or not. FARS counts or estimates any large truck (gross vehicle weight rating > 10,000 lbs.) on a public highway involved in crashes, including large pickup trucks.

Last year, the Department established an intermodal truck and bus working group that focuses on increasing safety and reducing truck and bus-related crashes.

NHTSA has accelerated its efforts to continue the decline of traffic fatalities. In February, NHTSA released [\\$562 million in grants](#) for highway safety programs to the Offices of Highway Safety in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The grants were issued to help state and local law enforcement agencies enhance their traffic safety efforts to combat risky driving behaviors.

The fatality counts for 2018 and 2019 and the ensuing percentage change from 2018 to 2019 will be further revised as the final file for 2018 and the annual reporting file for 2019 become available later this year. These estimates may be further refined when the projections for the first quarter of 2020 are released in late spring of 2020.

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