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

Traffic Safety Facts
CRASH•STATS

DOT HS 813 875 A Brief Statistical Summary November 2026

Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate for the First Half (January–June) of 2026

Summary

A statistical projection of traffic fatalities for the first half of 2026 shows an estimated 16,750 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, a decrease of about 2.5 percent compared to the 17,175 fatalities projected to have occurred in the first half of 2025 (*Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate in 2025*, Report No. DOT HS 813 800), as shown in Table 1.

Preliminary data reported by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) shows that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the first half of 2026 increased by about 12.9 billion miles, or about a 0.8-percent increase. Table 1 also shows the fatality rates per 100 million VMT, by quarter and year. In the first half of 2026 the fatality rate dropped to 1.02 fatalities per 100 million VMT, down from the projected rate of 1.05 fatalities per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2025. If realized, the rate of 1.02 represents the second lowest first half fatality rate, compared to the 1.01 achieved in the first half of 2014.

For the NHTSA regional differences, 8 of the 10 NHTSA regions are projected to have decreases in fatalities and fatality rate per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2026 as compared to the first half of 2025. Also, 35 States and Puerto Rico are projected to have decreases in fatalities. The fatality counts for 2025 and 2026 and the ensuing percentage change from 2025 to 2026 will be slightly revised when the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Annual Reporting File (ARF) for 2025 is available later this year, as well as when the Final File for 2025 and the ARF for 2026 are available next year. These estimates will be further refined when the projections for the first 9 months of 2026 are released in late December.

Table 1. Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Quarter, Full Year, and the Percentage Change From the Corresponding Quarter, First Half or Full Year in the Previous Year

Year	1st Quarter (Jan–Mar)	2nd Quarter (Apr–Jun)	3rd Quarter (Jul–Sep)	4th Quarter (Oct–Dec)	Total (Full Year)	1st Half (Jan–Jun)
Fatalities and Percentage Change in Fatalities for the Corresponding Quarter, H1 or Total From the Previous Year						
2014	6,856 [-4.3%]	8,179 [-0.3%]	8,799 [-2.5%]	8,910 [+4.9%]	32,744 [-0.5%]	15,035 [-2.2%]
2015	7,370 [+7.5%]	8,823 [+7.9%]	9,805 [+11.4%]	9,486 [+6.5%]	35,484 [+8.4%]	16,193 [+7.7%]
2016	8,154 [+10.6%]	9,563 [+8.4%]	10,078 [+2.8%]	10,011 [+5.5%]	37,806 [+6.5%]	17,717 [+9.4%]
2017	8,301 [+1.8%]	9,460 [-1.1%]	10,081 [+0.0%]	9,631 [-3.8%]	37,473 [-0.9%]	17,761 [+0.2%]
2018	8,203 [-1.2%]	9,323 [-1.4%]	9,934 [-1.5%]	9,375 [-2.7%]	36,835 [-1.7%]	17,526 [-1.3%]
2019	7,832 [-4.5%]	9,193 [-1.4%]	9,994 [+0.6%]	9,336 [-0.4%]	36,355 [-1.3%]	17,025 [-2.9%]
2020	7,901 [+0.9%]	9,164 [-0.3%]	11,358 [+13.6%]	10,584 [+13.4%]	39,007 [+7.3%]	17,065 [+0.2%]
2021	8,906 [+12.7%]	11,149 [+21.7%]	11,828 [+4.1%]	11,347 [+7.2%]	43,230 [+10.8%]	20,055 [+17.5%]

