



WEEKLY UPDATE

Report Highlights U.S. Traffic Safety Crisis

As many Americans hit the road for the busy Fourth of July weekend, a new report by a national transportation advocacy group highlights surging fatality rates over the last two years. The non-profit TRIP said that Covid-19 reduced overall U.S. travel in 2020 by 11% compared to 2019, yet total fatalities increased by 8% and the fatality rate by 21%.

From 2020 to 2021, traffic fatalities increased another 11% (from 38,824 to 42,915), roughly on pace with the increase in vehicle travel as Covid-related travel restrictions were gradually lifted. Traffic fatalities in 2021 were the highest since 2005.

This significant increase in traffic fatalities since the onset of the pandemic appears largely related to increased risks being taken by drivers. 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 other drugs.”

The report includes comprehensive steps to address the increased fatalities: Educating motorists; infrastructure improvements such as turning lanes, additional capacity and better lane markings; smarter vehicle technology such as collision avoidance, lane departure avoidance systems and turning detection systems; safer speeds; and better post-crash care.

TRIP estimates that the economic cost of fatal and serious traffic crashes in the U.S. in 2021 was \$391 billion.

[TRIP's "Addressing America's Traffic Safety Crisis"](#)