



Legislative Report

A report on the state of traffic safety in Minnesota in 2025

Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS)

01/15/2026

Contents

Letter from the safety chairs3

Executive summary4

Key policy priorities for the 2026 legislative session.....7

Crashes, fatalities and serious injuries8

Fatality rates.....9

Bordering states 12

Driver behaviors 12

Speeding 14

Seatbelt use 21

Alcohol..... 24

Distracted driving 28

Other contributing factors..... 31

State Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) 35

Focus areas 35

Action-oriented strategies..... 36

Annual program highlights 38

Transformative power of partnerships and collaboration 38

Rural high-risk roads..... 38

Safe road zones 39

Safe Roads Coalitions 40

Additional project highlights 41

Events 42

Emerging issues 43

Appendix A – Legislative priorities 46

Appendix B – Definitions, data sources and acronyms	49
Appendix C – Reference documents	51
Appendix D – About the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety	52
Council members.....	53
Subcommittees and working groups.....	55
Council meetings	55
Appendix E – Safe Roads Coalitions	57
Minnesota Safe Roads Coalitions: A Collaborative Approach to Traffic Safety	57
Appendix F – Report requirements	59

Letter from the safety chairs

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) prepared this report to detail the state of roadway safety in Minnesota in 2025. The Minnesota Advisory Council on Traffic Safety continues to work tirelessly to prevent serious and fatal motor vehicle crashes on our roads, and 2025 saw a significant reversal of the increasing fatality trend over the past five years. Minnesota is projected to have over 100 fewer fatalities in 2025 relative to 2024, and for the first time since 2019, there will be less than 400 annual traffic fatalities. This is a remarkable achievement that would not have been possible without the work of Advisory Council members, the support of the Governor's Office and Legislature, and our many traffic safety partners across the state.

While this trend is moving in the right direction, we must continue to be persistent in our pursuit of the policies, practices, and resources necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of zero deaths. Driving this mission are the highly professional and passionate members of DPS-OTS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) who are committed to high performance and exhibiting excellence in our state. This extends to our many partners in the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program as well.

Following the 2023 legislative session, Minnesota implemented multiple initiatives to increase traffic safety, including the creation of safe road zones, speed reduction projects, a Tribal traffic safety summit, and increased funding for law enforcement training and equipment. We are seeing the result of those significant investments in the lives saved on Minnesota roads in 2025.

We acknowledge that we still have much work to do in many areas to further improve safety for all Minnesotans who use our roads. The Advisory Council on Traffic Safety members and the staff from the University of Minnesota, DPS-OTS, MnDOT, and MDH are proud of our work and the accomplishments we have made with our traffic safety partners working toward a common goal. We look forward to continuing this work in the coming years.

Respectfully submitted by,

Michael Hanson, Minnesota Department of Public Safety chair, Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS)

Catherine Diamond, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) vice chair, ACTS

Brian Sorenson, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) vice chair, ACTS

Executive summary

In commitment to the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety's (ACTS') mission of guiding Minnesota toward zero fatal and serious injury crashes, this report provides a summary of our key strategic achievements and demonstrable impact over the past year. Leveraging the resources provided by the legislature, our collaborative efforts have led to critical results in advancing innovative safety solutions and best practices that support a safe and equitable roadway system for all Minnesotans. These outcomes represent significant progress toward realizing the Council's vision where all roadway users are safe from fatal and life-changing injuries.

Traffic safety efforts in Minnesota include engineering safer roadways, educating roadway users, enforcing traffic laws, and providing rapid emergency response to crashes. The Advisory Council is one of many partners in these efforts including transportation experts, law enforcement, educators and advocates, emergency responders and policy makers. Following are some key impact measures and policy priorities for 2025.

Minnesota traffic fatalities

As of Dec. 1, 2025, Minnesota has observed 347 fatalities in Minnesota YTD, which is 89 fewer fatalities than observed YTD in 2024 (436 fatalities), or roughly a 20 percent decrease. This 2025 fatality count is also a significant drop from the YTD average of the previous five years (408 fatalities) and represents the fewest fatalities observed at this point in the year since 2019. Though this fatality data is still preliminary, Minnesota is projected to potentially have fewer than 400 fatalities in the entirety of 2025.



(Values shown are Dec 1st YTD fatality counts)

A roadmap for traffic safety in Minnesota

Traffic safety depends on partnerships, and ACTS continues to facilitate new relationships among disparate groups. Events such as the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) conference (the state's leading forum for reducing serious and fatal crashes) and the Tribal Traffic Safety Summit (a complement to TZD) brought together cross-disciplinary stakeholders and community members to encourage collaboration. Recent additions to the council include the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and the Insurance Federation of Minnesota.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

ACTS has endorsed the SHSP as the major framework for traffic safety improvements in the state. The 2025-2029 Minnesota SHSP identifies focus areas, strategies and tactics to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths and serious injuries, with the goal of reducing traffic-related deaths to 225 or fewer by 2030. The updated SHSP emphasizes the critical roles that speed and distraction play in severe crashes and is used as a guiding document for the council in determining priorities. Notably, the updated SHSP received a commendation from the FHWA (the only state to receive such commendation) in its annual letter to MnDOT:

“(Minnesota is) commended for developing this action-oriented Strategic Highway Safety Plan and for taking an aggressive approach to reducing fatal traffic crashes in the State of Minnesota. This plan aligns closely with USDOT’s top priority of safety and reducing the estimated 39,345 fatal traffic crashes in the United States in 2024.”

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

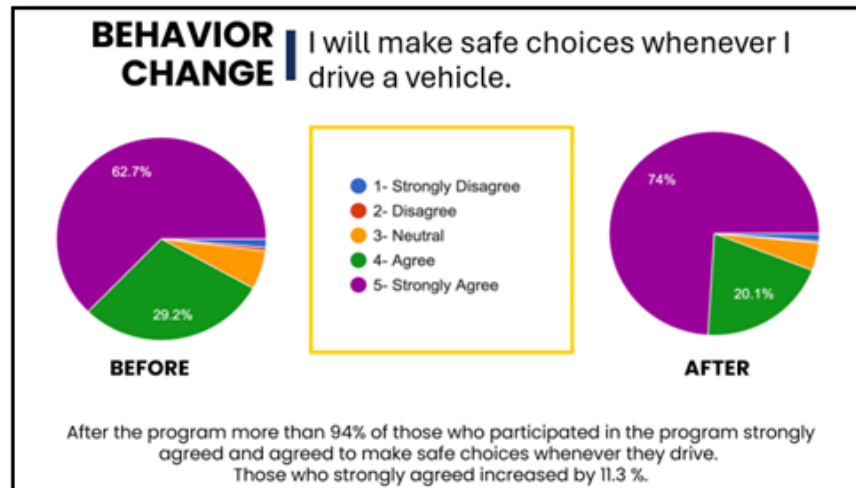
Implementation of \$12M in state and local safety programming

In 2023, the MN legislature provided critical resources focused on traffic safety. To directly address high-risk crash areas, the Council successfully allocated \$12 million across two critical programs: the Rural High-Risk Roadways (RHRR) program and the Safe Road Zones (SRZ) initiative. The \$10 million RHRR program funded safety infrastructure on trunk highways — such as roundabouts and rumble strips — and provided additional funding to the statewide enforcement grant program to focus on speed enforcement. Concurrently, the \$2 million SRZ initiative provided funding to all 23 local agencies that applied, enabling tailored safety initiatives including dynamic speed signs, road safety audits and public engagement campaigns. Funds were also used for additional enforcement in the Safe Road Zones. These strategic programs demonstrate a vital commitment to improving traffic safety across the state of Minnesota.

Partnership in action: Safe Road Coalitions

Local attention leads to local success. Minnesota Safe Roads Coalitions are essential, community-based partnerships committed to reducing traffic-related fatal and serious injury crashes through localized strategies. By bringing together diverse stakeholders and fostering true community ownership, these coalitions implement creative, successful solutions that state agencies cannot achieve alone. For example, LeSueur County's JOYRIDE program has provided over 2,220 reliable, alcohol-free rides home, directly preventing potential DWI incidents. The Impact Teen Drivers program reached dozens of schools in Minnesota this year, positively impacting teen attitudes toward safe driving. And partnerships with organizations like AARP deliver critical services, such as the CarFit program, which promotes older driver safety and mobility. Through CarFit, Renville and McLeod Counties together reached approximately 75 drivers in 2025.

These coalitions are a proven model for translating traffic safety goals into meaningful community action, leading to measurable results and shifting safety culture statewide. Below, we show the results of one of the surveys of teen drivers before and after an Impact Teen Driver session.



Analyzing outcomes of traffic safety violations

In May 2023, the Minnesota Legislature directed the University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) to evaluate recent citation and court disposition trends in four key behavioral areas contributing to fatal and serious injury crashes: speeding, impaired driving, distracted driving and seatbelt violations. The project examined enforcement and adjudication of traffic safety violations in Minnesota between 2017 and 2022. Key findings included:

- The number of total traffic citations steeply declined.
- Fatal crashes increased while most citations decreased.
- Conviction rates were high but varied by violation type and charge level.
- Impairment conviction rates were high across judicial districts.
- Fines and fees tended to have high payments overall, but were lower for impaired charges.
- Citation counts were influenced by the pandemic, policy, and targeted campaigns.

The full report and a two-page summary of the findings can be found [online](#).

Key policy priorities for the 2026 legislative session

ACTS supports the following positions going into the 2026 legislative session. See Appendix A for full details.

1. **Adopt a framework policy:** The Advisory Council on Traffic Safety endorses and supports the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan along with the companion Triennial Highway Safety Plan as the framework for the focus areas, strategies and tactics to address our state’s most pressing traffic safety needs. The Advisory Council recommends the state provides the necessary authorities, resources and staff to fully implement the plan, including ongoing funding for regional and local traffic safety efforts like Safe Road Zones and county-based traffic safety coalitions.
2. **Address critical needs:**
 - a. **Speed reduction:**
 - i. Ensure sufficient law enforcement funding to increase speed enforcement.
 - ii. Support a progressive penalty structure that includes increased fines, penalties, required education and other control measures like intelligent speed assist.
 - iii. Increase focus on and funding for roadway calming with emphasis on low cost, rapid deployment, and functional roadway features.
 - iv. Increase focus on measures to prevent or reduce the severity of lane departure crashes.
 - b. **Distraction:** Modify the Criminal Vehicular Homicide and Criminal Vehicular Operation statutes to specifically include “use of an electronic device while driving.”
 - c. **Impairment:** Fully authorize the use of roadside oral fluid testing as a preliminary screening test.
 - d. **Vulnerable Roadway Users:**
 - i. Clarify the school bus stop arm language to address the need for vehicles to stop while the stop arm is being deployed.
 - ii. Address the fatal and serious injury crash risks of any allowed use of the shoulder of paved highways by ATV/UTVs.
 - iii. Clarify the legal definition of e-motos, and the prohibition against operation in the public right-of-way.

Crashes, fatalities and serious injuries

To provide additional background around traffic safety in Minnesota, OTS researchers examined many aspects of the crash data provided by MNCrash. The data explored and quantified include crash severity, comparisons of crashes over time, and driving behavior, among many others.