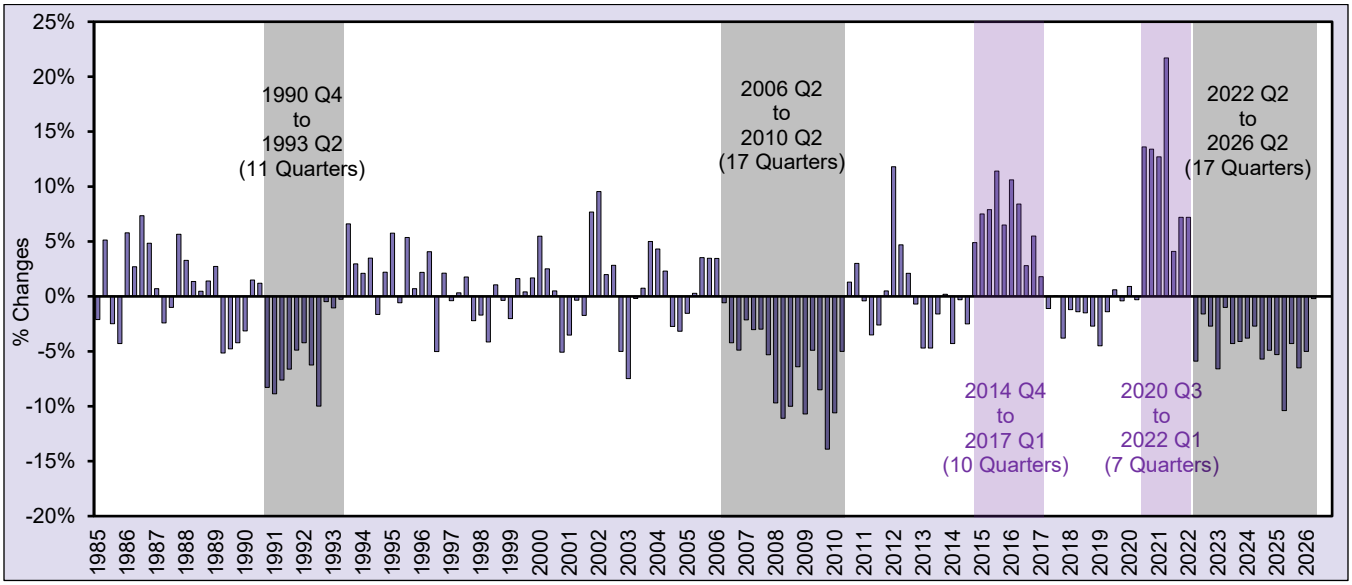
Year	1st Quarter (Jan–Mar)	2nd Quarter (Apr–Jun)	3rd Quarter (Jul–Sep)	4th Quarter (Oct–Dec)	Total (Full Year)	1st Half (Jan–Jun)
2022	9,545 [+7.2%]	10,491 [-5.9%]	11,643 [-1.6%]	11,042 [-2.7%]	42,721 [-1.2%]	20,036 [-0.1%]
2023	8,916 [-6.6%]	10,386 [-1.0%]	11,137 [-4.3%]	10,586 [-4.1%]	41,025 [-4.0%]	19,302 [-3.7%]
2024	8,574 [-3.8%]	10,107 [-2.7%]	10,505 [-5.7%]	10,068 [-4.9%]	39,254 [-4.3%]	18,681 [-3.2%]
2025†	8,120 [-5.3%]	9,055 [-10.4%]	10,055 [-4.3%]	9,410 [-6.5%]	36,640 [-6.7%]	17,175 [-8.1%]
2026†	7,715 [-5.0%]	9,035 [-0.2%]	-	-	-	16,750 [-2.5%]
Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT						
2014	0.99	1.03	1.11	1.17	1.08	1.01
2015	1.03	1.08	1.20	1.21	1.13	1.06
2016	1.11	1.16	1.23	1.27	1.19	1.14
2017	1.12	1.13	1.21	1.20	1.17	1.13
2018	1.10	1.11	1.18	1.15	1.14	1.11
2019	1.05	1.09	1.18	1.14	1.12	1.07
2020	1.08	1.43	1.44	1.42	1.34	1.25
2021	1.28	1.38	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.33
2022	1.29	1.28	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.29
2023	1.18	1.24	1.31	1.32	1.26	1.21
2024	1.12	1.19	1.22	1.23	1.19	1.15
2025†	1.05	1.05	1.15	1.15	1.10	1.05
2026†	0.99	1.05	-	-	-	1.02

†2025 and 2026 statistical projections and rates based on these projections.
Sources: Fatalities: 2014–2023 FARS Final File, 2024 FARS ARF.
VMT: FHWA August 2026 Traffic Volume Trends (TVT) for 2025 and 2026 VMT.

Figure 1 shows the historical trend of the percentage changes every quarter from the same quarter in the previous year, going back to 1985 (NHTSA has fatality data going back to 1975). The shading in the chart shows the years when there were significant numbers of consecutive quarters with increases/declines as compared to the corresponding quarters of the previous years.

