Traffic Fatalities: Traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled

Oregon's strategy

ODOT's strategy to reduce traffic fatalities is to continue to implement traffic safety programs and countermeasures based on the causes of fatal crashes in Oregon. For example, the Oregon Transportation Safety Performance Plan (HSP) and the ODOT Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) outline safety activities directed at safe driving behaviors, DUII, safety belt use, speeding, motorcycle safety, child safety seats, equipment standards, and other areas. ODOT also seeks to combat traffic fatalities through strategic highway safety improvements, such as median cable barriers, rumble strips, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the DMV medically at-risk program.

About the target

Oregon's goal is zero fatalities, but realistic targets are set based on the desire to reduce fatality rates gradually over time to achieve the longer-term goal of zero. Oregon's 2016 rate was 1.35 fatalities per 100M vehicle miles traveled.
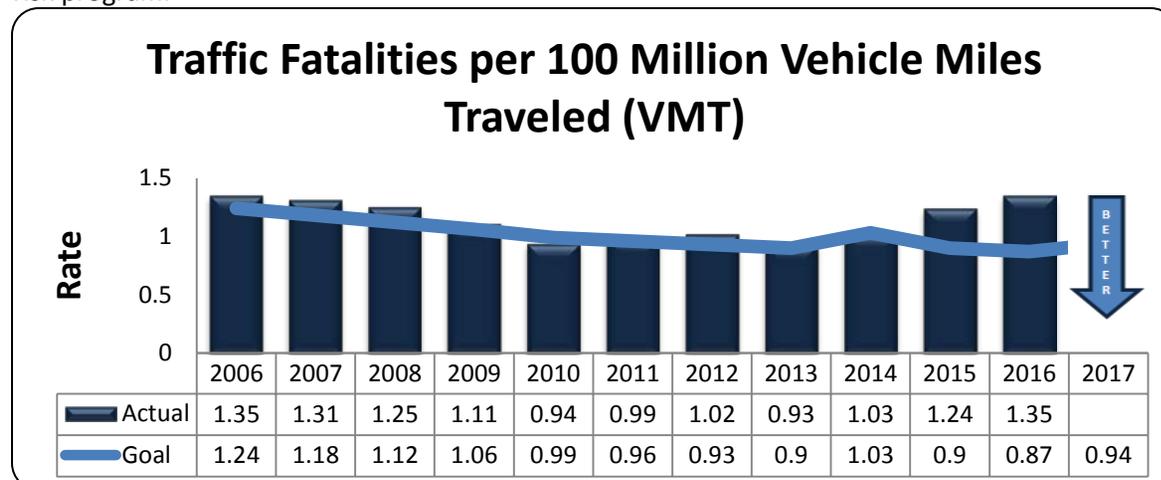
How Oregon is doing and how it compares

The rate of 1.35 for 2016 is above the target of 0.90 per 100 million VMT. There was a dramatic increase in the number of fatalities, in line with the rest of the nation, in Oregon starting in October 2014 which increased the rate per 100 million VMT. When comparing Oregon traffic fatality data with national data provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Oregon's rate in 2016 was higher than the U.S. national fatality rate of 1.18; ODOT set an aggressive long-term goal of reducing the traffic fatality rate to 0.87 per 100 million VMT by 2016. The targets are increasingly more challenging to meet, however the goal is important and should not change, as 'zero' is the goal for you and your family, every trip, every time. Until recently, Oregon's fatality rates have been consistently below the national average since 1999.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done

Several factors affected the traffic fatality

Traffic Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Actual	1.35	1.31	1.25	1.11	0.94	0.99	1.02	0.93	1.03	1.24	1.35	
Goal	1.24	1.18	1.12	1.06	0.99	0.96	0.93	0.9	1.03	0.9	0.87	0.94

Fact

Fatal crashes involving alcohol; speed; or not wearing a safety belt are the most common causes of a fatality on Oregon roadways.

rate in 2016. Among those factors were continuing increases in crashes involving impairment, the number of available traffic law enforcement officers, and the response times of emergency medical services. Another factor is that it is harder to make changes when the fatality rate is already at such a low rate. Fatal crashes involving alcohol; speed; or not wearing a safety belt are the most common causes of a fatality on Oregon roadways. Over the last 16 years, Oregon experienced the lowest fatality count since the late 1940s. ODOT and its safety partners must continue efforts to reduce fatalities by reviewing the causes of fatalities, targeting safety activities accordingly, and allocating safety resources to the programs most effective at reducing fatal crashes.

About the data

Traffic fatality rates are reported on a calendar year basis. The data that ODOT uses to measure traffic fatality rates has several strengths. It is coded to national standards, which allows for state to state comparisons, and it is a comprehensive data set that includes medical information. Some weaknesses of the data are that it is sometimes difficult to get blood alcohol content reports and death certificates for coding purposes, and priority is placed on coding the data and not on creating localized reports for state, city, and county agencies and organizations.

Contact information

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Data source

Crash Analysis and Reporting, ODOT; Fatality Analysis Reporting System, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, US DOT