The following graphs (Figure 1) depict reported crash counts in Minnesota for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2017 through 2025. Over these nine years, the total number of crashes has decreased slightly and is trending downward. Most crashes do not involve deaths or injuries to persons involved, but the vehicles in the collision or other property are damaged. These crashes are called property damage only (PDO). Historically, the proportion of crashes categorized as PDO is around 70 percent. In previous years Minnesota has seen this proportion increase, suggesting that Minnesota traffic safety has improved and that injurious crashes are being prevented. However, recent legislative changes have also loosened reporting requirements, resulting in possible under-reporting of these PDO crashes in certain areas.

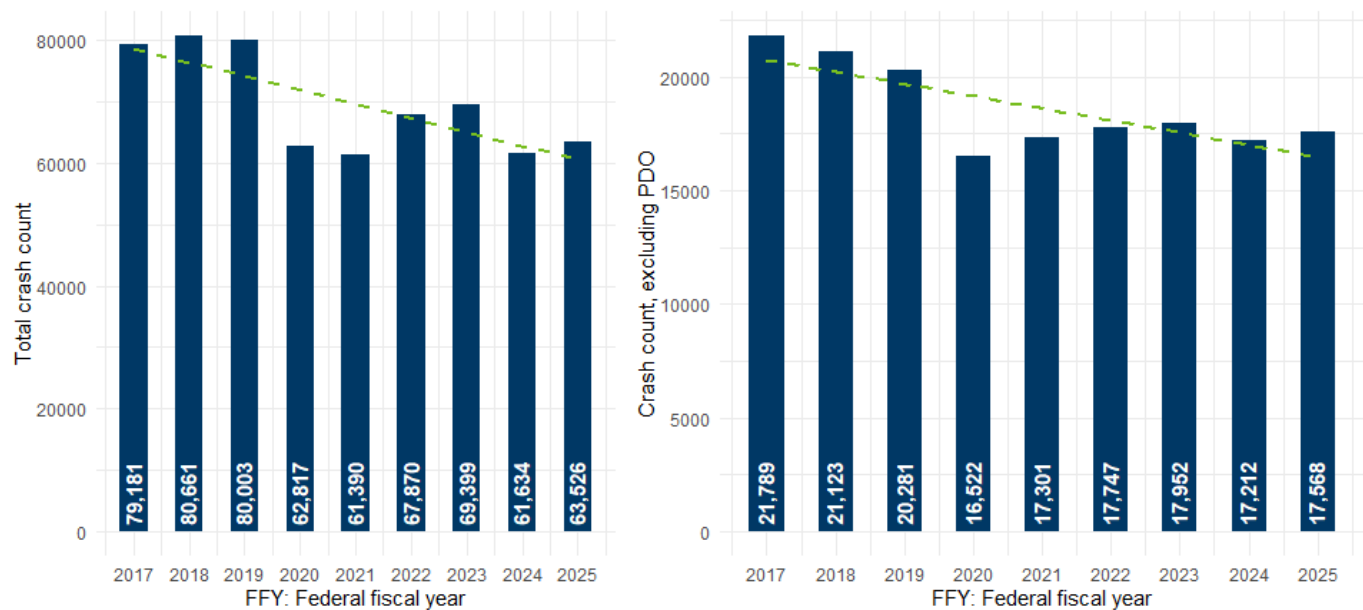


Figure 1: Yearly crash counts over time. Left, total number of crashes in Minnesota per year; right, total number of non-PDO crashes per year. Green dashed line indicates the linear trend over time.

Traffic safety initiatives tend to focus on the prevention of severe crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries. Fatal and serious injury crashes represent a small proportion of the total crashes, but these crashes are the most devastating and are almost always preventable with the proper precautions.

Trends for the past nine fiscal years show that fatalities are slightly increasing (Figure 2), though FFY 2025 has shown a decrease relative to FFY 2024. Substantial progress in preventing fatalities had been made prior to the COVID-19 years; for example, there were only 350 fatalities in FFY18. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic the state has seen an abrupt increase in fatalities and Minnesota is currently working to return to pre-pandemic numbers.

Beyond fatalities, Minnesota also continues to see an increase in serious injuries over time. This increase in serious and fatal crashes in the years since COVID 19 is a topic of interest beyond Minnesota, especially given that traffic volumes have returned to pre-pandemic levels (suggesting that behaviors stemming from reduced traffic volumes are not solely to blame).

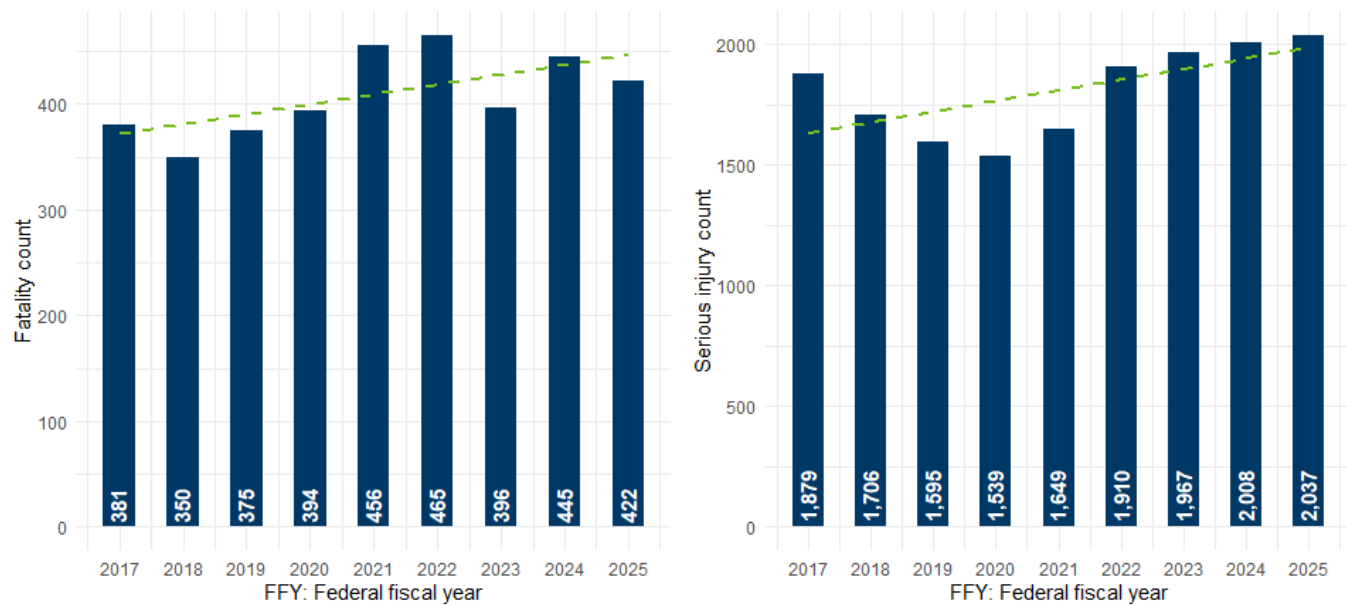


Figure 2: Yearly fatality and serious injury counts over time. Left, total number of fatalities per year; right, total number of serious injuries per year. Green dashed line indicates the linear trend over time.

Fatality rates

According to NHTSA data, Minnesota has a comparatively low crash fatality rate by several measures. Relative to population, Minnesota has the 10th lowest fatality rate in the nation. Relative to the number of registered motor vehicles, Minnesota ranks even lower (fourth in the nation) with only Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Hawai’i having a lower fatality rate in 2024. Finally, relative to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), Minnesota once again has the fourth lowest fatality rate, at 0.8 in 2024; only Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Utah had a lower fatality rate relative to VMT.

The following table (Table 1) shows the full list of fatality rates as a function of population, registered motor vehicles (MV) and vehicle miles traveled for each state in 2024. This data is derived from the National Safety Council’s Injury Facts.

Table 1: 2024 fatality rates and ranks for each state, colored and grouped by NHTSA region

NHTSA Region	State	Fatalities	Fatality Rate per 100K Population	Rank	Fatality Rate per 10K MV	Rank	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT	Rank
1	Connecticut	330	9.86	9	1.17	20	1.07	15
	Maine	179	14.45	31	1.31	29	1.18	25
	Massachusetts	368	6.65	3	0.70	2	0.62	1
	New Hampshire	135	10.38	12	0.96	10	0.99	11
	Rhode Island	52	4.91	1	0.63	1	0.66	2
	Vermont	59	10.26	11	0.94	9	0.81	5
2	New Jersey	695	8.14	5	1.16	19	0.90	8
	New York	1,105	6.55	2	1.18	23	0.92	10
3	Delaware	127	13.92	27	2.85	49	1.29	32
	Maryland	579	9.79	8	1.17	22	1.02	13
	Pennsylvania	1,139	9.78	7	1.04	15	1.11	21
	Virginia	910	11.06	16	1.15	18	1.07	15
	West Virginia	255	16.08	36	1.69	38	1.61	48
4	Alabama	976	21.34	48	1.79	42	1.35	34
	Florida	3,188	15.02	34	1.63	36	1.36	35
	Georgia	1,423	14.54	32	1.55	33	1.09	20
	Kentucky	714	17.10	40	1.57	35	1.45	42
	Mississippi	723	27.95	50	3.24	50	1.79	50
	North Carolina	1,659	17.64	44	1.89	45	1.37	36
	South Carolina	1,041	20.18	46	1.97	47	1.71	49
	Tennessee	1,202	17.35	43	1.73	39	1.41	39
5	Illinois	1,208	10.42	13	1.19	24	1.14	23
	Indiana	827	13.08	26	1.43	32	0.85	7
	Michigan	1,047	11.87	19	1.05	16	1.07	15
	Minnesota	478	9.93	10	0.82	4	0.80	4
	Ohio	1,160	11.11	17	1.03	14	1.03	14
	Wisconsin	575	11.05	15	1.00	12	0.84	6

NHTSA Region	State	Fatalities	Fatality Rate per 100K Population	Rank	Fatality Rate per 10K MV	Rank	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT	Rank
6	Arkansas	606	21.56	49	1.82	43	1.53	46
	Louisiana	746	17.20	41	1.65	37	1.31	33
	New Mexico	400	20.59	47	2.10	48	1.43	41
	Oklahoma	642	16.45	38	1.89	44	1.40	38
	Texas	4,162	14.26	29	1.77	41	1.37	36
7	Iowa	358	12.34	21	0.93	8	1.07	15
	Kansas	342	12.46	23	1.38	31	1.07	15
	Missouri	965	16.36	37	1.75	40	1.20	27
	Nebraska	250	15.42	35	1.27	27	1.14	23
8	Colorado	687	13.07	25	1.32	30	1.25	31
	Montana	205	18.92	45	0.87	6	1.47	44
	North Dakota	90	12.31	20	0.85	5	0.91	9
	South Dakota	146	16.89	39	1.05	17	1.41	39
	Utah	280	8.70	6	0.91	7	0.79	3
	Wyoming	107	12.63	24	1.20	25	1.12	22
9	Arizona	1,250	17.25	42	1.94	46	1.59	47
	California	3,807	11.44	18	1.23	26	1.19	26
	Hawaii	102	7.79	4	0.81	3	1.00	12
	Nevada	420	14.90	33	1.57	34	1.49	45
10	Alaska	70	14.12	28	1.03	13	1.24	30
	Idaho	240	14.40	30	1.17	21	1.20	27
	Oregon	539	12.40	22	1.28	28	1.46	43
	Washington	730	10.45	14	0.98	11	1.21	29
	U.S Total	39,345	12.89		1.39		1.20	

Bordering states

One theory used to explain Minnesota's relatively low fatality rate is that of weather. Winter months in Minnesota produce more crashes overall, but those crashes are generally less severe and result in fewer deaths than crashes occurring during summer months. According to this theory, bordering states with similar weather should exhibit similar fatality rates. However, Minnesota's fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled has been consistently lower than fatality rates for Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. This suggests that weather alone is insufficient to explain Minnesota's lower fatality rates.