More recently, the significant increases in fatalities occurred over 10 consecutive quarters, ending after the first half of 2017. Fatalities also increased 7 consecutive quarters beginning with the third quarter of 2020, until the 5.9-percent decline seen in the second quarter of 2022. The third and fourth quarters of 2020 and the first and especially the second quarters of 2021 showed significant increases in fatalities as compared to the corresponding quarters of 2019 and 2020. The percentage increase in the second quarter of 2021 is the highest quarterly percentage increase in FARS data recorded history, which was in the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Figure 1. Percentage Changes in Fatalities in Every Quarter Compared to the Fatalities in the Same Quarter During the Previous Year



Sources: 1985–2023 FARS Final File, 2024 FARS ARF, 2025 and 2026 statistical projections.

The quarterly projections of fatalities, fatality rates, and VMT are further split into monthly estimates for 2025 and 2026, as shown in Table 2. In 2026 both fatalities and the fatality rate per 100 million VMT show decreases in all months except for May and June, which showed an increase, as compared to the corresponding month in 2025.

Table 2. Fatalities, VMT, Fatality Rate by Month or Quarter in 2026, and the Percentage Changes in Fatalities and VMT From the Corresponding Month or Quarter in 2025

	1st Quarter				2nd Quarter				3rd Quarter				4th Quarter			
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Apr	May	Jun	Total	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Fatalities in 2026 and Percentage Change in Fatalities for the Corresponding Month and Quarter From 2025																
2025†	2,690	2,465	2,965	8,120	2,915	3,090	3,050	9,055	3,310	3,520	3,225	10,055	3,405	3,055	2,950	9,410
2026†	2,465 -8.4%	2,355 -4.5%	2,895 -2.4%	7,715 -5.0%	2,760 -5.3%	3,135 1.5%	3,140 3.0%	9,035 -0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT/VMT (in Billion) and Percentage Changes in VMT																
2025†	1.07 252.5	1.03 238.7	1.06 278.8	1.05 770.0	1.05 278.6	1.05 295.2	1.06 286.9	1.05 860.7	1.11 297.2	1.19 295.9	1.15 279.6	1.15 872.7	1.17 291.5	1.16 263.1	1.11 265.9	1.15 820.5
2026†	0.98 252.8 0.1%	0.96 244.9 2.6%	1.02 283.2 1.6%	0.99 780.9 1.4%	0.99 280.2 0.5%	1.07 293.1 -0.7%	1.09 289.4 0.9%	1.05 862.7 0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

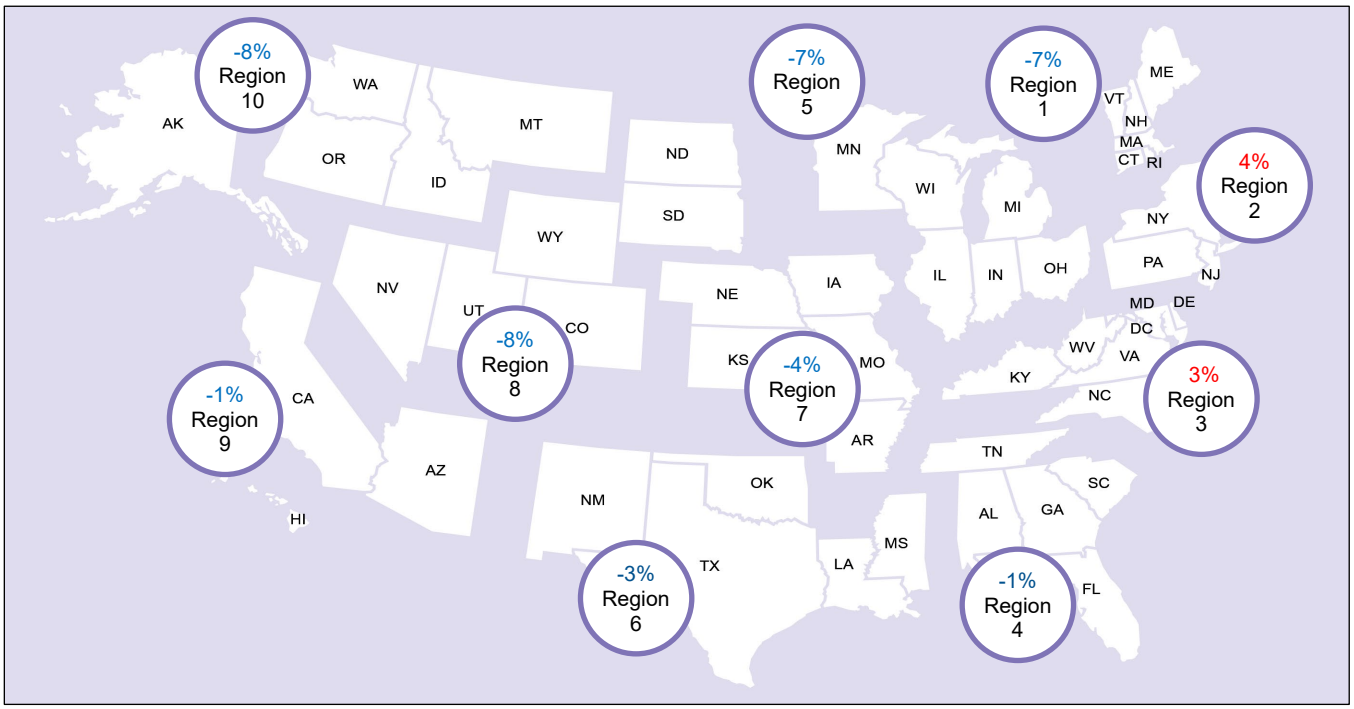
†2025 and 2026 statistical projections and rates based on these projections.
Sources: VMT: FHWA August 2026 TVT for 2025 and 2026 VMT.

