



# Michigan had more crashes but less drunk, drugged and distracted driving in 2022

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Diverted southbound U.S. 131 traffic backs up along Century Ave. SW after a serious crash on the highway, near Hall Street, in Grand Rapids on Friday, March 29, 2019. (Cory Morse | MLive.com file photo) Cory Morse | MLive.com By [Justin P. Hicks | jhicks3@mlive.com](mailto:jhicks3@mlive.com)

Michigan had 293,341 traffic crashes in 2022, which resulted in the death of 1,123 individuals.

Last year's crash total marked a 4% increase from 2021, though it was an improvement from the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted travel patterns in 2020, according to the state's annual traffic crash report published Wednesday, June 28.

Michigan reported 1% fewer traffic fatalities in 2022 compared to the year prior (1,131), however traffic deaths have increased more than 14% since 2019 and the 2022 total was the second-most in a year over the last decade. Out of 365 days in 2022, there were only 23 days in which Michigan did not report a single traffic fatality.

In a recent [national report](#), traffic safety experts indicated the increase in road deaths are likely a result of people taking greater risks including speeding, impaired and distracted driving, and reduced seatbelt and helmet use.

However, Michigan reported fewer drug-related, alcohol-related, and distracted driving crashes in 2022 than in 2021. In fact, those totals were also improvements from 2018 and 2019.

The state did see a year-over-year increase in crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians. Motorcycle crashes declined slightly, however motorcycle deaths increased 4%.

There were also year-over-year increases in:

- Work-zone crashes -- 28% from 5,814 to 7,436.
- Train-involved crashes -- up 16% from 56 to 65.
- School bus-involved crashes -- up 33% from 785 to 1,041.
- Deer-involved crashes -- up 13% from 52,218 to 58,984.
- Deaths from crashes in which drivers were fleeing police -- up 167% from nine to 24.

A recent report from the national transportation research nonprofit group TRIP identified 1,133 total traffic deaths for Michigan in 2022. Their count was 10 higher than Michigan State Police's tally. A spokesperson for MSP said TRIP used an estimate from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and that the MSP data from Wednesday's report is most accurate.

Below is a deeper look at MSP's 2022 report.

## Dangerous actions

Michigan had 10% fewer alcohol-involved traffic fatalities and 9% fewer drug-involved traffic fatalities reported in 2022 compared to the previous year. There were also fewer total crashes involving both drugs and alcohol. Alcohol was a factor in 9,331 crashes, which resulted in 322 deaths. That was down from 9,557 crashes that led to 357 deaths in 2021. Meanwhile, there were 2,352 drug-involved crashes in 2022, resulting in 249 fatalities. A year ago, there were 2,999 such crashes and 275 related deaths.

Police determined distracted driving was a factor in 15,441 crashes last year, including crashes that killed 57 people. That was down from 16,543 such crashes killing 59 people in 2021.

Distracted driving includes using a phone or other electronic device both in your hand and hands-free. It can also include other activity in the vehicle, which was the most common form in 2022, as well as your passengers or something going on outside of your vehicle.

## Pedestrians and bicyclists

There were 173 pedestrians killed by traffic crashes in 2022, which was down 5% from the year before. However, the 1,897 total pedestrian-involved crashes was an increase of 6%.

Michigan reported 1,340 crashes in which a bicycle was involved. Those incidents resulted in 36 bicyclists being killed, which was up from 29 a year ago.

There were also nine snowmobile deaths and 21 off-road vehicle deaths.

## Seatbelts and helmets

Michigan's traffic report documented the use of restraints and helmets during fatal crashes.

Among the road deaths for 2022, there were 329 in which a seatbelt was used, 231 in which a seatbelt wasn't used and 186 in which a seatbelt wasn't available. There were also five deaths where a shoulder belt only was used, and one where a lap belt only was used.

The state also identified 128 deaths in which the restraint use was unknown, and only one death in which there was a "restraint failure."

A combination shoulder and lap seatbelt was worn in at least 81% of injury crashes involving passenger vehicles. There were 54,212 such injury crashes, compared to 2,490 in which no seat belt was used and 2,434 where no belt was available.

As for helmets, there were 119 deaths in which the rider did not wear a helmet and 33 deaths in which use of a helmet wasn't known.

Helmets weren't perfect though, with 85 riders killed despite wearing one. Those deaths weren't differentiated between motorcycle, bicycle, snow mobile, or off-road vehicle deaths.

Eighteen bicyclists who were killed did not wear a helmet, compared to five who did. For motorcyclists, 91 who died did not wear a helmet compared to 68 who did.

## More than 7 in 10 traffic fatalities were men

Males accounted for 816 of Michigan's traffic fatalities in 2022, or 72.7%.

The remaining 307 fatalities were female, with zero fatalities noted in the report's "non-binary" column.

The gender gap is reduced heavily when looking at injury crashes. Males accounted for almost 49% of injury crashes, compared to about 51% females and a small percentage non-binary.

Men also accounted for a substantial number of the state's motorcycle (93%), bicycle (97%), and off-road vehicle deaths (90%).

The most common age group for all fatalities was 25 to 34. That group also had the most injury crashes, followed by the 35-to-44 age group.

Drivers accounted for about 50% of the fatalities (556) and about 70% of the traffic injuries (49,046). Passengers accounted for another 155 deaths, and there 173 motorcyclists who died.

## When crashes occurred most

November led all other months with 32,560 crashes, followed by October, December and January. Meanwhile, April had the fewest crashes followed by March and July.

June was the deadliest month with 114 fatal crashes, followed by July with 111 and September with 109. The fewest fatalities occurred in February (59), March (63) and April (65).

More crashes occurred on Fridays -- 50,097 -- than any other day of the week, with the fewest crashes occurring on Sundays. As for time of day, the most crashes were reported between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

## Types of crashes

The most common scenario for a traffic crash in 2022 was the single motor vehicle crash, which accounted for 109,806 crashes or 34%. Those crashes also proved most fatal, making up almost 50% of fatal collisions.

Read-end crashes were the next most common (22%), followed by angle (15%), and side-swipes from the same direction (13%).

Head-on crashes -- straight on and from a left turn -- accounted for less than 4% of total crashes, but 14% of traffic fatalities.