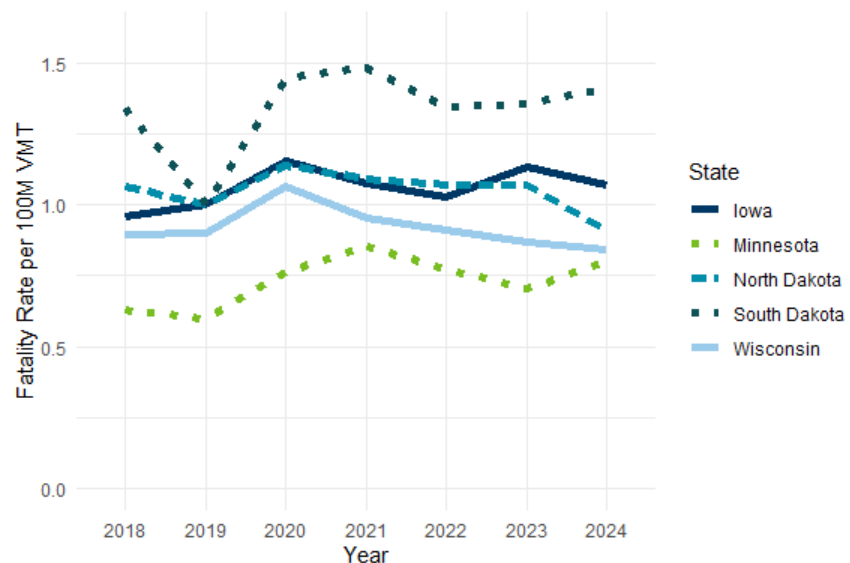


Figure 3: Fatality rates for Minnesota and neighboring states over time (based on fatalities per 100 million VMT)

Driver behaviors

Government agencies, academic institutions and private businesses have all conducted research into the causes of traffic crashes. Regardless of the researching entity, these studies have collectively concluded that driver errors cause at least 94 percent of traffic collisions. Common driver errors include speeding, distraction and alcohol or drug impairment. These behaviors represent decisions made by drivers that may directly result in crashes. In contrast, the decision to not wear a seatbelt does not on its own directly cause a traffic crash (though it may correlate with other behaviors that do); instead, this behavior greatly increases the odds of injury or fatality resulting from a collision. A seatbelt further protects the occupants by reducing the likelihood of passengers being thrown from the vehicle.

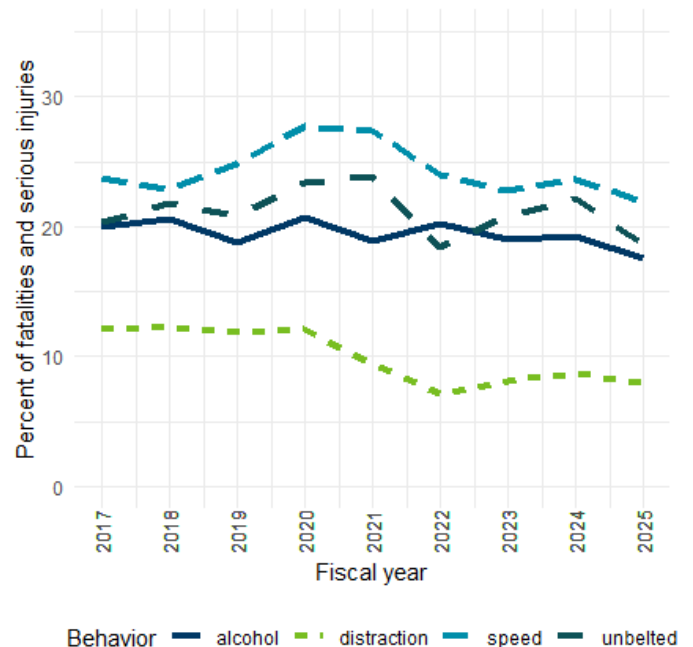


Figure 4: Percentage of fatalities and serious injuries attributed to each of the 'Big Four' driver behaviors over time

These three driver behaviors (speeding, alcohol and distraction) and motor vehicle occupant seatbelt usage are known as the “Big Four Behaviors” due to their relative importance and frequency in crashes. They are all tracked on the crash report and are important pieces of information for trend analysis. The graph above (Figure 4) examines how speeding, seatbelt non-use, alcohol and distraction have changed since FFY 2017. As shown, speeding, alcohol impairment and unbelted behaviors have remained relatively stable, while reported distracted driving has shown a marked decline. Importantly, reported distracted driving also does not reflect actual incidence of distracted driving; unlike the other behaviors, distracted driving relies heavily on self-report and is the most difficult behavior to accurately quantify.

Since FFY 2017, 50.9 percent of Minnesota severe and fatal crashes had at least one of the Big Four behaviors as a contributing factor. In addition, 17.7 percent of serious and fatal crashes had two or more behaviors involved. Since 94 percent of crashes involve driver error (mostly errors relating to recognition and decision), reducing driver errors related to speed, alcohol use, distraction and seatbelt non-use is key to traffic safety. The graph below (Figure 5) examines the proportions of zero, one, or two-plus Big Four behaviors over the years. The increase in the proportion of crashes with zero behaviors (the dark blue section in the bar graph) shows that efforts to address these behaviors can be successful. However, a potential caveat for this increase is the reporting of distraction in crashes. Distraction reported in crashes has decreased since the 2016 release of MNCrash. This decrease in reporting could be one explanation for the increase in proportion of zero behavior crashes. Each of these behaviors will be examined individually more closely on the following pages.

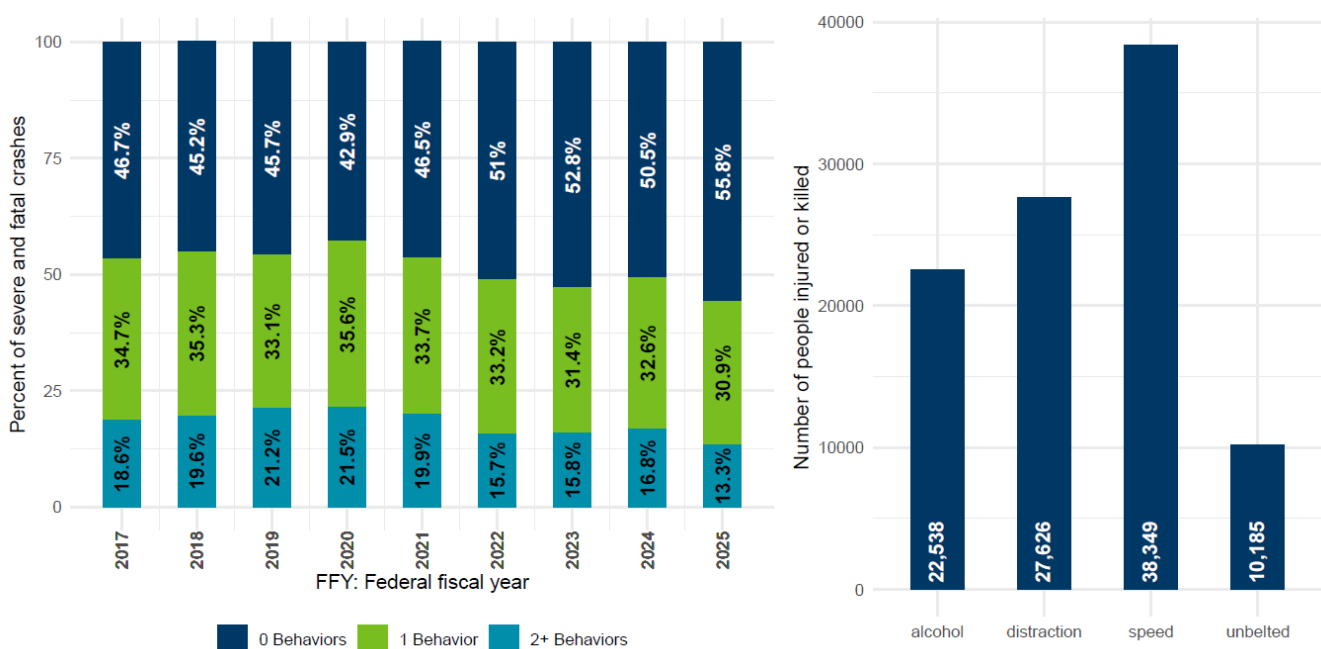
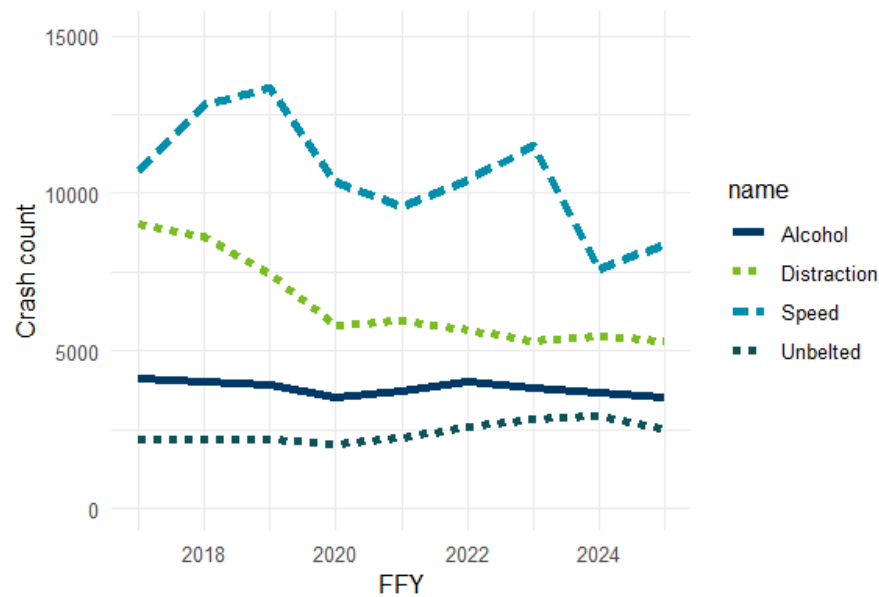


Figure 5: Proportions of serious and fatal crashes attributable to 0, 1, or 2 or more ‘Big Four’ behaviors over time (left) and total people injured or killed by each behavior since FFY 2017 (right)

Generally, the total number of crashes with each of the Big Four behaviors as one of the contributing factors has declined over time, except for unbelted crashes. The number of crashes in which at least one person was

unbelted has increased somewhat (since FFY 2017), though there was also a decline in the number of unbelted crashes in FFY 2025 relative to FFY 2024 (2,561 crashes vs 2,959 crashes). The number of speed-associated crashes, in contrast, has shown the opposite pattern; in general, the number of speed-related crashes has declined over time, but there was an increase in speed-related crashes in FFY 2025 relative to FFY 2024 (8,392 crashes vs 7,582 crashes).