Regional Differences

The statistical procedures used in these projections were generated for each NHTSA administrative region and were collated to create the national estimate. This allows for the comparison of regional estimates in 2026 with the projected 2025 counts (note that Connecticut was moved from Region 2 to Region 1 in 2024). Figure 2 shows the percentage changes in estimated fatalities in the first half of 2026 from the projected fatalities in the first half of 2025 by NHTSA region; 8 of the 10 regions experienced decreases. Figure 3 shows the comparison of the estimated fatality rate per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2026 with the projected fatality rate per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2025, by NHTSA region; 8 of the 10 regions presented decreases. These estimates by

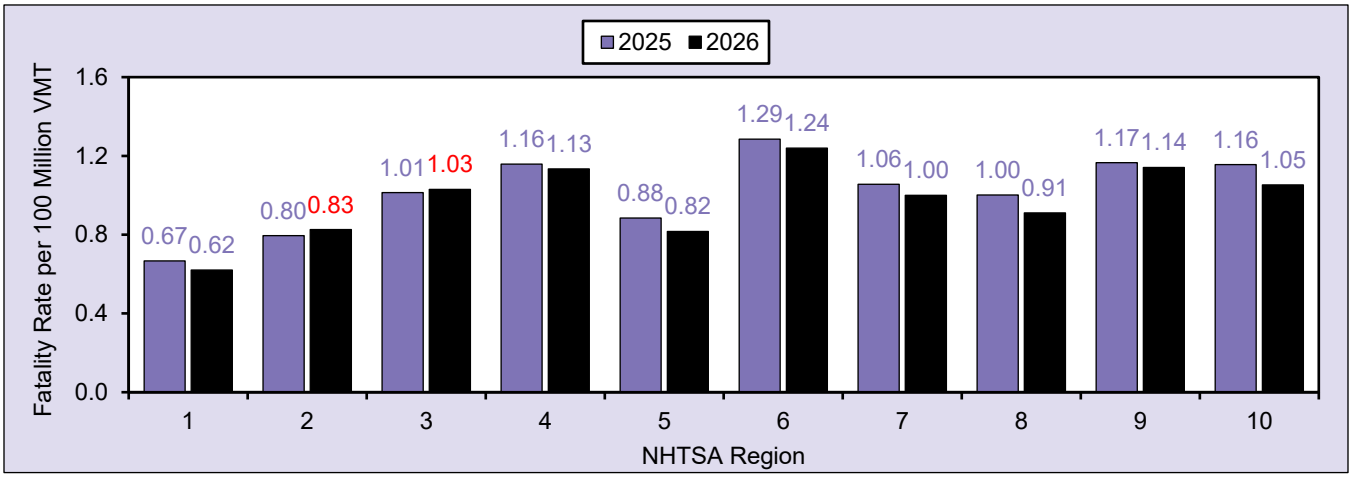
NHTSA region shown in Figures 2 and 3 are subject to small changes as the FARS fatality counts for 2025 and 2026 are reported.

