

Michigan traffic deaths are up 15% since 2019 and recklessness is to blame

Michigan Radio | By [Toussaint Fancher](#)

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Michigan traffic fatalities have increased by 15% since 2019.

In a [new study](#) by The Road Information Program (TRIP), Michigan traffic fatalities increased by 15% from 2019 to 2022.

The report says the reason behind the increase in fatalities is that driving behaviors from the pandemic are continuing now. There were fewer vehicles on the road during the pandemic, and drivers became more aggressive and more reckless.

In April 2020, the U.S. vehicle miles of travel (VMT) decreased by 40% compared to April of 2019.

The report says drivers are now continuing to drive in many of the same ways, resulting in the increase in deadly crashes.

TRIP Director of Communications and Research, Carolyn Bonifas Kelly said, “The increase in traffic fatalities despite the reduction in vehicle travel appears to be largely the result of an increase in risks that are being taken by drivers. That includes risky behaviors like speeding or not wearing a seatbelt, or being impaired by alcohol or drugs, and also aggressive driving.”

“More aggressive driving and increased incidents in alcohol or drug impairments and the lack of seatbelts; those behaviors as the study shows, began during the pandemic and have continued even as vehicle travel has returned,” she said.

Kelly said there are a few options to help reduce crashes. She said strategies to reduce traffic fatalities include additional lane markings, rumble strips, turn lanes, lighting, and shoulders.