Speeding

Speeding is by far the most common dangerous driving behavior. Since 2020, 14.7 percent of all crashes in Minnesota were attributed to driver speeding. While speeding-related crashes occur throughout the state, counties in the northern and southernmost areas of the state have higher percentages of their total crashes attributed to speeding. Combined data for the metro counties (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington) shows just 13.2 percent of crashes resulting from speeding. The map below (Figure 6) displays the percentage of speed-related crashes for each county. Of all 87 counties, Wilkin County had the highest percentage of crashes related to speeding, with 41.4 percent.

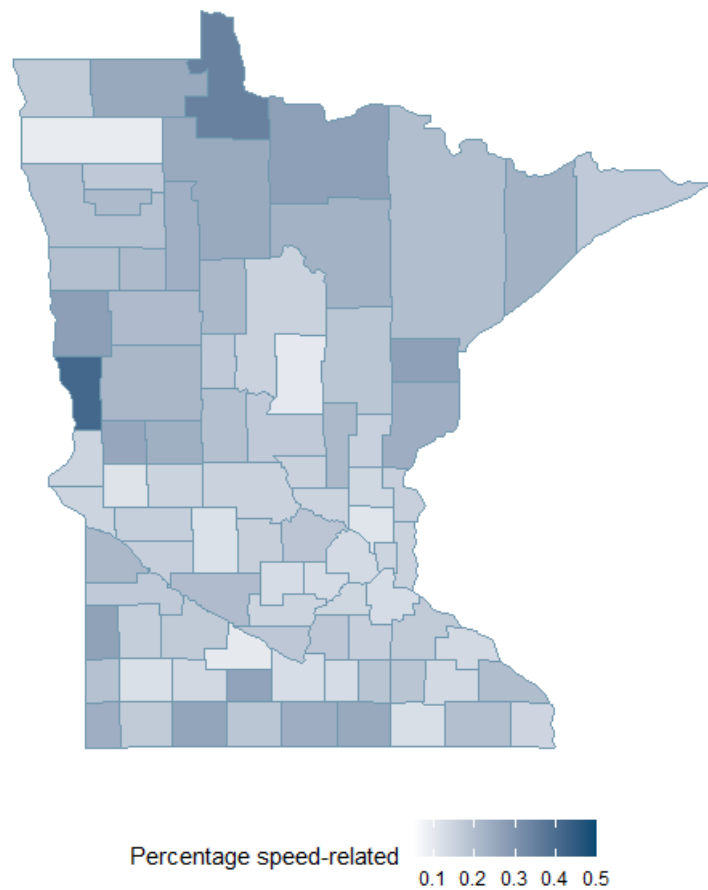


Figure 6: Percentage of crashes since 2020 that were speed-related, by county

Unsurprisingly, excess speed increases the severity of vehicle damage when a crash occurs. As shown (Figure 7), there is a clear relationship between the severity of damage and the proportion of crashes that were speed-related, where increased damage is associated with increased speeding. We also see that single vehicle crashes are more likely to be speed-related than multi-vehicle crashes (29.2 percent of single vehicle crashes, 10.1 percent of multi-vehicle crashes).

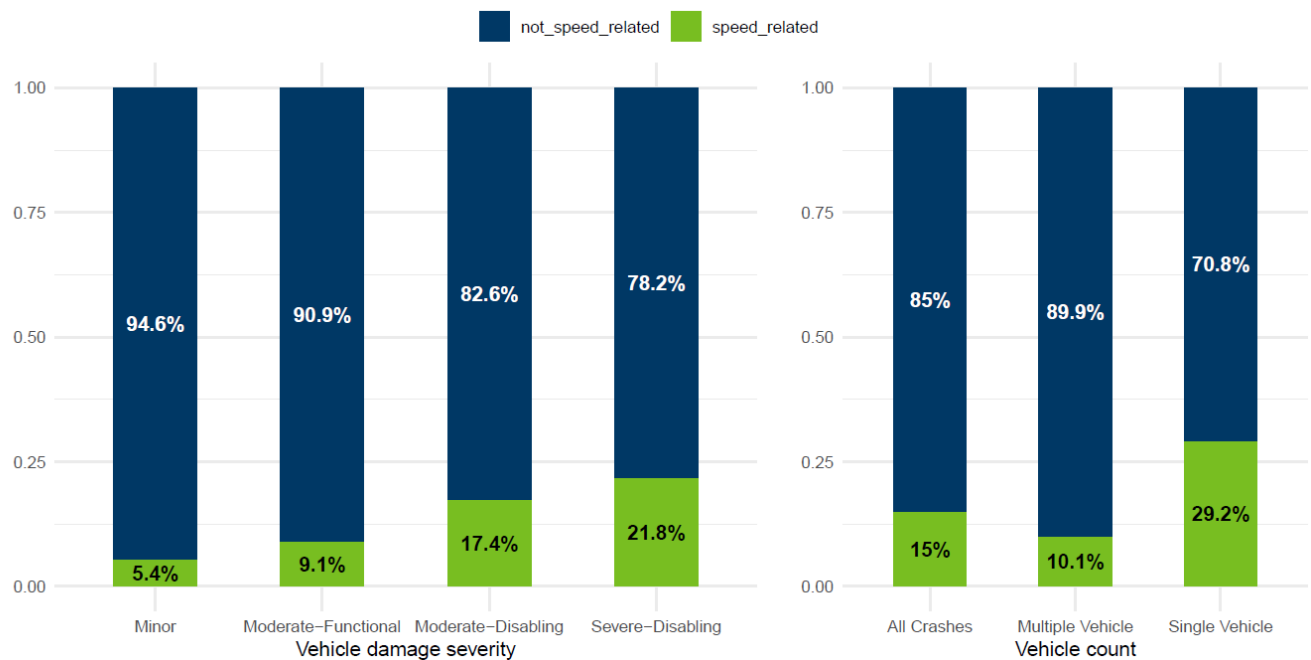


Figure 7: Speed is more frequently involved in crashes with more severe vehicle damage (left) and single vehicle crashes are more likely to be speed-related (right)

Next, the OTS research team examined injury severity in speed-related and non-speed-related crashes (Figure 8). Resulting injuries are more severe when speed is involved in a crash. Since 2020, nearly one-third (30 percent) of all fatalities and nearly 23 percent of all serious injuries were the result of speed-related crashes.

Put another way, increases in speed greatly increase the risk of injury, with previous research estimating that the risk of fatality doubles for every 10 mph of increased speed. Comparing outcomes from speed- and not speed-related crashes directly, all levels of injury occur at higher rates in speed-related crashes. Further, based on this crash data and estimates of increased crash likelihood associated with speed, researchers found that the risk of serious injury is roughly four times higher when speeding, and that the risk of being killed is over seven times higher when speeding.

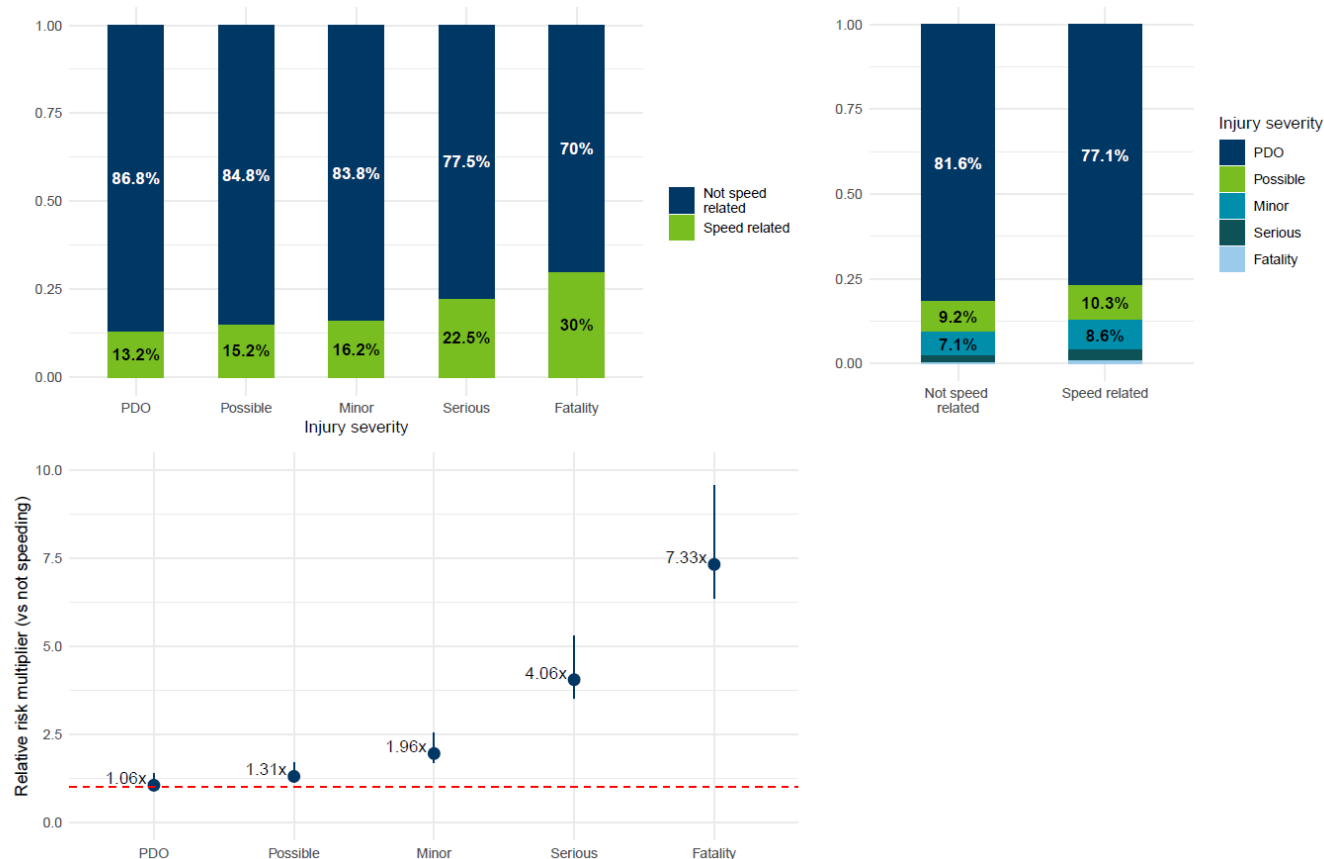


Figure 8: Speed-related crashes are associated with greater injury. Top left, speed is more frequently involved in more severe crashes. Top right, injury severity increases if speed is involved. Bottom, risks of injury and fatality are increased when speeding.

