

## NHTSA Data Estimates Indicate Traffic Fatalities Continued to Rise at Record Pace in First Nine Months of 2021

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*USDOT's recently announced first-of-its-kind safety strategy provides the blueprint for stakeholders across sectors to act to address rising traffic fatalities*

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The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released its [early estimate of traffic fatalities for the first nine months of 2021](#).

NHTSA projects that an estimated 31,720 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes from January through September 2021, an increase of approximately 12% from the 28,325 fatalities projected for the first nine months of 2020. The projection is the highest number of fatalities during the first nine months of any year since 2006 and the highest percentage increase during the first nine months in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System's history.

The new estimates come days after the U.S. Department of Transportation released the federal government's first-ever [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), a roadmap to address the national crisis in roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

"This is a national crisis. We cannot and must not accept these deaths as an inevitable part of everyday life," said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "The good news is we now have a strategy, as well as the resources and programs to deliver it, thanks to the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The National Roadway Safety Strategy is America's first-ever national, comprehensive plan to significantly reduce deaths and injuries on our roads."

"We have to change a culture that accepts as inevitable the loss of tens of thousands of people in traffic crashes," said Dr. Steven Cliff, NHTSA's Deputy Administrator. "This will require a transformational and collaborative approach to safety on our nation's roads."

The early estimate report released today also provides the first look at state-level traffic fatality estimates during the pandemic. Compared to 2020, NHTSA projects that during the first nine months of 2021, fatalities increased in 38 states, remained flat in two states, and decreased in 10 states and the District of Columbia.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, vehicle miles traveled in the first nine months of 2021 increased by about 244 billion miles, an 11.7% increase from the same time in 2020.

The fatality rate for the first nine months of 2021 increased to 1.36 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, a marginal increase from the projected rate of 1.35 fatalities in the same time in 2020. However, the fatality rates in the second and third quarters of 2021 declined compared to 2020.