Figure 2. Percentage Changes in Estimated Fatalities in the First Half of 2026 From Estimated Fatality Counts in the First Half of 2025, by NHTSA Region



Sources: 2025 and 2026 statistical projections. Puerto Rico is not included in Region 2.

Figure 3. Comparison of Estimated Fatality Rates in the First Half of 2026 With Estimated Fatality Rate in the First Half of 2025, by NHTSA Region



Source: FHWA August 2026 TVT for 2025 and 2026 VMT. Puerto Rico is not included in Region 2.

State Differences

Given the significant interest in the traffic safety community in estimated changes at the State level to assess emerging trends, NHTSA has developed a methodology in the third quarter of 2022 to generate such State-level estimates based on the most recent distribution of the fatalities by State in a NHTSA region and the month (see *Data and Methodology* section for more details). Table 3 shows the comparison of each State's estimate in the first half of 2026 with the projected fatality counts in the first half of 2025 and the percentage change in 2026 from 2025; 35 States and Puerto Rico are projected to have experienced decreases in fatalities in the first half of

2026 compared to in the first half of 2025, and 15 States and District of Columbia are projected to have had increases in fatalities. Also, the estimates of the fatality rates per 100 million VMT by State in the first half of 2025 and 2026 are presented in Table 3 of this report. These estimates by State shown in Table 3 are subject to change slightly as fatality counts in FARS for 2025 and 2026 are reported, and as FHWA finalizes the State VMT estimates for 2025 and 2026.

Table 3. Estimated Fatalities in the First Half of 2026, and the Percentage Change in Estimated Fatalities From the Projected Fatalities in the First Half of 2025, by State. The States' Estimates of the Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT in the First Half of 2025 and 2026 Are Also Presented

State	Fatalities			Fatality Rate		State	Fatalities			Fatality Rate	
	2025	2026	Percent Change	2025	2026		2025	2026	Percent Change	2025	2026
Alabama	389	405	+4.1%	1.07	1.10	Nebraska	105	100	-4.8%	0.98	0.92
Alaska	29	23	-20.7%	1.02	0.82	Nevada	200	167	-16.5%	1.40	1.15
Arizona	562	518	-7.8%	1.55	1.42	New Hampshire	58	48	-17.2%	0.88	0.72
Arkansas	243	227	-6.6%	1.24	1.15	New Jersey	267	260	-2.6%	0.68	0.67
California	1,792	1,825	+1.8%	1.08	1.09	New Mexico	218	208	-4.6%	1.54	1.47
Colorado	292	264	-9.6%	1.08	0.96	New York	423	416	-1.7%	0.74	0.73
Connecticut	106	103	-2.8%	0.69	0.67	North Carolina	696	746	+7.2%	1.07	1.14
Delaware	46	59	+28.3%	0.97	1.26	North Dakota	36	45	+25.0%	0.73	0.91
D.C.	7	16	+128.6%	0.40	0.92	Ohio	486	523	+7.6%	0.87	0.92
Florida	1,474	1,439	-2.4%	1.15	1.12	Oklahoma	342	300	-12.3%	1.48	1.26
Georgia	598	658	+10.0%	0.98	1.08	Oregon	228	222	-2.6%	1.23	1.19
Hawaii	68	46	-32.4%	1.27	0.87	Pennsylvania	445	502	+12.8%	0.97	1.08
Idaho	122	102	-16.4%	1.23	1.01	Rhode Island	18	22	+22.2%	0.47	0.58
Illinois	569	453	-20.4%	1.11	0.88	South Carolina	463	434	-6.3%	1.49	1.37
Indiana	367	330	-10.1%	0.85	0.76	South Dakota	49	44	-10.2%	0.97	0.85
Iowa	123	141	+14.6%	0.75	0.85	Tennessee	493	443	-10.1%	1.27	1.12
Kansas	190	157	-17.4%	1.23	0.99	Texas	1,856	1,851	-0.3%	1.20	1.19
Kentucky	285	337	+18.2%	1.20	1.40	Utah	115	110	-4.3%	0.62	0.59
Louisiana	371	335	-9.7%	1.36	1.22	Vermont	23	26	+13.0%	0.67	0.75
Maine	73	71	-2.7%	1.03	1.00	Virginia	382	364	-4.7%	0.88	0.83
Maryland	223	201	-9.9%	0.80	0.72	Washington	306	284	-7.2%	1.04	0.96
Massachusetts	164	141	-14.0%	0.55	0.47	West Virginia	133	96	-27.8%	1.60	1.14
Michigan	475	432	-9.1%	0.98	0.89	Wisconsin	248	228	-8.1%	0.74	0.67
Minnesota	164	178	+8.5%	0.57	0.62	Wyoming	53	58	+9.4%	1.16	1.23
Mississippi	292	297	+1.7%	1.41	1.43	**U.S. Total***	**17,175**	**16,750**	**-2.5%**	**1.05**	**1.02**
Missouri	416	413	-0.7%	1.04	1.02	Puerto Rico	153	128	-16.3%	–	–
Montana	92	82	-10.9%	1.40	1.23						