The following table expands on our speed-related data by aggregating crashes and speed violations since 2020 at a county level. Total counts of speeding citations and proportion of crashes that were speed-related are shown, as well as whether those values are increasing, decreasing, or relatively steady year over year. “Increasing” was defined as a 10 percent or more increase in the number of speed citations or proportion of speed-related crashes, “Decreasing” was defined as a 10 percent or more decrease in the number of speed citations or proportion of speed-related crashes; counties that did not surpass either threshold (or had an absolute change of only one or two additional citations or crashes) were instead labeled “Steady.” Counties that show an increasing trend in speeding citations and a decreasing trend in speed-related crashes are highlighted in green; counties that show a decreasing trend in speeding citations and an increasing trend in speed-related crashes are highlighted in red. Eighteen counties show a trend toward more speeding crashes and fewer speeding citations, while only four show a trend toward fewer speeding crashes and more speeding citations.

Table 2: Speed-related citations and speed-related crashes by county since 2020.

County	Total speed citations	Citation trend	Speed crash %	Speed crash rank	Speed crash trend
Aitkin	7,870	Steady	17.8%	39	Increasing
Anoka	27,836	Steady	10.7%	84	Increasing
Becker	9,793	Decreasing	20.3%	24	Increasing
Beltrami	4,804	Decreasing	25.2%	7	Steady
Benton	8,751	Decreasing	15.1%	58	Increasing
Big Stone	1,533	Decreasing	14.8%	60	Increasing
Blue Earth	11,545	Decreasing	12.4%	78	Increasing
Brown	4,545	Decreasing	9.9%	85	Steady
Carlton	16,827	Decreasing	26.4%	5	Decreasing
Carver	11,812	Decreasing	12.9%	75	Increasing
Cass	4,469	Steady	14.7%	63	Steady
Chippewa	4,363	Decreasing	14.9%	59	Decreasing
Chisago	12,196	Increasing	15.3%	56	Increasing
Clay	11,189	Decreasing	26.9%	3	Steady
Clearwater	2,487	Steady	21.6%	19	Steady
Cook	3,149	Steady	17.4%	44	Increasing
Cottonwood	5,001	Decreasing	14.1%	68	Steady
Crow Wing	15,309	Decreasing	9.5%	86	Increasing
Dakota	44,754	Steady	12.6%	77	Increasing
Dodge	4,210	Steady	18.2%	36	Increasing
Douglas	7,902	Steady	23.3%	15	Steady
Faribault	4,330	Increasing	23.7%	13	Increasing
Fillmore	2,155	Decreasing	18.9%	34	Steady
Freeborn	9,159	Steady	24.4%	12	Increasing
Goodhue	24,735	Steady	16.6%	47	Steady
Grant	1,249	Increasing	26.7%	4	Increasing
Hennepin	147,334	Steady	13.3%	72	Steady
Houston	2,786	Decreasing	13.6%	71	Increasing

County	Total speed citations	Citation trend	Speed crash %	Speed crash rank	Speed crash trend
Hubbard	4,617	Decreasing	20.4%	23	Increasing
Isanti	7,532	Decreasing	13.7%	70	Decreasing
Itasca	11,061	Decreasing	22.3%	18	Decreasing
Jackson	6,655	Increasing	24.9%	10	Steady
Kanabec	1,587	Steady	14.3%	67	Increasing
Kandiyohi	6,410	Steady	11.9%	82	Increasing
Kittson	1,139	Decreasing	16.0%	51	Steady
Koochiching	1,711	Increasing	25.1%	8	Decreasing
Lac qui Parle	2,908	Decreasing	19.4%	29	Steady
Lake	7,261	Increasing	22.5%	17	Increasing
Lake of the Woods	650	Increasing	35.6%	2	Steady
Le Sueur	8,135	Increasing	17.6%	43	Increasing
Lincoln	1,801	Decreasing	24.7%	11	Steady
Lyon	5,155	Steady	16.0%	50	Steady
Mahnomen	1,902	Increasing	19.3%	30	Steady
Marshall	1,294	Steady	8.5%	87	Steady
Martin	4,137	Increasing	17.6%	41	Increasing
McLeod	9,614	Steady	12.9%	76	Increasing
Meeker	3,130	Increasing	15.4%	54	Decreasing
Mille Lacs	5,907	Increasing	20.7%	22	Increasing
Morrison	8,707	Decreasing	16.9%	46	Increasing
Mower	4,695	Decreasing	12.2%	79	Steady
Murray	1,074	Decreasing	12.0%	81	Decreasing
Nicollet	10,018	Increasing	17.7%	40	Decreasing
Nobles	3,747	Steady	16.2%	49	Increasing
Norman	730	Decreasing	19.6%	26	Steady
Olmsted	28,249	Increasing	13.2%	73	Increasing
Otter Tail	12,912	Decreasing	21.4%	20	Increasing
Pennington	2,099	Decreasing	19.0%	33	Steady

County	Total speed citations	Citation trend	Speed crash %	Speed crash rank	Speed crash trend
Pine	10,446	Decreasing	23.1%	16	Increasing
Pipestone	2,476	Decreasing	18.6%	35	Steady
Polk	8,625	Steady	19.2%	32	Steady
Pope	2,584	Decreasing	14.7%	64	Increasing
Ramsey	62,406	Decreasing	14.6%	65	Steady
Red Lake	1,402	Decreasing	21.2%	21	Steady
Redwood	3,725	Steady	16.2%	48	Decreasing
Renville	5,389	Increasing	19.5%	28	Increasing
Rice	8,837	Steady	15.8%	53	Increasing
Rock	3,827	Decreasing	23.7%	14	Steady
Roseau	1,711	Steady	25.1%	9	Steady
Scott	20,738	Decreasing	13.9%	69	Increasing
Sherburne	23,351	Decreasing	14.7%	62	Steady
Sibley	4,984	Steady	14.5%	66	Decreasing
St. Louis	44,972	Decreasing	19.9%	25	Steady
Stearns	29,101	Decreasing	15.3%	57	Steady
Steele	13,155	Decreasing	18.2%	37	Increasing
Stevens	1,669	Decreasing	11.1%	83	Increasing
Swift	1,931	Decreasing	15.4%	55	Steady
Todd	5,244	Steady	19.5%	27	Steady
Traverse	633	Steady	15.8%	52	Decreasing
Wabasha	2,913	Steady	13.1%	74	Increasing
Wadena	2,465	Steady	17.2%	45	Decreasing
Waseca	2,088	Increasing	12.2%	80	Decreasing
Washington	27,288	Steady	14.8%	61	Increasing
Watonwan	4,465	Decreasing	26.0%	6	Decreasing
Wilkin	2,899	Decreasing	41.2%	1	Increasing
Winona	10,873	Steady	19.3%	31	Steady
Wright	27,767	Decreasing	17.9%	38	Increasing

County	Total speed citations	Citation trend	Speed crash %	Speed crash rank	Speed crash trend
Yellow Medicine	3,314	Decreasing	17.6%	42	Steady

Seatbelt use

Using a seatbelt is one of the most effective means of protection for a motor vehicle occupant (MVO) in the event of a collision. Minnesota is one of many states that has a law mandating seatbelt use and as a result Minnesota generally has a high seatbelt usage rate. The most recent annual statewide observational study found that 95.2 percent of Minnesota drivers used a seatbelt, continuing a prolonged trend of high seatbelt usage, with female MVOs consistently showing higher usage than males.

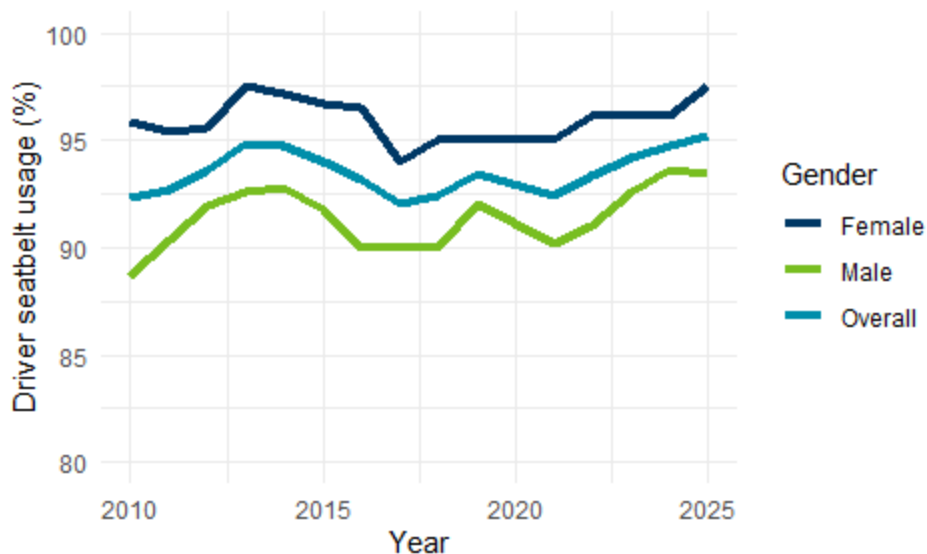


Figure 9: Percentage of Minnesota drivers that use a seatbelt, grouped by driver gender.

Seatbelt usage observed in crashes, however, differs from seatbelt usage in general. Since 2020, 83.1 percent of MVOs in crashes were reported as having used a seatbelt, with 2 percent reported as unbelted and 14.9 percent unknown. The map below shows seatbelt use in crashes (2020-2024) broken down by TZD region. The Metro region had the highest percentage of crashes reported with unknown seatbelt use, at 16.9 percent, which may explain the lower rate of known seatbelt usage in that region.

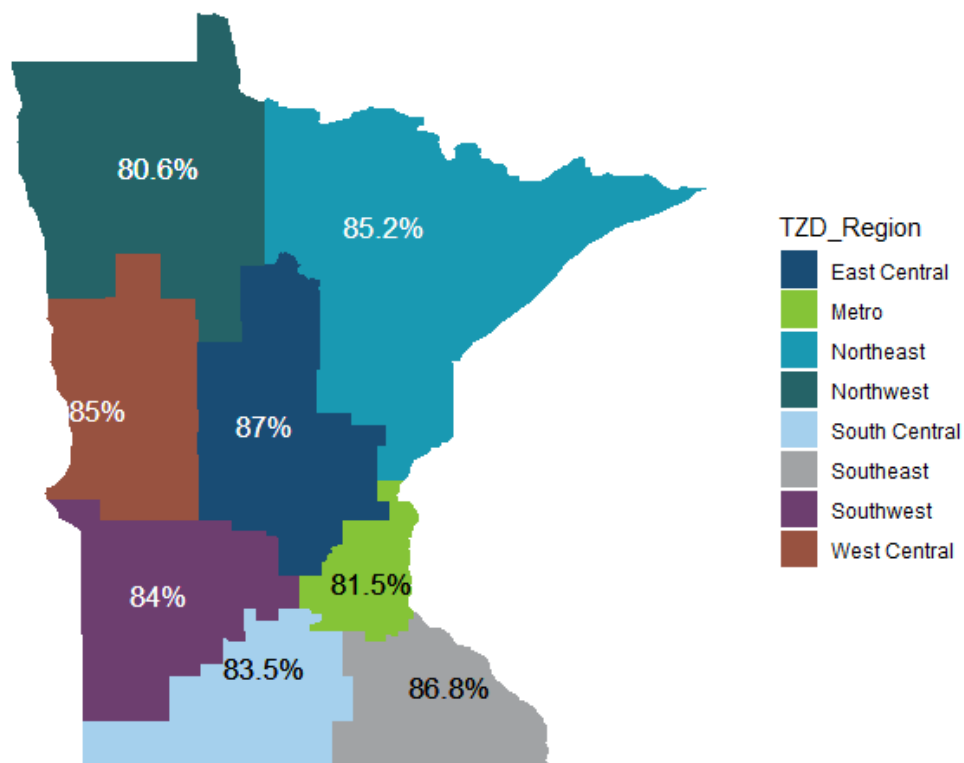


Figure 10: Percentage of known seatbelt usage by MVOs in crashes (since 2020), divided by TZD region.

