

Traffic Safety Facts 1995

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



Older Population



REVISED:
Includes revised 1995
population estimates.

There are more than 23.6 million people age 70 years and older in the United States. In 1995, this age group made up 9 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 8 percent in 1985. From 1985 to 1995, this older segment of the population grew 2.3 times as fast as the total population.

There were 16.5 million older licensed drivers in 1995—a 47 percent increase from the number in 1985. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 13 percent from 1985 to 1995. Older drivers made up 9 percent of all licensed drivers in 1995, compared with 7 percent in 1985.

In 1995, 156,000 older individuals were injured in traffic crashes, accounting for 5 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes during the year. These older individuals made up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities, 13 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 1995 occurred during the daytime (82 percent), on weekdays (72 percent), and involved another vehicle (75 percent).

In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was about 3 times as likely to be the one that was struck (55 percent and 18 percent, respectively). In 46 percent of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 27 percent, the older driver was turning left—8 times as often as the younger driver.

Older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest proportion of intoxication—with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater—of all adult drivers. Fatally injured older pedestrians also had the lowest intoxication rate of all adult pedestrian fatalities.

“In 1995, older people made up 9 percent of the resident population but accounted for 13 percent of all traffic fatalities and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.”

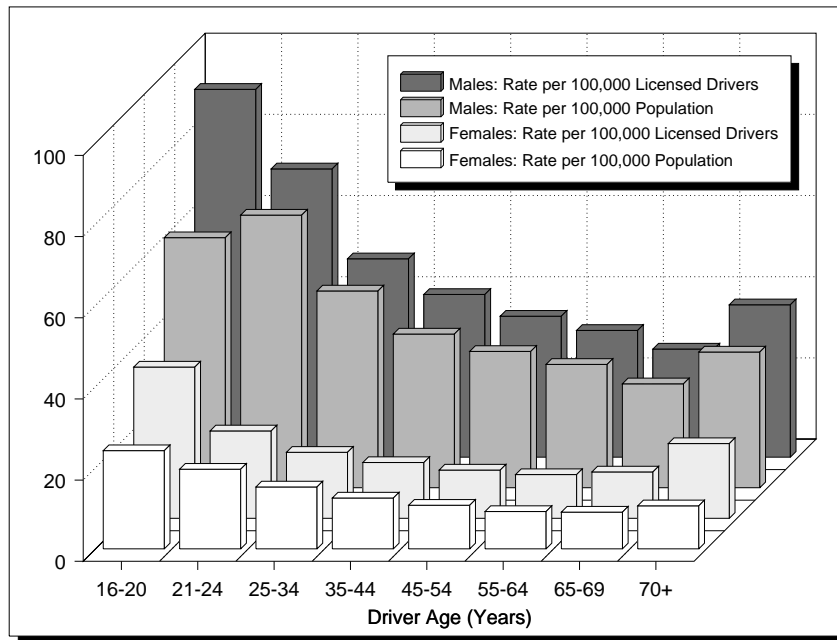
Table 1. Age and Alcohol, 1995

Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated	Total	Intoxicated	Percentage Intoxicated
<16	415	18	4.4	754	27	3.6
16-20	7,738	985	12.7	294	91	31.0
21-34	19,297	5,243	27.2	1,124	549	48.9
35-54	17,475	3,483	19.9	1,616	743	45.9
55-69	5,718	627	11.0	733	197	26.9
70+	4,593	191	4.2	1,005	83	8.3
Total	*56,155	10,855	19.3	**5,585	1,714	30.7

* Includes 919 drivers of unknown age.

** Includes 59 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

Figure 1. Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 1995



“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 1995 had the lowest proportion of intoxication of all adult drivers.”

Two-thirds (67 percent) of all older occupants of passenger cars involved in fatal crashes were using restraints at the time of the crash, compared to 55 percent for other adult occupants.

For older people, 66 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 1995 occurred at non-intersection locations. For other pedestrians, 83 percent of fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations.

