

Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries

Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries: Traffic fatalities and Serious Injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled

Oregon's strategy

ODOT's strategy to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries is to continue to implement traffic safety programs and proven 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 unsafe driving behaviors like DUII, non-safety belt use, and speeding; that address strategies for programs like motorcycle safety, child passenger safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety and other priority areas. ODOT also seeks to combat traffic fatalities and serious injuries through strategic highway safety

infrastructure improvements (ARTS), such as median cable barriers, rumble strips, and pedestrian crossings, as well as through the DMV medically at-risk program.

About the target

Oregon's goal is zero fatalities, but realistic interim targets are set based on the desire to reduce fatality and serious injury rates gradually over time to achieve the longer-term goal of zero. Oregon's 2018 rate was 5.91 fatalities and serious injuries per 100M vehicle miles traveled.

How Oregon is doing and how it compares

The preliminary rate is 6.51 for 2019. This is due to a dramatic increase in the number of serious crashes, like the rest of the nation, in Oregon starting in October 2014. There is no ability to compare Oregon to regional or national rates as the definition of serious injury differs among states. Focusing on the fatality rate per VMT only, Oregon is higher than the national average.

Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)



Fact

Fatal and Serious Injury crashes involving alcohol or drug impairment; speed; and/or not wearing a safety belt are the most common causes of a fatality on Oregon roadways.

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Factors affecting results and what needs to be done

Several factors affected the traffic fatality and serious injury rate for 2019. These included continuing increases in crashes

involving impairment (and specifically, drug impairment), the number of traffic law enforcement officers, and emergency response times. Fatal crashes involving alcohol and/or drug use; excessive speed; street racing; lane departure; and/or not

wearing a safety belt are the most common causes of a fatality on Oregon roadways. Over the last 17 years, Oregon also experienced its lowest fatality count since the late 1940s. ODOT and its safety partners will 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 and serious injury rates are reported on a calendar year basis. The data that ODOT uses to measure traffic fatality rates has several strengths. It is closely

coded to national standards, which allows for state to state comparisons on fatality data, and it is a comprehensive data set that includes medical information. Some weaknesses of the data are

that it is sometimes difficult to obtain blood alcohol content reports; other drug data from medical screening; determine use of a cell phone (requires a search warrant); access to death certificates for coding purposes is not timely, and priority is placed on entering the data into the state's data systems, and not on creating localized data reports for state, city, and county agencies and organizations. This causes delays in the implementation of local and statewide countermeasures.

Contact information

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Data source

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