Since seatbelts provide protection during collisions, it is no surprise that a strong correlation exists between injury severity and seatbelt usage. According to crash data (2020-2025), approximately one-third of MVO fatalities were not using a seatbelt at the time of crash and roughly 18 percent of serious injuries were individuals who were not wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash (Figure 11).

Directly comparing belted and unbelted injury severities emphasizes this point even more. While nearly 85 percent of MVOs who used their seatbelt reported no injury at all (PDO), only 54.5 percent of unbelted MVOs reported no injury, a precipitous drop. As seen with speed-related crashes, the proportion of individuals for each level of injury increased significantly in unbelted vs belted crashes. Consequently, the associated risk of serious injury was approximately 13 times higher in individuals who did not use a seatbelt (relative to those who did) and the risk of dying in a crash was 28 times higher.

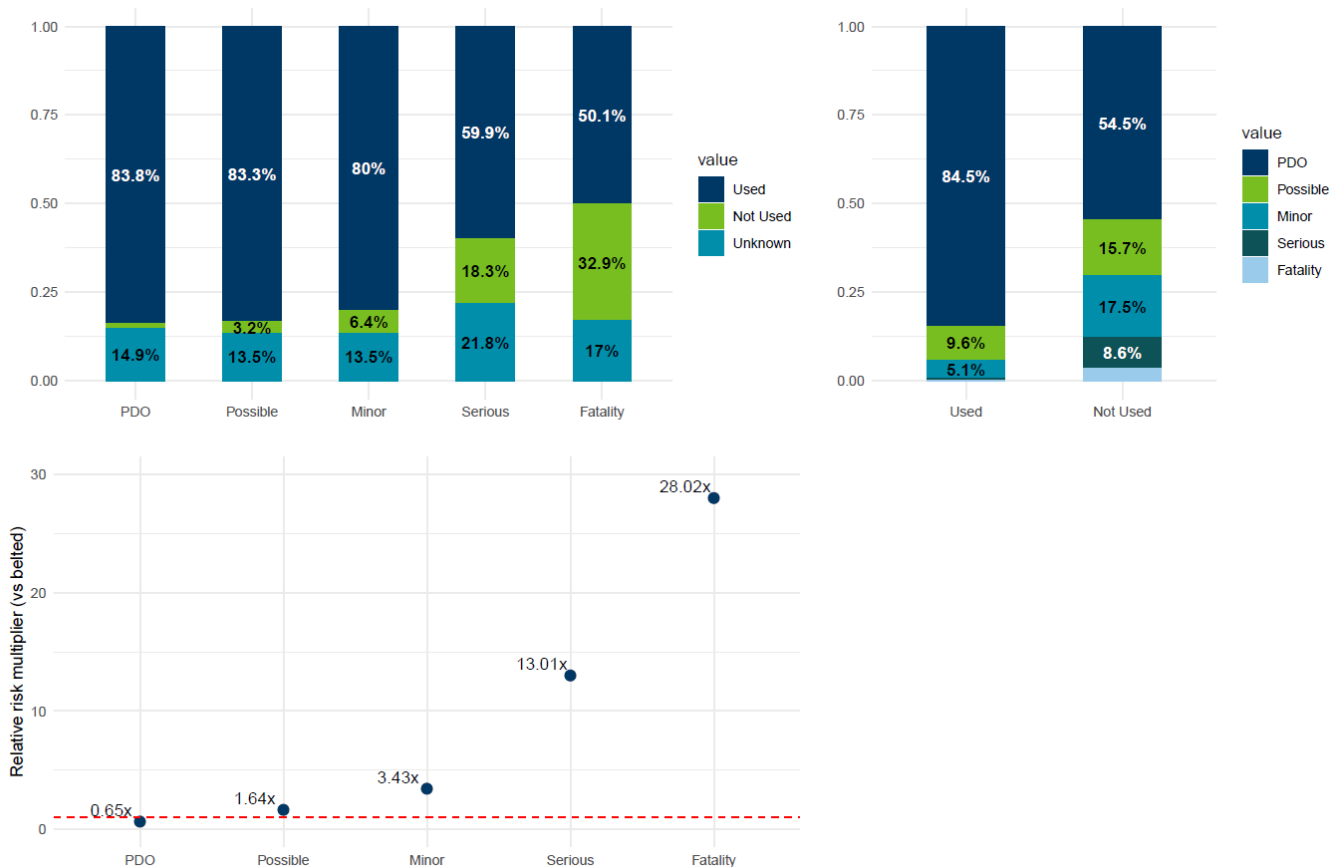


Figure 11: Seatbelt disuse is associated with greater injury. Top left, seatbelts disuse is more frequent in more severe crashes. Top right, injury severity increases when seatbelts are not used. Bottom, risks of injury and fatality are greatly increased when seatbelts are not used.

This data also demonstrated that the risk of becoming trapped or ejected from a vehicle during a crash was much higher when not using a seatbelt. While nearly 99 percent of individuals who used their seatbelt were not ejected or trapped, that number fell to roughly 89 percent in individuals who did not use their seatbelt. Correspondingly, the associated risk of being ejected was estimated to be 47 times higher when not using a seatbelt and the risk of being trapped in the crashed vehicle was roughly five times higher.

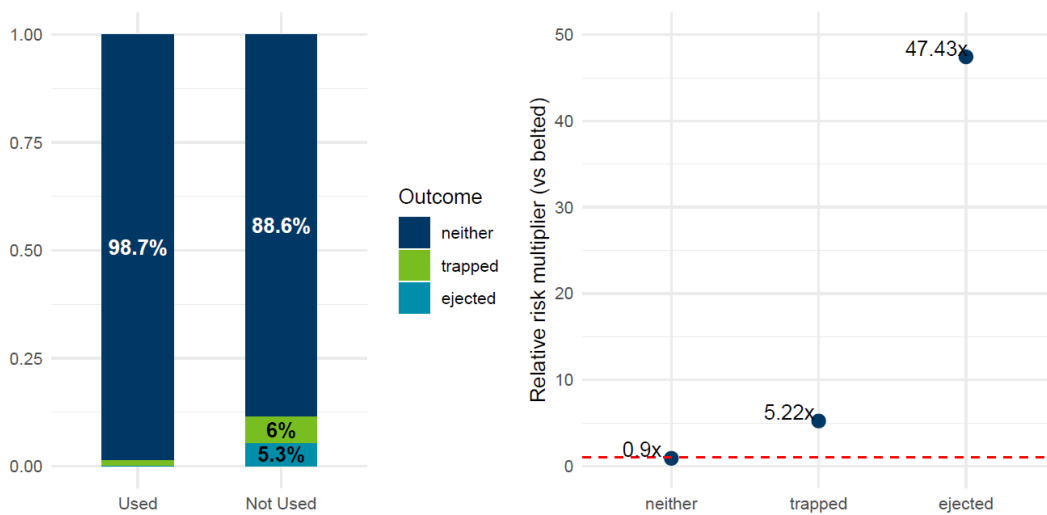


Figure 12: MVOs are more likely to be trapped or ejected during a crash when not using a seatbelt (left); right, the risk of being trapped or ejected during a crash are greatly increased when not using a seatbelt.

Alcohol

Since 2020, 6.27 percent of all crashes in Minnesota were considered alcohol-related, defined as either the law enforcement officer perceiving alcohol involvement or a person involved in the crash (driver or non-motorist) tested positive for alcohol. While alcohol-related crashes occur throughout the state, counties in the northern and western areas of the state have higher percentages of alcohol-related crashes. The metro counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington comprise roughly half (50.8 percent) of the state’s alcohol-related crashes. The map below displays the percentage of alcohol-related crashes for each county. Of all 87 counties, Lake of the Woods County had the highest alcohol-related percentage at 24.5 percent (though that county also only had 49 total crashes) and Mahnommen County had the second highest alcohol-related percentage at 19.1 percent.

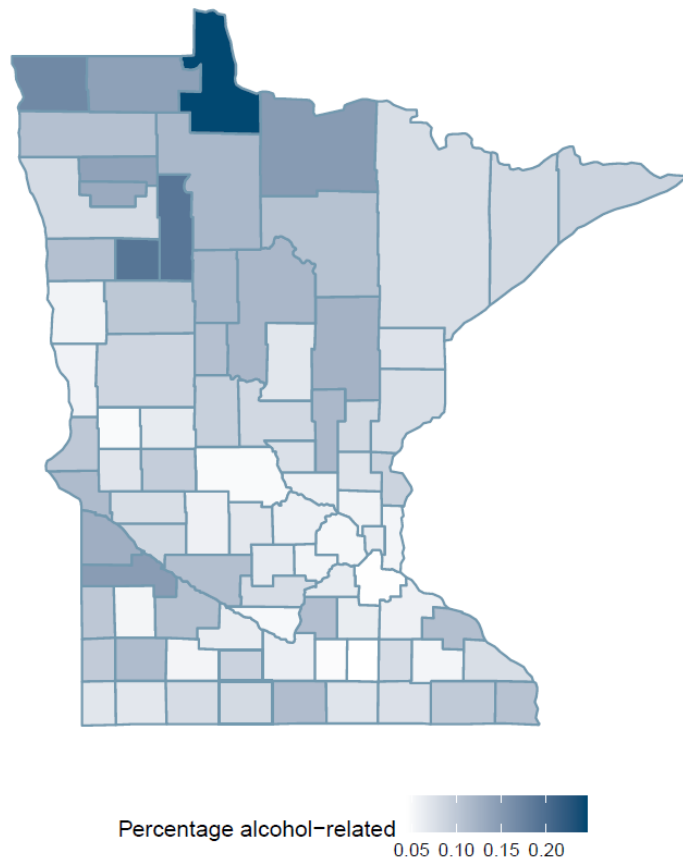


Figure 13: Percentage of crashes since 2020 that were alcohol-related, by county

As seen with other risky behaviors, crashes involving alcohol tend to be more severe. Since 2020, over one-third (34 percent) of all fatal crashes and 21 percent of all serious injury crashes were alcohol-related. Directly comparing alcohol-involved and non-alcohol-involved crashes yields similar conclusions; the proportion of crashes that are non-injury related drops from 74 percent to 57 percent in alcohol-related crashes, and the proportion of each level of injury (possible, minor, serious, and fatal) increases. Based on the observed relative frequencies of each injury level when comparing alcohol- and non-alcohol-related crashes, OTS estimates that the chances of serious injury are roughly 8.6 times higher when alcohol is involved and the chances of being killed are roughly 17.7 times higher. However, these estimates for fatalities may be inflated relative to other injury levels because alcohol testing is most thorough in fatal crashes and may be slightly under-reported at other severities.

