

Road Safety Fact Sheet

Safety: A FHWA Vital Few - Fact Sheet

How Safe is America's Roadway System?

The U.S. roadway system's positive trends have plateaued at a fatality rate that is the lowest in history at 1.5 deaths per 100 million miles of travel (down from 5.5 fatalities in 1966). However, that's still not good enough. In 2003, almost 3 million people were injured and 42,643 people died on our nation's roads. The number of annual roadway fatalities had remained virtually unchanged (40,000-42,000) for the past ten years, but now there is an upward trend.

How Significant is the Roadway Safety Problem?

Roadway safety is a serious, national public health issue. In 2003, there were 42,643 fatalities and almost 3 million injuries occurred on our nation's roads.

Out of the total 42,643 fatalities in 2003, there were:

- 25,321 road departure fatalities (59%)
- 9,213 intersection fatalities (21%)
- 4,749 pedestrian fatalities (11%)

Can You Put This In Perspective?

Fatalities

- One road departure fatality every 21 minutes
- One intersection fatality every hour
- One pedestrian fatality about every two hours

Average Day

- 117 fatalities a day
- 30% of daily fatalities (35) are under the age of 25
- Daily financial loss is \$630 million

What is the FHWA Goal to Reduce Roadway Fatalities?

As a safety agency dedicated to saving lives, FHWA has identified improving roadway safety and mobility as a Vital Few - one FHWA's top three priorities. The other two Vital Few priorities are Congestion and Environmental Streamlining.

The FHWA Safety Programs focuses on high risk areas, such as road departure, intersections and pedestrian safety, in order to make the biggest difference in improving traffic safety.

To reduce road departure, intersection and pedestrian fatalities by 10% by 2007, FHWA is focusing on six national target areas, two of which are concerned with road departure. They are as follows:

- Road Departure Fatalities: Reduce run-off-the-road, head-on and opposite direction side-swipe crashes by 10% by 2007. Save 2,514 lives.
 - Preventing road departure fatalities from occurring
 - Minimizing the severity of road departure crashes
- Intersection Fatalities: Reduce by 10% by 2007. Save 921 lives.
- Pedestrian Fatalities: Reduce by 10% by 2007. Save 475 lives.
- Safety Belt Use: Raise seat belt use to 90% by 2008. Save 5,536 lives.
- Safety Awareness: FHWA is working to make sure that safety is an integral part of planning, project development and operations at the state, MPO and local levels.

What is the FHWA Doing to Solve This National Safety Problem?

FHWA provides national safety leadership through: conducting innovative safety research; setting national highway safety