

## Ga. traffic deaths jump by 21% in 2 years, new report finds

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AUGUSTA, Ga. (WRDW/WAGT) - Just ahead of the busy July Fourth travel weekend, a national nonprofit says Georgia traffic fatalities surged 21 percent from 2019 to 2021. And in Richmond County, traffic fatalities are the highest they've been in five years.

Georgia's increase came as the number of traffic fatalities in the U.S. grew by 19 percent in the same period.

Traffic fatalities began to increase dramatically in 2020 even as vehicle travel rates plummeted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. Traffic fatalities continued to

increase in 2021 as vehicle travel returned to near pre-pandemic levels, according to a [report released Wednesday by the nonprofit](#).

### GEORGIA STATISTICS:

	2019	2020	2021	2019-2021 change
Traffic fatalities	1,491	1,664	1,806	+21 percent
Fatalities per 100M miles traveled	1.12	1.43	1.4	+25 percent
Vehicle miles traveled (billions)	133.1	116	129.3	-3 percent

The increase in traffic fatalities seems mostly related to increased risks being taken by drivers, according to TRIP. In an October 2021 report, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that “after the declaration of the public health emergency in March 2020, driving patterns and behaviors in the United States changed significantly. Of the drivers who remained on the roads, some engaged in riskier behavior, including speeding, failure to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.”

Based on a public survey, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety drew similar conclusions about the role of increased risks being taken by drivers during the pandemic, according to TRIP.

### Other statistics

- Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates the number of people killed in alcohol-involved crashes rose by 9 percent from 2019 to 2020 and by 5 percent from 2020 to 2021.
- The number of unrestrained occupants of passenger vehicles killed increased 15 percent from 2019 to 2020 and 3 percent from 2020 to 2021.
- The number of people killed in speeding-related traffic crashes climbed 11 percent from 2019 to 2020 and 5 percent from 2020 to 2021.
- In 2020, the share of patients treated by EMS at vehicle crashes who had severe injuries was 21 percent higher than in 2019. Through the first eight months of 2021, the share of patients who had severe injuries was 17 percent higher than in 2019.