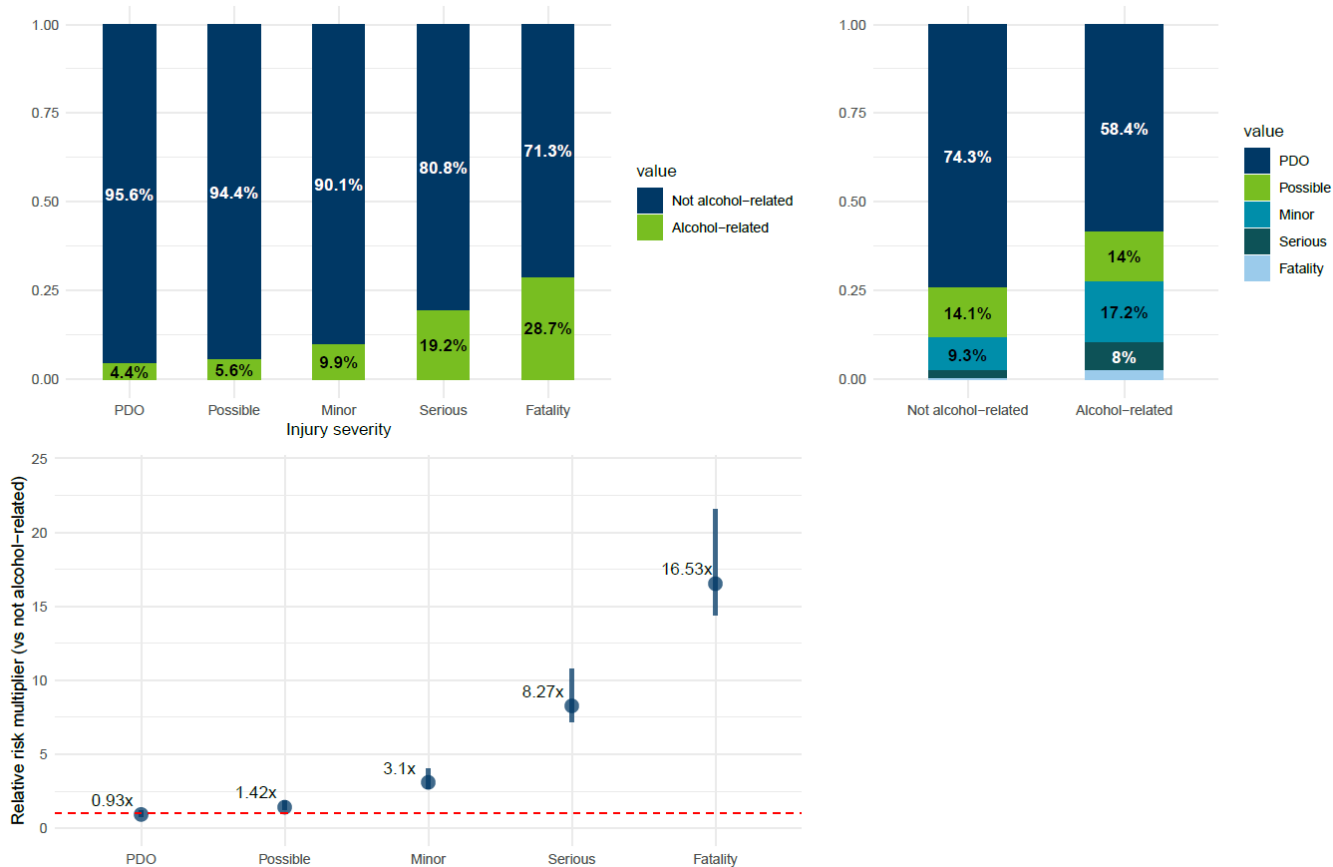


Figure 14: Alcohol-related crashes are associated with greater injury. Top left, alcohol-related crashes make up a larger proportion of more severe crashes. Top right, injury severity increases when crashes are alcohol-related. Bottom, risks of injury and fatality are greatly increased for alcohol-related crashes.

Arrests for driving while impaired (DWI) usually are not the direct result of traffic crashes, but since alcohol impairs the ability to operate a motor vehicle these arrests could be considered related precursors to alcohol-related crashes. Minnesota generally averages around 25,000 DWI arrests and 4,000 alcohol-related crashes each year. Considering this connection and that almost one-third of fatalities are related to alcohol, reducing the numbers of alcohol-impaired drivers on the roads is essential for traffic safety.

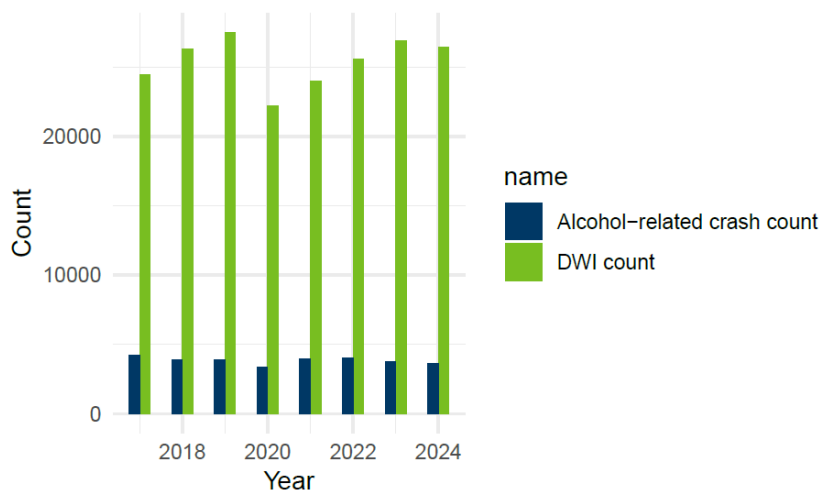


Figure 15: Annual DWI counts (green) and counts of alcohol-related crashes (dark blue).

Drug or alcohol-related crashes

Finally, alcohol is not the only substance that can potentially impair drivers' ability to drive safely. Drugs also play a factor in crashes and often co-occur with alcohol intoxication. Since 2020, 2,845 alcohol-related crashes have also been reported as drug-related; those 2,845 crashes represent roughly 12 percent of all alcohol-related crashes or nearly 40 percent of all drug-related crashes, further demonstrating the frequent co-occurrence of drug and alcohol-related behaviors.

When examining alcohol and drug related crashes combined (grouping all crashes that were alcohol-related and/or drug-related) the trends observed in alcohol-related crashes are increased even more. For example, while just under a third of fatalities were alcohol-related, nearly half (47 percent) of fatalities are drug or alcohol-related (or potentially both). Similarly, while alcohol alone was associated with roughly a 16-fold increase in fatality risk, when considering both alcohol and drug involvement that risk increase jumps to nearly 27-fold.

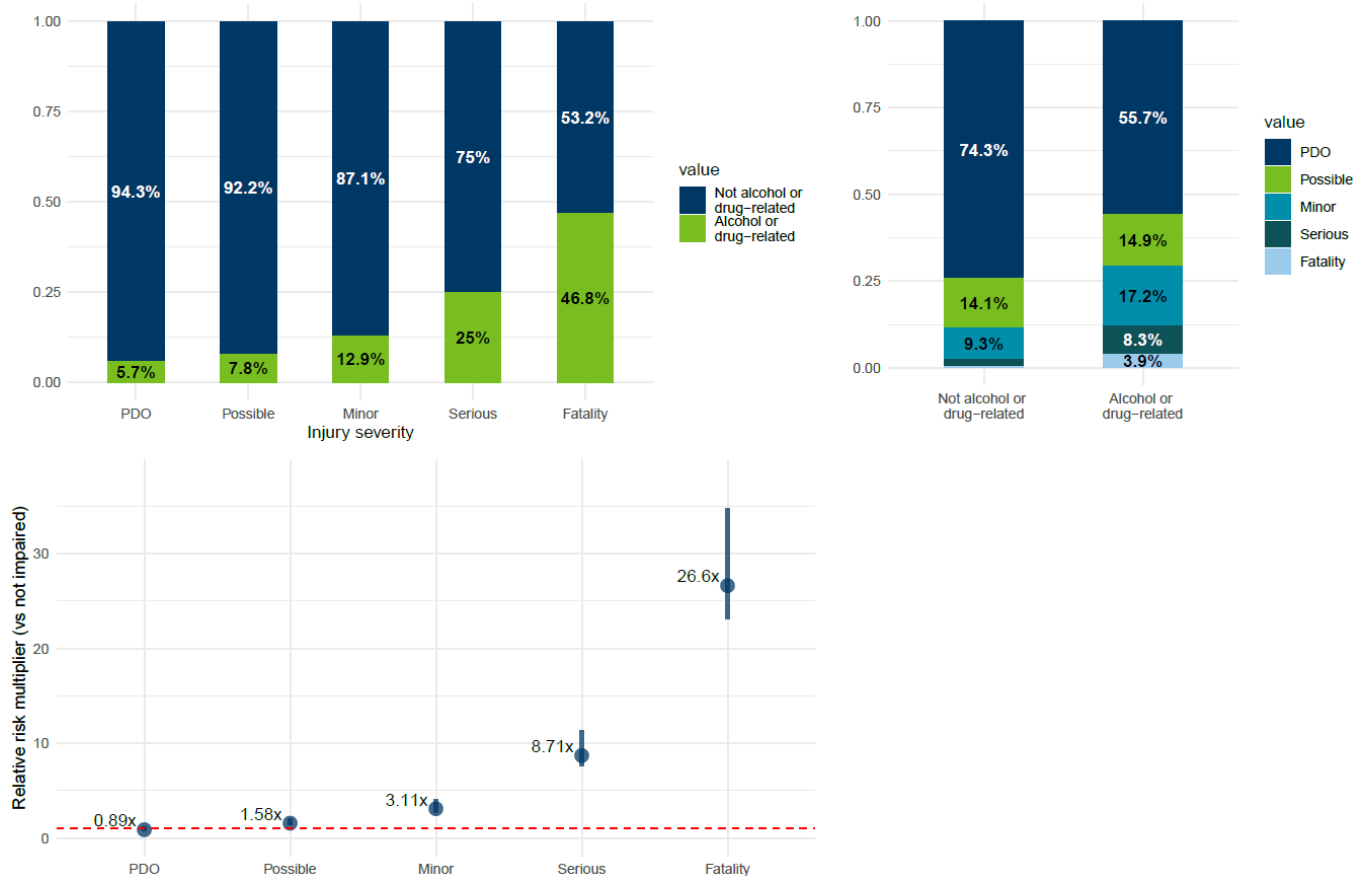


Figure 16: Alcohol- and/or drug-related crashes are associated with greater injury. Top left, alcohol- or drug-related crashes make up a larger proportion of more severe crashes. Top right, injury severity increases when crashes are alcohol- and/or drug-related. Bottom, risks of injury and fatality are greatly increased in drug or alcohol involved.

Therefore, while alcohol is a certainly much more commonly reported contributing factor in crashes (and warrants specific focus as one of the Big Four behaviors), drug impairment also has an appreciable effect on crash risk and severity.

