



## Quick Facts on Highway Safety

### What causes motor vehicle crashes?

The safety of road transportation is a product of interactions between the **driver, roadway environment** and the way a **vehicle** is designed, equipped and performs. A breakdown in one or more of these elements will significantly increase the risk of a serious crash.

In a national study of why roadway accidents happen, it was found that reasons for crashes overlap. Driver factors are involved in 93 percent of crashes. Roadway aspects are included in 34 percent of the accidents. Vehicle malfunctions are included in 12 percent of crashes.

### How do changing conditions influence crash rates?

Changing conditions make it necessary to continually monitor roadway safety. Changes in traffic, driver behavior, technology, environmental conditions, and fleet characteristics influence safety problems and their solutions.

Some of the challenges changing the nature of the safety of Iowa's roadway system include:

- growing traffic volumes, particularly heavy truck volumes;
- increased congestion on high speed rural roadways;
- changes in roadway use (urban/rural; residential/commercial);
- different mixes of vehicle types;
- increased truck sizes;
- higher centers of gravity for vans, pick-ups, and sport utility vehicles;
- new headlamps and aerodynamic vehicle designs (e.g., sloped front ends);
- an aging driver population;
- reduced compliance with traffic regulations;
- higher traffic speeds;
- aggressive and distracted driving behavior;

- need to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists; and
- an increased number of motorcyclists.

Consequently, there is a need for highway safety officials at the state and local levels of government and within multiple disciplines to continually work to fill gaps and identify effective countermeasures so that the safety of Iowa's roadways continues on its present trend of fewer fatalities.

### Iowa Facts: Motor vehicle travel and fatalities and injuries

- There are 2.1 million licensed drivers
- Nine percent of all drivers are under age 20
- Twelve percent of all drivers are age 70 or older
- There is a motor vehicle crash approximately every 8 minutes
- One out of every 20 drivers will be involved in a crash
- On average, 37 lives are lost each month because of traffic crashes
- A total of 441 lives were lost in 2003
- Approximately 100 persons are injured each day because of traffic crashes
- Nearly 45 percent of all those fatally injured were not using a protective device, such as seat belt or child car seat
- In 2003, there were a total of 489,573 moving and non-moving motor vehicle convictions
- The most common conviction is speeding, followed by no insurance card
- The average annual number of revocations for operating while intoxicated is 19,606 (five-year average 1996-2000) or an average of approximately 54 revocations per day
- In 2003, motor vehicles traveled an estimated 31.4 billion miles on our public road system
- There are nearly 3.8 million registered motor vehicles (autos, buses, trucks)

- As of Nov. 22, 2004, 210 people have escaped serious injury or death during this calendar year because they were buckled up at the time of the crash (as determined

by the investigating law enforcement officer); since July 1, 1986, 5,431 people have been added to Iowa's Life Toll list

History of Iowa motor vehicle crashes from 1972 to 2003

(Data in the following chart was taken from the annual Iowa Highway Accident Facts, Iowa Traffic Accident Facts, Iowa Crash Facts, and Crash Research and Statistical History produced by the Iowa Department of Public Safety and Iowa Department of Transportation. \*Preliminary Data; N/A - Data Not Available at This Time)

1994-2003 10-year average number of fatalities = 462

Year	Fatalities	Injuries	Total Crashes	Fatality Rate	Registered Vehicles	Vehicle Miles Traveled (Millions)
2003	443	N/A	59,187	1.42	N/A	N/A
2002	405	N/A	59,724	1.29	N/A	N/A
2001	446	N/A	62,000	1.46	3,400,311	30,461
2000	445	35,529	63,364	1.49	3,124,768	29,820
1999	490	36,920	64,485	1.65	3,070,856	29,726
1998	448	37,652	64,041	1.54	3,083,476	29,191
1997	468	39,513	71,512	1.67	3,027,355	27,990
1996	465	38,562	78,357	1.7	2,946,853	27,332
1995	527	38,992	76,203	1.97	2,920,666	26,687
1994	479	36,315	74,048	1.81	2,885,112	26,434
1993	457	35,510	73,608	1.8	2,851,302	25,396
1992	436	33,876	69,261	1.79	2,830,151	24,411
1991	488	29,663	71,271	2.07	2,802,036	23,571
1990	464	30,222	71,792	2	2,771,940	23,164
1989	515	29,597	70,716	2.29	2,730,604	22,509
1988	557	27,578	67,901	2.55	2,701,924	21,834
1987	491	27,074	63,458	2.36	2,892,994	20,824
1986	441	26,669	61,683	2.15	2,841,138	20,481
1985	473	26,988	63,624	2.35	2,796,172	20,104
1984	420	27,868	62,518	2.05	2,655,529	20,481
1983	510	26,050	61,190	2.59	2,542,267	19,712
1982	480	25,905	61,549	2.48	2,577,994	19,391
1981	612	28,776	68,263	3.27	2,592,604	18,715
1980	626	29,100	77,800	3.42	2,554,379	18,305
1979	655	29,972	86,969	3.45	2,540,547	18,959
1978	650	31,631	91,213	3.34	2,474,790	19,467
1977	640	32,289	87,771	3.36	2,356,327	19,028
1976	785	34,096	98,000	4.26	2,300,721	18,441
1975	674	32,802	94,825	3.78	2,250,417	17,853
1974	685	31,741	91,117	3.97	2,178,530	17,250
1973	813	35,059	96,620	4.6	2,095,330	17,691
1972	875	35,484	91,918	5.11	2,012,245	17,127