Figure 2. Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates by Age Group, 1985-1995

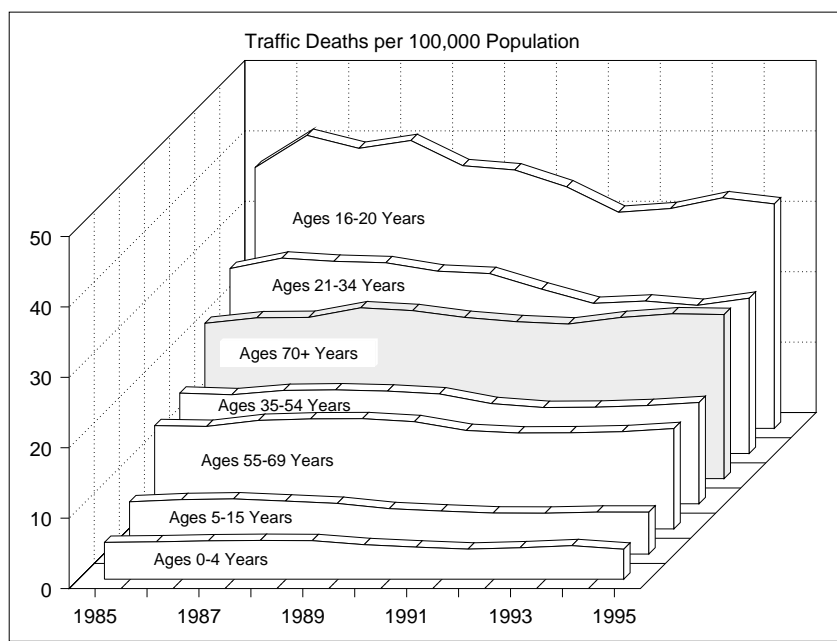


Table 2. Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1985 and 1995

	1985			1995			Percentage Change, 1985-1995		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<i>Population (thousands)</i>									
Total	237,924	19,073	8.0	262,755	23,604	9.0	10%	24%	12%
Male	115,730	7,212	6.2	128,314	9,183	7.2	11%	27%	15%
Female	122,194	11,861	9.7	134,441	14,421	10.7	10%	22%	11%
<i>Licensed Drivers (thousands)</i>									
Total	156,868	11,165	7.1	177,433	16,452	9.3	13%	47%	30%
Male	81,592	6,077	7.4	90,223	8,170	9.1	11%	34%	22%
Female	75,276	5,088	6.8	87,210	8,282	9.5	16%	63%	41%
<i>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</i>									
Total	57,883	3,090	5.3	56,155	4,593	8.2	-3%	49%	53%
Male	44,846	2,250	5.0	41,216	3,068	7.4	-8%	36%	48%
Female	12,142	840	6.9	14,179	1,525	10.8	17%	82%	55%
<i>Driver Fatalities</i>									
Total	25,337	1,942	7.7	24,398	3,012	12.3	-4%	55%	61%
Male	19,916	1,420	7.1	17,996	1,955	10.9	-10%	38%	52%
Female	5,419	522	9.6	6,397	1,057	16.5	18%	102%	72%
<i>Total Traffic Fatalities</i>									
Total	43,825	4,206	9.6	41,798	5,501	13.2	-5%	31%	37%
Male	30,959	2,386	7.7	28,109	2,964	10.5	-9%	24%	37%
Female	12,856	1,820	14.2	13,662	2,536	18.6	6%	39%	31%
<i>Occupant Fatalities</i>									
Total	36,043	3,000	8.3	35,274	4,442	12.6	-2%	48%	51%
Male	25,484	1,709	6.7	23,477	2,339	10.0	-8%	37%	49%
Female	10,553	1,291	12.2	11,772	2,102	17.9	12%	63%	46%
<i>Pedestrian Fatalities</i>									
Total	6,808	1,170	17.2	5,585	1,005	18.0	-18%	-14%	5%
Male	4,671	644	13.8	3,854	581	15.1	-17%	-10%	9%
Female	2,133	526	24.7	1,730	424	24.5	-19%	-19%	-1%

Sources: Licensed drivers—Federal Highway Administration. Population—Bureau of the Census.

For more information:

Information on the older population 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. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nscsa>. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.