

Traffic Safety Facts 1994

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



Pedalcyclists



The first automobile crash in the United States occurred in New York City in 1896, when a motor vehicle collided with a pedalcyclist rider (*Famous First Facts*, by Joseph Kane).

More than 43,000 pedalcyclists have died in traffic crashes in the United States since 1932—the first year in which estimates of pedalcyclist fatalities were recorded. The 350 pedalcyclists killed in 1932 accounted for 1.3 percent of the 27,979 persons who died in traffic crashes that year.

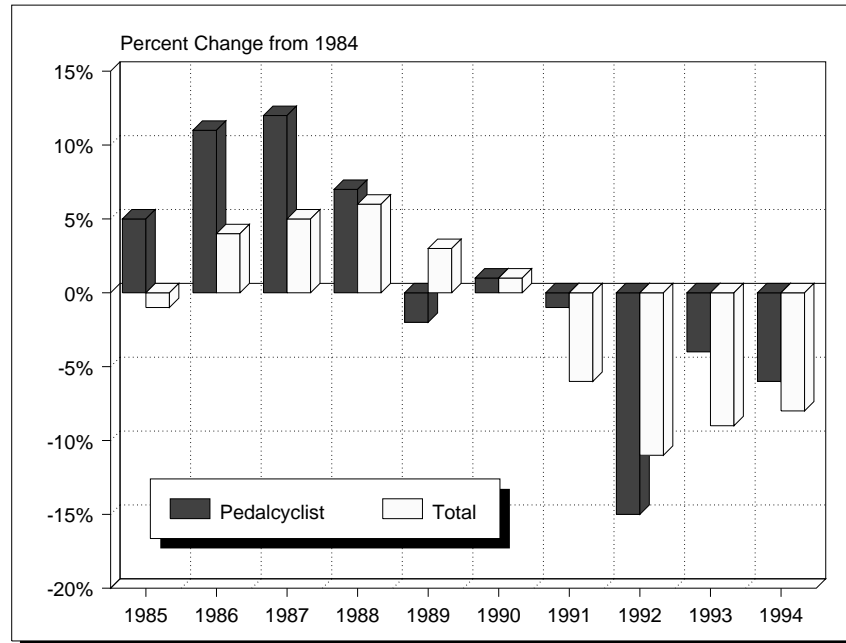
In 1994, 802 pedalcyclists were killed in traffic crashes. Pedalcyclist deaths accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities during the year.

The number of pedalcyclist fatalities in 1994 was 6 percent lower than the 849 fatalities reported in 1984. The highest number of pedalcyclist fatalities ever recorded in the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) was 1,003 in 1975.

The average age of pedalcyclist fatalities was 23.3 years in 1984; in 1994 the average age was 28.8 years.

“The 802 pedalcyclist deaths in 1994 accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities during the year.”

Figure 1. Trends in Pedalcyclist and Total Traffic Fatalities, 1984-1994



Pedalcyclists accounted for 12.6 percent of all nonmotorist traffic fatalities in 1994. Pedestrians accounted for 85.7 percent, and the remaining 1.7 percent were skateboard riders, roller skaters, etc.

Table 1. Nonoccupant Traffic Fatalities, 1984-1994

Year	Pedestrian	Pedalcyclist	Other	Total
1984	7,025	849	99	7,973
1985	6,808	890	84	7,782
1986	6,779	941	133	7,853
1987	6,745	948	132	7,825
1988	6,870	911	136	7,917
1989	6,556	832	107	7,495
1990	6,482	859	124	7,465
1991	5,801	843	124	6,768
1992	5,549	723	98	6,370
1993	5,649	816	111	6,576
1994	5,472	802	109	6,383

“More than one-third of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1994 were between 5 and 15 years old.”

Pedalcyclist fatalities occurred more frequently in urban areas (60 percent), at nonintersection locations (70 percent), between the hours of 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM (35 percent), and during the months of July, August, and September (38 percent).

Most pedalcyclist fatalities in 1994 were males (86 percent), and most were between the ages of 5 and 44 years (76 percent).

The pedalcyclist fatality rate per capita was nearly 7 times as high for males as for females.

Pedalcyclists under age 16 accounted for 37 percent of all pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1994, compared with 49 percent in 1984.

Pedalcyclists 25 years of age and older have made up an increasing proportion of all pedalcyclist deaths since 1984. The proportion of pedalcyclist fatalities age 25 to 64 was twice as high in 1994 as in 1984 (41 percent and 21 percent, respectively).

More than one-third (35 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1994 were between 5 and 15 years old. The pedalcyclist fatality rate for this age group was 6.8 per million population—more than twice the rate for all pedalcyclists (3.1 per million population).

“Alcohol involvement—either for the driver or the cyclist—was reported in more than one-third of the pedalcyclist fatalities in 1994.”

For 72 percent of the pedalcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 1994, police reported one or more errors or other factors related to the cyclist's behavior. The factor most often noted was “failure to yield right-of-way” (24 percent), followed by “walking with or against traffic, playing, working, sitting, lying, standing, etc., in roadway” (15 percent), and “improper crossing of the roadway or intersection” (12 percent). Fewer than half of the drivers involved were cited by police for driving errors or other factors related to driver behavior. The factors most often noted for drivers were “driving too fast for conditions or exceeding the speed limit” (17 percent), “vision obscured” (14 percent), and “failure to keep in proper lane or running off road” (13 percent).