*Puerto Rico is not included.
Sources: 2025 and 2026 statistical projections.
VMT: FHWA August 2026 TVT for 2025 and 2026 VMT. Traffic Volume Trends for Puerto Rico are not available.

Discussion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were marked increases in fatalities and the fatality rates per 100 million VMT in 2020. The increased trend of fatalities in 2020 continued into 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.

The increased trend of the fatality rates per 100 million VMT in 2020 continued into the first quarter of 2021, decreased in the second and third quarters of 2021, and increased again in the first quarter of 2022.

NHTSA is continuing to gather and finalize data on crash fatalities for 2026 using information from police crash reports and other sources. The FARS ARF and the Final File for 2025 as well as the ARF for 2026 will be available within the next 2 years and usually result in the minor revision of fatality totals and the ensuing fatality rates and percentage changes.

Data and Methodology

The data used in this analysis comes from several sources: NHTSA's FARS, Early Notification (EN) data, and Monthly Fatality Counts (MFC) (the EN and MFC data are not available to the public); and from FHWA's VMT estimates.

FARS is a census of fatal traffic crashes in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To be included in FARS, a crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway and must result in the death of at least one person (occupant of a vehicle or a nonoccupant) within 30 days of the crash. FARS Final Files from 2003 to 2023 and the FARS Annual Report File in 2024 are used to obtain the monthly fatality counts. The EN program is designed as an Early Fatality Notification System to capture fatality counts from States more rapidly and provide near-real-time notification of fatality counts from all jurisdictions reporting to FARS. The MFC data provide monthly fatality counts by State through sources that are independent from the EN or FARS systems. MFCs from January 2003 up to June 2026 are used. MFCs are reported midmonth for all prior months of the year.

To estimate the traffic fatality counts for the first half of 2026, the time series cross-section regression procedure was applied to analyze the data with both cross-sectional values (by NHTSA region) and time series (by month), to model the relationship among FARS, MFC, and EN, the details of which are available in a Research Note, *Statistical Methodology to Make Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities* (Report No. DOT HS 811 123).

Furthermore, after the projected fatality counts for NHTSA region r and the month m (F_Est_{mr}) are obtained, the estimated fatality counts for a State st in region r and the month m ($F_Est_{st|mr}$) are calculated. Each State receives a proportion of the projected fatality counts for the region using the most recent relative proportion of fatalities in each State st for region r and month m found in the EN data. This can be expressed as $F_Est_{st|mr} = (F_{st|mr} / \sum_{all\ States\ in\ r} F_{st|mr}) \times F_Est_{mr}$, where $F_{st|mr}$ is the latest fatal count in the EN data for State st in region r and month m. That is, the inflation rate for all States within a region is assumed to be the same as the inflation rate of that region. For example, the estimated motor vehicle traffic fatalities for Arizona in Region 9 (Arizona, California, Hawaii) and the month m is: $F_Est_{AZ|m9} = (F_{AZ|m9} / (F_{AZ|m9} + F_{CA|m9} + F_{HI|m9})) \times F_Est_{m9}$.

The methodology used to generate the national, regional, and State-level estimates for the first half of 2026 is the same as NHTSA used to project the motor vehicle traffic fatalities for the first quarter of 2026 in *Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate For the First Quarter of 2026* (Report No. DOT HS 813 833).

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