

NHTSA Estimates Traffic Fatalities Continued to Decline in the First Half of 2023

Traffic fatalities declined for five straight quarters, NHTSA estimates

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration today released its [early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first half of 2023](#), estimating that traffic fatalities declined for the fifth straight quarter. An estimated 19,515 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, representing a decrease of about 3.3% as compared to 20,190 fatalities in the first half of 2022. Fatalities declined in both the first and second quarters of 2023.

Continuing the trend identified in the [first quarter estimates](#) released in June, preliminary data shows vehicle miles traveled in the first half of 2023 increased by about 35.1 billion miles, roughly 2.3% higher than the same time last year. More miles driven combined with fewer traffic deaths resulted in a fatality rate of 1.24 fatalities per 100 million VMT, down from the projected rate of 1.31 fatalities per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2023.

"After spiking during the pandemic, traffic deaths are continuing to slowly come down—but we still have a long way to go," U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said. "Safety has always been the core mission of this Department, and thanks to President Biden, we are delivering unprecedented resources to communities across the country to make their streets safer."

"While we are encouraged to see traffic fatalities continue to decline from the height of the pandemic, there's still significantly more work to be done," NHTSA Acting Administrator Ann Carlson said. "NHTSA is addressing traffic safety in many ways, including new rulemakings for lifesaving vehicle technologies and increased Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for state highway safety offices. We will continue to work with our safety partners to meet the collective goal of zero fatalities."

NHTSA estimates a decrease in fatalities in 29 states, while 21 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, are projected to have experienced increases.

NHTSA has announced several safety initiatives aimed at reducing traffic deaths, including proposed rulemakings to require automatic emergency braking systems in [passenger cars](#), [light trucks](#) and [heavy vehicles](#).

The agency has also published a proposed rule for [seat belt warning systems](#) and issued a [Standing General Order](#) to collect more data about crashes that occur when automated driving systems and advanced driver assistance systems are engaged.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests billions into roadway safety, including programs to help states improve driver behavior and prevent traffic crashes and fatalities. In Fiscal Year 2023, states received \$886 million in highway safety formula grants and are using those funds to address risky driving behaviors, protect vulnerable road users, and engage new partners to strengthen their programs.

In addition, in January 2022, Secretary Buttigieg announced the [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), which includes a special focus on reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The NRSS aims to save lives by focusing on safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and post-crash care.

The Department of Transportation also launched the next phase of the National Roadway Safety Strategy, the [Call to Action campaign](#), and released a one-year progress report with accompanying data visualizations that highlight the extent and magnitude of the U.S. roadway safety problem and ways to eventually bring the number of deaths on our roads to zero.

The Department's other roadway safety actions include:

- Produced the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to guide states on required 2023 assessments.
- Issued the Complete Streets Report to Congress: Moving to a Complete Streets Design Model.
- Issued a final rule on rear impact guards.
- Advanced the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices rulemaking effort, analyzing and resolving the more than 25,000 public comments.
- Published an Advance Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning speed limiters with a motor-carrier-based approach.
- Initiated formal rulemakings on automatic emergency braking, including pedestrian AEB

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