Alcohol involvement—either for the driver or the pedalcyclist—was reported in more than one-third of the traffic crashes that resulted in pedalcyclist fatalities in 1994. In 25.7 percent of the crashes, either the driver or the cyclist was intoxicated, with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.10 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or greater. Lower alcohol levels (BAC 0.01 to 0.09 g/dl) were reported in an additional 7.6 percent. More than one-fifth (21.3 percent) of the pedalcyclists killed had a BAC of 0.01 g/dl or greater, and 16.1 percent were intoxicated.

Table 2 presents summary statistics for 1994 pedalcyclist fatalities by age and sex, and Table 3 presents detailed data by state.

Table 2. Pedalcyclist Fatalities and Fatality Rates by Age and Sex, 1994

Age (years)	Male			Female			Total		
	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*	Fatalities	Population (thousands)	Fatality Rate*
<5	10	10,094	0.99	7	9,632	0.73	17	19,726	0.86
5-9	85	9,657	8.80	22	9,201	2.39	107	18,859	5.67
10-15	153	11,450	13.36	22	10,905	2.02	175	22,355	7.83
16-20	57	8,965	6.36	12	8,530	1.41	69	17,495	3.94
21-24	34	7,536	4.51	7	7,311	0.96	41	14,847	2.76
25-34	86	20,676	4.16	16	20,677	0.77	102	41,353	2.47
35-44	105	20,647	5.09	9	21,010	0.43	114	41,657	2.74
45-54	67	14,571	4.60	7	15,281	0.46	74	29,852	2.48
55-64	36	9,983	3.61	4	11,032	0.36	40	21,015	1.90
65-69	15	4,500	3.33	3	5,471	0.55	18	9,971	1.81
70-79	22	6,445	3.41	1	8,870	0.11	23	15,315	1.50
80+	14	2,530	5.53	0	5,342	0.00	14	7,872	1.78
Unknown	8			0			8		
Total	692	127,076	5.45	110	133,265	0.83	802	260,341	3.08

* Rate per million population.

Source: Population—Bureau of the Census projections.

For more information:

Information on pedalcyclist traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone inquiries should be addressed to Ms. Louann Hall at (202) 366-4198. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

“Serving the Highway Safety Community by the Numbers”

Table 3. Pedalcyclist Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rates by State, 1994

State	Total Traffic Fatalities	Resident Population (thousands)	Pedalcyclist Fatalities	Percent of Total	Pedalcyclist Fatalities per Million Population
Alabama	1,083	4,219	8	0.7	1.90
Alaska	85	606	3	3.5	4.95
Arizona	903	4,075	22	2.4	5.40
Arkansas	610	2,453	8	1.3	3.26
California	4,226	31,431	114	2.7	3.63
Colorado	585	3,656	8	1.4	2.19
Connecticut	310	3,275	6	1.9	1.83
Delaware	112	570	5	4.5	8.77
District of Columbia	69	706	2	2.9	2.83
Florida	2,687	13,953	120	4.5	8.60
Georgia	1,426	7,055	19	1.3	2.69
Hawaii	122	1,179	4	3.3	3.39
Idaho	249	1,133	5	2.0	4.41
Illinois	1,554	11,752	25	1.6	2.13
Indiana	974	5,752	12	1.2	2.09
Iowa	478	2,829	11	2.3	3.89
Kansas	442	2,554	1	0.2	0.39
Kentucky	778	3,827	5	0.6	1.31
Louisiana	838	4,315	27	3.2	6.26
Maine	188	1,240	4	2.1	3.23
Maryland	651	5,006	13	2.0	2.60
Massachusetts	440	6,041	8	1.8	1.32
Michigan	1,419	9,496	30	2.1	3.16
Minnesota	644	4,567	16	2.5	3.50
Mississippi	791	2,669	11	1.4	4.12
Missouri	1,089	5,278	8	0.7	1.52
Montana	202	856	2	1.0	2.34
Nebraska	271	1,623	2	0.7	1.23
Nevada	294	1,457	10	3.4	6.86
New Hampshire	119	1,137	1	0.8	0.88
New Jersey	761	7,904	19	2.5	2.40
New Mexico	447	1,654	8	1.8	4.84
New York	1,658	18,169	46	2.8	2.53
North Carolina	1,431	7,070	28	2.0	3.96
North Dakota	88	638	0	0.0	0.00
Ohio	1,371	11,102	14	1.0	1.26
Oklahoma	687	3,258	6	0.9	1.84
Oregon	490	3,086	13	2.7	4.21
Pennsylvania	1,441	12,052	20	1.4	1.66
Rhode Island	63	997	1	1.6	1.00
South Carolina	847	3,664	14	1.7	3.82
South Dakota	154	721	0	0.0	0.00
Tennessee	1,214	5,175	7	0.6	1.35
Texas	3,186	18,378	58	1.8	3.16
Utah	342	1,908	7	2.0	3.67
Vermont	77	580	2	2.6	3.45
Virginia	930	6,552	19	2.0	2.90
Washington	638	5,343	14	2.2	2.62
West Virginia	356	1,822	6	1.7	3.29
Wisconsin	712	5,082	9	1.3	1.77
Wyoming	144	476	1	0.7	2.10
U.S. Total	40,676	260,341	802	2.0	3.08
Puerto Rico	598	* 3,622	19	3.2	5.25

* 1993 resident population for Puerto Rico.

Note: Totals may not equal sum of components due to independent rounding.

Sources: Fatalities—Fatal Accident Reporting System, NHTSA. Population—Bureau of the Census.