

NHTSA Early Estimates Show Record Increase in Fatalities Nationwide

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration today released its [early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first quarter of 2022](#).

NHTSA estimates that 9,560 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in the first quarter of 2022. This is an increase of about 7% as compared to the 8,935 fatalities projected for the same quarter in 2021. This would be the highest number of first-quarter fatalities since 2002.

According to NHTSA's early estimates, the fatality rate for the first quarter of 2022 increased to 1.27 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up from the projected rate of 1.25 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles in the first quarter of 2021.

NHTSA recently began breaking out fatality trends by state for these quarterly estimates. While fatalities increased nationwide, 19 states and Puerto Rico saw traffic deaths decline during this period. NHTSA will continue to monitor state-by-state numbers to make it easier for state practitioners, researchers and advocates to see if there is a trend and if there are activities these states are undertaking that are contributing to this decline.

"The overall numbers are still moving in the wrong direction. Now is the time for all states to double down on traffic safety. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, there are more resources than ever for research, interventions and effective messaging and programs that can reverse the deadly trend and save lives," said Dr. Steven Cliff, NHTSA's Administrator.

Ending traffic fatalities across the country is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Transportation and the entire Biden-Harris Administration. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), makes significant investments in highway safety. In January, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced the National Roadway Safety Strategy, which includes a special focus on reducing traffic fatalities. The long-term plan aims to save lives by focusing on safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and post-crash care.

As part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) to prevent traffic deaths, NHTSA launched a public education campaign last month to address one of America's most dangerous driving behaviors – speeding. NHTSA's [Speeding Wrecks Lives campaign](#) aims to change general attitudes toward speeding and remind drivers of the deadly consequences. In addition to education campaigns, NHTSA regional offices are working closely with States to assist them in directing NHTSA formula grant funds to address risky driving behaviors such as speeding and driving while impaired, protect vulnerable road users, and reach over-represented and underserved populations using a broad array of programs and countermeasures.

NHTSA has also launched its annual [Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Labor Day](#) high-visibility enforcement campaign, which focuses on preventing impaired driving and improving safety for all road users.

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