

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 implement traffic safety programs and proven countermeasures based on the identified causes of fatal crashes in Oregon. The Oregon Highway Safety Performance Plan ([HSP](#)) and the State's Transportation Safety Action Plan ([5-year TSAP](#)) outline safety activities directed at reducing risky driving behaviors like impairment from alcohol or drugs, non-safety belt use, and speeding (the top three contributors to crashes in Oregon). The Transportation Safety Office (TSO) partners closely with ODOT's Engineering & Technical Services Branch (ETS) and their Highway Safety Program which addresses *infrastructure* solutions

for roadway safety in the HSP and TSAP. TSO also funds implementation of programs like motorcycle safety, child passenger safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety and other priority problem areas. ETS also seeks to combat traffic fatalities and serious injuries through strategic highway safety infrastructure improvements ([ARTS](#)), such as intersection improvements, median cable barriers, rumble strips, and pedestrian crossings. The ODOT-DMV contributes through their medically at-risk driver 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

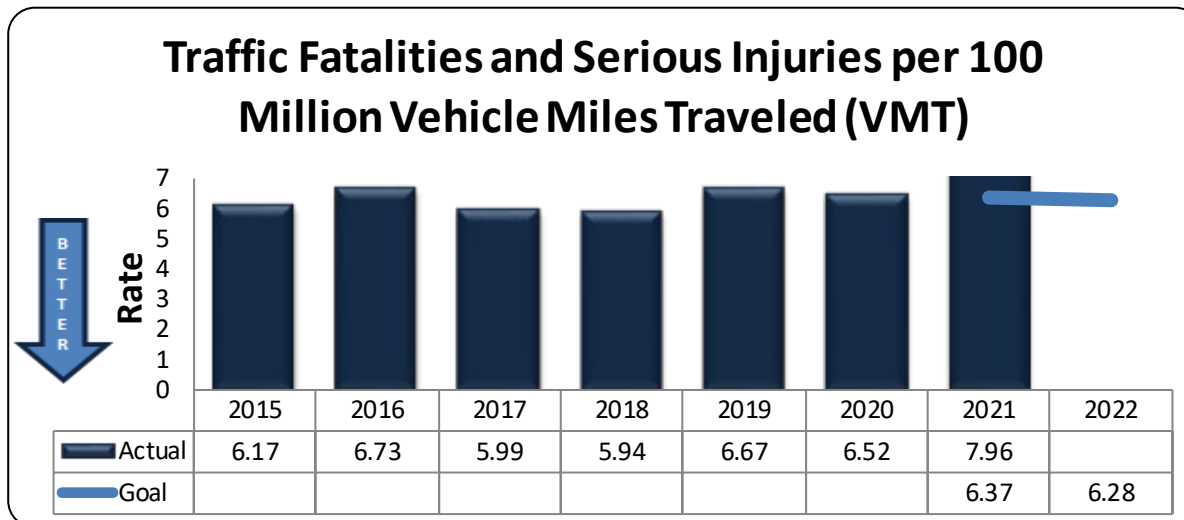
over time to achieve the longer-term goal of zero. Oregon's 2021 rate was 7.96 fatalities and serious injuries per 100M vehicle miles traveled.

How Oregon is doing and how it compares

In 2020 the rate was 6.52 and the 2021 rate is 7.96. This increase in reducing the fatal and serious injuries rate is discouraging. Focusing on the fatality rate per VMT only, Oregon is higher than the national average.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done

Several factors affected the traffic fatality and serious injury rate for 2021. These included



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.

continuing increases in crashes involving impairment (and specifically, a significant increase in poly-substance use by drivers with multiple impairing substances present), the number of traffic law enforcement officers, and emergency response times. Fatal crashes involving alcohol and/or drug use; excessive speed; lane departure; and/or not wearing a safety belt are the most common causes of a fatality on Oregon roadways. ODOT and its safety partners will continue efforts to reduce fatalities by reviewing the causes of fatalities; applying proven countermeasures; and implementing safety activities accordingly by allocating safety resources to the programs and projects most effective at reducing fatal and serious injury crashes.



that it is sometimes difficult to obtain blood alcohol content reports or other drug data from medical screening (to prove impairment); to determine use of a cell phone while driving (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.

ODOT is currently working on a crash modernization plan to obtain, process, and provide quality control of the data in a more accurate and timely fashion for end users.

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

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Data source

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