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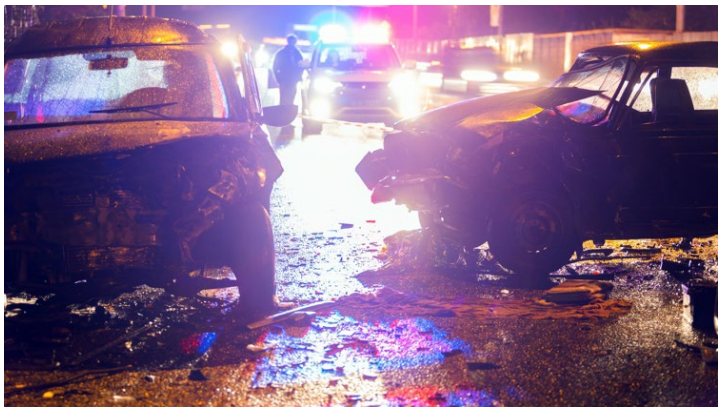
Report: Texas' traffic fatality rate was 20th highest in nation last year; 25K+ killed in five-year period

Mason Hickok | Wednesday, September 23, 2026



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From 2020 to 2025, traffic crashes in the United States claimed more than 240,000 lives.

SAN ANTONIO — While traffic fatalities fell in 2025 for the fourth straight year, Texas ranked in the top 20, according to a report by TRIP, a National Transportation Research Nonprofit.

In a report released Wednesday, TRIP found that between 2020 and 2025, traffic crashes in the United States claimed 241,637 lives. In Texas, 25,012 people died in crashes during the same period, an average of 11 deaths per day.

The report explores national and state-level trends in traffic fatalities from 2015 to 2025. The number and rate of fatalities surged in 2021 and 2021, caused by a change in "driver behavior and travel patterns" caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to TRIP.

“While four straight years of declining fatalities show that safety improvements are making a difference, more than 36,000 people were killed on our nation’s roads in 2025," said Haley Jenkins, chair of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA). "Rising pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities further reinforce the need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to safety.

The lowest figure for traffic fatalities came in 1949 with 30,246, the report states. The closest the trend came to the figure was in 2011, with 32,740 fatalities in the United States.

In 2025, Texas averaged a fatality rate of 1.21 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, one point higher than the national rate. Between 2015 and 2025, traffic fatalities increased by seven percent, the report found.

The image below shows the top 20 states with the highest traffic fatalities in 2025.

Meanwhile, bike and pedestrian fatalities increased nationwide by eight percent from 2020 to 2025 nationwide — to 1,148 and 6,529, respectively. Both accounted for 21% of all U.S. traffic fatalities in 2025, according to the report. There were 5,758 motorcyclist fatalities in 2025.

2025 Traffic Fatality Rate per 100M VMT

1	New Mexico	1.59	11	Nevada	1.32
2	Mississippi	1.52	12	Oregon	1.29
3	South Carolina	1.51	13	Colorado	1.28
4	Arizona	1.50	14	Tennessee	1.27
5	West Virginia	1.46	15	Wyoming	1.26
6	Arkansas	1.43	16	Florida	1.24
7	Montana	1.43	17	Idaho	1.22
8	Louisiana	1.38	18	Hawaii	1.22
9	Kentucky	1.36	19	Delaware	1.21
10	Oklahoma	1.35	20	Texas	1.21
U.S. TOTAL: 1.10					

Credit: TRIP

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Billions estimated in economic burden from traffic crashes

Medical care, a loss of productivity and legal costs are some of the economic costs from traffic crashes, according to a revised 2023 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) report examining the economic and societal impact of crashes.

TRIP, citing NHTSA's traffic crash cost methodology, estimates that fatal and serious traffic crashes in Texas last year "caused a total of $171.6 billion in the value of societal harm." The figure includes an estimated $42.6 billion in economic costs and $129 billion in quality-of-life costs.

TRIP found that when initial COVID-19 precautions were implemented nationwide in 2020, "the number and rate of traffic fatalities began to increase, even as the rate of vehicle travel decreased initially." The report attributes this to increased risks taken by drivers.

"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," TRIP found, citing a 2021 NHTSA report.

The report indicates an increase in roadway safety funding to counter increased traffic fatalities; however, according to TRIP, a billion-dollar backlog exists for "needed roadway safety improvements," TRIP states in its Thursday news release.

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which was signed into law in November 2021, boosted federal funding for roads, bridges and transit from 2022 to 2026. The IIJA, however, expires on Sept. 30.