README for "Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2014-Present" dataset.
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA);
Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)[distributor]
2021-04-14

LINKS TO DATASET

A. Dataset archive link:
   https://doi.org/10.21949/1520850.

B. Dataset Documentation Link
   https://doi.org/10.21949/1518753.

SUMMARY OF DATASET

The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) dataset is 2014-Present and from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and part of U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)/Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS') National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD). This current dataset is for FARS 2017 data. The FARS dataset includes 1 geospatial file and 25 tabular files. One of the primary objectives of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is to reduce the staggering human toll and property damage that motor vehicle traffic crashes impose on our society. FARS is a census of fatal motor vehicle crashes with a set of data files documenting all qualifying fatalities that occurred within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico since 1975. To qualify as a FARS case, the crash had to involve a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic way customarily open to the public, and must have resulted in the death of a motorist or a non-motorist within 30 days of the crash. This data file contains information about crash characteristics and environmental conditions at the time of the crash. There is one record per crash. On the NHTSA website, raw FARS data are made available to the public in Statistical Analysis System (SAS) data files as well as comma-separated values (CSV) files. Current and past raw FARS data are available at: ftp://ftp.nhtsa.dot.gov/fars/. The FARS/CRSS Coding and Validation Manual contains a detailed description of each data element including coding instructions and attribute definitions. The Coding Manual is published for each year of data collection; current and past manuals are available at: https://doi.org/10.21949/1520850.

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A. GENERAL INFORMATION
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0. Title of Dataset:

   Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2014-Present [dataset]

1. Description of Dataset:

     The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) dataset is 2014-Present and from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and part of U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)/Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS') National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD). This current dataset is for FARS 2017 data. The FARS dataset includes 1 geospatial file and 25 tabular files. One of the primary objectives of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is to reduce the staggering human toll and property damage that motor vehicle traffic crashes impose on our society. FARS is a census of fatal motor vehicle crashes with a set of data files documenting all qualifying fatalities that occurred within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico since 1975. To qualify as a FARS case, the crash had to involve a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic way customarily open to the public, and must have resulted in the death of a motorist or a non-motorist within 30 days of the crash. This data file contains information about crash characteristics and environmental conditions at the time of the crash. There is one record per crash. On the NHTSA website, raw FARS data are made available to the public in Statistical Analysis System (SAS) data files as well as comma-separated values (CSV) files. Current and past raw FARS data are available at: ftp://ftp.nhtsa.dot.gov/fars/. The FARS/CRSS Coding and Validation Manual contains a detailed description of each data element including coding instructions and attribute definitions. The Coding Manual is published for each year of data collection; current and past manuals are available at: https://doi.org/10.21949/1520850.

2. Dataset archive link:

    https://doi.org/10.21949/1520795

3. Authorship Information:

  Principal Data Creator or Data Manager Contact Information

     Institution: U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

     Address: 1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington D.C. 20590

     Email: nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov

  Data Distributor Contact Information

     Name: National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD)

     Institution: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), The Office of Spatial Analysis and Visualization (OSAV)

     Address: 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington D.C. 20590

     Email: ntad@dot.gov

4. Date of data collection and update interval:

  Every year (preliminary data release followed one year later by final data release).

5. Geographic location of data collection:
  The 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

6. Information about funding sources that supported the collection of the data:
  U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

B. SHARING/ACCESS & POLICIES INFORMATION
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0. Recommended citation for the data:
  U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA); Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)[distributor]. (2020). NHTSA 2014 Present [datasets]. https://doi.org/10.21949/1520850.

1. Licenses/restrictions placed on the data:
  These data are in the Public Domain.

2. Was data derived from another source?:
  No.

3. This dataset and its documentation was created and shared to meet the requirements enumerated in the U.S. Federally-Funded Scientific Research" Version 1.1 << https://doi.org/10.21949/1520559 >> and guidelines suggested by the DOT Public Access website << https://doi.org/10.21949/1503647 >>, in effect and current as of December 03, 2020.

C. DATA & RELATED FILE OVERVIEW
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1. File List for the bts_FARS_202104.zip collection

    A. Filename:
        fars_XXXX.zip
            Short description:
            Compressed file folders containing the geospatial data for FARS 2014-Present dataset. Listed
            below are the names of the compressed file folders, classified by vintage date:
            fars_2014.zip, fars_2015.zip

    B. Filename:
        bts_FARS_DMP_20210412.pdf
            Short description:
            A PDF file containing the Data Management Plan that was created for current and future
            management of the data and associated files.

    C. Filename:
        bts_FARS_20210412_README.txt
            Short description:
            The README.txt file that includes human-readable information about the data, variable definitions,
            contact information, and other contextual information. The file you are reading now.

2. File List for the fars_XXXX.zip collection

    A. Filename:
        fars.shp
            Short description:
            A shapefile containing the geospatial data for FARS 2014-Present dataset. This includes associated
            files with extensions .prj, .dbf, .sbn, .sbx, .shx.

    B. Filename:
        fars.txt
            Short description:
            A text file containing key metadata and documentation information such as methodology,
            procedures, data dictionary, etc.

D. METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION
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1. Description of methods used for collection/generation of data:

   NHTSA has a cooperative agreement with an agency in each State government to provide specific information in a standard format on fatal crashes occurring in the State. The agreements are managed by NCSA's FARS program staff. The State employees who gather, translate, and transmit the data are called FARS analysts. The number of analysts in each State varies according to the State. NHTSA provides each FARS analyst with formal training. All FARS data on fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes is gathered from the State's own source documents and is coded onto standard FARS forms or directly into a microcomputer data entry system. The analysts obtain the documents needed to complete the FARS cases, which generally include some or all the following:Police accident reports, State vehicle registration files, State driver licensing files, State highway department data, Vital records department data, Death certificates, Coroner/medical examiner reports, and Emergency medical service reports.

   Each FARS analyst enters coded data through a local computer into NHTSA's central FARS Web accessed database daily. The data is automatically checked online for acceptable range values and consistency, and again reviewed for quality upon arrival at NHTSA. Range checks ensure that the codes submitted are valid. For example, a code "4" for the element "Sex" would be rejected by the system since "1" (male), "2" (female), and "9" (unknown) are the only valid codes. Consistency checks ensure that no inconsistent data is entered. For example, if an analyst codes "11 a.m." as the time of the crash and "dusk" as the light condition, these codes would all be rejected, as they are inconsistent. Quality control is a vital system feature. In addition to the range and consistency checks, other checks for timeliness, completeness, and accuracy are conducted throughout the year.

2. Instrument- or software-specific information needed to interpret the data:

   The data and documentation files can be opened with Esri ArcMap and any GIS software package.

E. DATA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION
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1. XXXXXX data table

   Data is updated annually. Dataset Manager is contacted to verify changes to data resulting in NTAD update. The metadata is updated in the same manner. For the most recent data, please visit the NTAD catalog at https://data-usdot.opendata.arcgis.com/

A. Number of variables (columns):

   The data dictionary found in (PDF documentation) provides definitions for the variables

B. Data Dictionary/Variable List:

   Because of the large number of variables, please refer to the Data Dictionary found within the file fars.txt for names, definitions, and formats of variables.

C. Missing data codes:

   None

F. UPDATE LOG

This bts_FARS_20210414_README.txt file was originally created on 2021-04-14 by Dominic Menegus, Geographer, dominic.menegus@dot.gov

[Note changes or update to the readme.txt file, e.g.:]

2021-04-14: Original file created