Distracted driving

Of all the traffic safety topics, none is more challenging to analyze than distracted driving. Eating, grooming, playing with vehicle controls, using a cell phone and interacting with passengers are all types of distraction. Because most crash reports are written after the crash occurred and a law enforcement officer did not witness the crash, officers often rely on witnesses or other people involved in a crash for distraction-related information. This form of reporting data discrepancy almost certainly results in an inaccurate picture of the problem of driver distraction, since drivers are unlikely to respond completely truthfully when questioned by law enforcement regarding cell phone use during a crash.

Minnesota's Hands-Free Law was enacted Aug. 1, 2019. Since then, multiple surveys have found that people know using a cell phone while driving is illegal, but they often do it anyway. One interpretation of the decrease

in distraction-related crashes and increase in phone handling citations is that citing drivers more frequently might help to reduce crashes. However, another interpretation is that cell phone use has increased overall (as supported by the increase in citations), and only reported cell phone use in crashes (often self-reported) has declined due to drivers knowing that behavior is illegal.

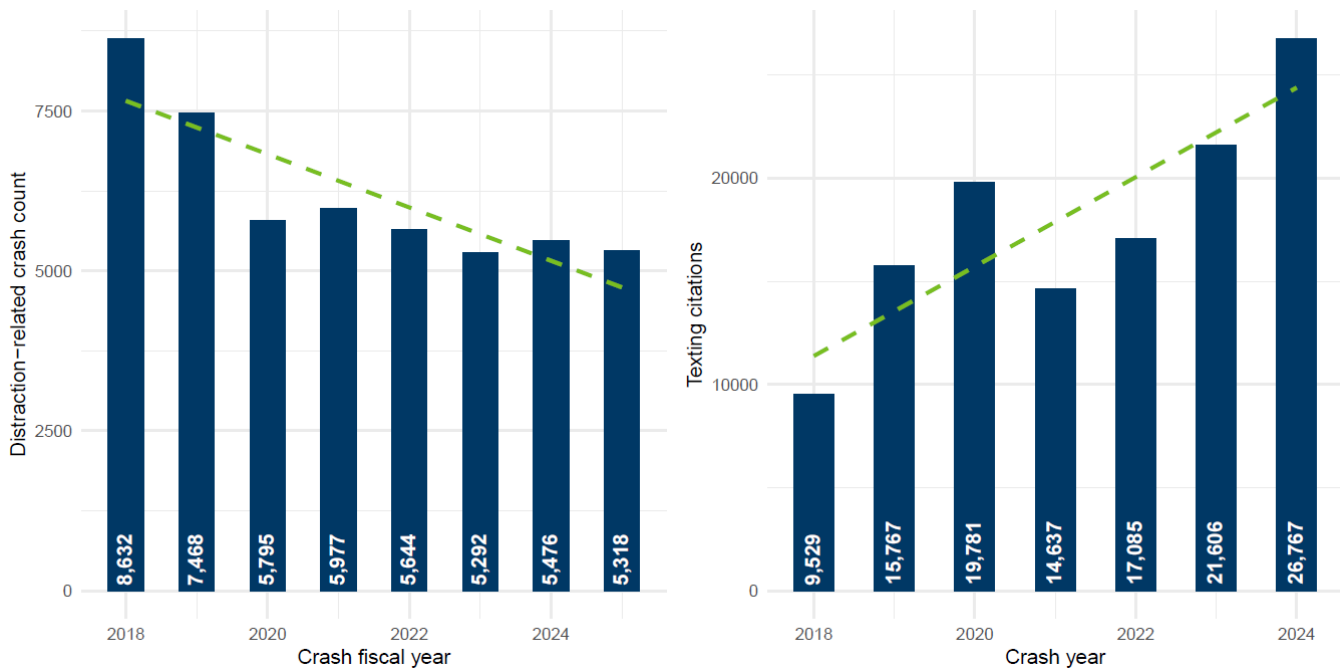


Figure 17: The number of distraction-related crashes since 2018 has decreased (left), while the number of citations for cell phone use while driving has increased (right).

When looking specifically at drivers in cell phone distraction-related crashes since 2020, researchers found that most drivers were male (57.8 percent) and relatively young (42.3 percent were age 24 or younger). The exact breakdowns of cell phone-distracted drivers by both gender and age are shown in the table below (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of drivers in cell phone distraction-related crashes since 2020, broken down by driver gender.

Age group	Female drivers	Male drivers	% Female	% Male
19 and under	1,388	1,683	45.1%	54.7%
20-24	1,410	1,828	43.4%	56.3%
25-29	909	1,321	40.5%	58.9%
30-34	658	1,017	39%	60.2%
35-39	529	750	41.2%	58.5%
40-44	307	513	37.2%	62.2%
45-49	254	385	39.6%	60%
50-54	243	342	41.5%	58.4%

Age group	Female drivers	Male drivers	% Female	% Male
55-59	197	292	40.1%	59.5%
60-64	141	218	39.2%	60.6%
65-69	80	148	35.1%	64.9%
70-74	64	81	43.8%	55.5%
75-79	39	32	54.9%	45.1%
80-84	19	23	45.2%	54.8%
85+	7	13	30.4%	56.5%

Researchers also observed that while young drivers (<24 years old) were the largest group for cell phone distraction both in total number of crashes and the percentage of crashes, that age group has also shown a substantial decline over the past nine years (Figure 18). While this may be promising evidence of improvement, the caveats of the self-report nature of distracted driving still apply.

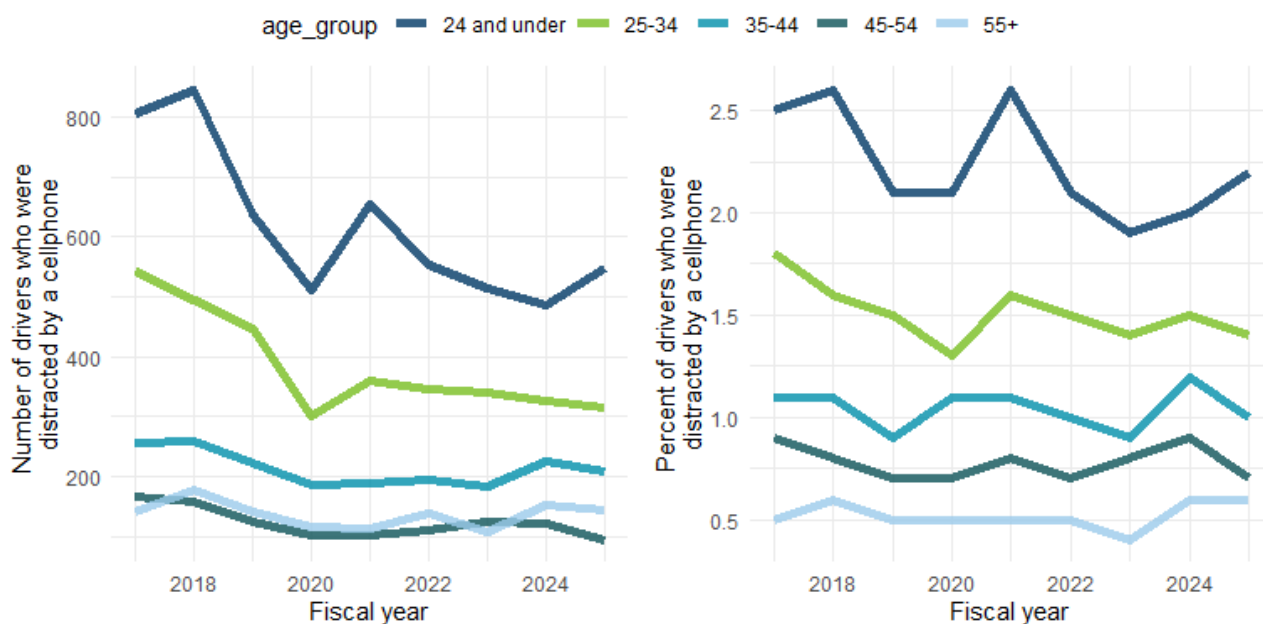


Figure 18: Age groups of cell phone distracted drivers in crashes per year over time, measured by both total number of drivers (left) and percentage of drivers in that age group (right).

Other contributing factors

This report has already taken an in-depth look at the “Big Four” behaviors related to crashes, but there are many other contributing factors that can be reported as part of a crash. Some of these additional factors are also related to the actions or behavior of the driver or non-motorist, other factors relate to the functioning of the vehicle and still other factors relate to the driving environment on the roadway. Frequently, there are multiple contributing factors present in any given crash. MNCrash allows officers to document these contributing factors as relating to behavioral actions (person), vehicle defects or characteristics (vehicle), or road characteristics (crash); this section of the report focuses solely on behavioral factors, as those may be directly preventable.

The table below (Table 4) examines the contributing behavioral factors cited on crash reports from 2020-2025, quantified by both the total number of people affected by each factor and the percentage of all people in crashes that were affected by that factor. Note that this specifically refers to all people affected; for example, if one driver is speeding and gets into a crash with another driver who also has one additional MVO, all three people in that crash were affected by speeding as a contributing factor. The table is limited to only the top 15 behavioral factors by people affected.

Table 4: Top behavioral contributing factors in crashes since 2020, ordered by the total number of people affected in all crashes. Percent of people affected is defined as the total people affected by that factor divided by the total number of people involved in all crashes.

Behavioral contributing factor	Total people affected	Percent of people affected
Speeding	109,061	14.2%
Distracted	77,416	10.1%
Failure to yield right-of-way	62,820	8.2%
Following too closely	51,582	6.7%
Alcohol	41,590	5.4%
Failed to keep in proper lane	35,655	4.6%
Reckless, aggressive, or negligent driving	33,685	4.4%
Swerved or avoided	22,524	2.9%
Improper turn or merge	21,811	2.8%
Ran off road	20,922	2.7%
Ran red light/stop sign	18,007	2.3%
Over-correcting/over-steering	15,496	2%
Disregard other traffic signs	8,295	1.1%
Improper backing	4,686	0.6%
Improper passing	4,012	0.5%

Next, researchers focused further on only drivers that were seriously injured or killed in crashes since 2020. This report also separated out the subset of drivers that were 24-years-old or younger and the subset of drivers that were 65-years-old or older to examine potential impacts of age. Relative to all crash severities, speeding and alcohol were far more prevalent in serious and fatal crashes (24.8 percent and 24.4 percent of drivers affected, respectively). Speeding was even more of an issue for younger drivers; it was a contributing factor for 35.7 percent of younger drivers that were seriously injured or killed. In contrast, speeding and alcohol were much less prevalent for older drivers that were seriously injured or killed (12.2 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively), while failure to yield right of way was far more prevalent (13.9 percent). The differences in these distributions highlight the need to consider age in analyzing crash outcomes, especially as Minnesota’s population trends older.

Table 5: Top behavioral contributing factors for drivers seriously injured or killed (since 2020), ordered by number of drivers affected and further separated into young drivers (less than 24-years -old) and older drivers (65--years-old or older).

Behavioral contributing factor	Total drivers affected	% of all drivers	Total young drivers (<24) affected	% of young drivers	Total older drivers (65+) affected	% of older drivers
Speeding	2,214	24.8%	613	35.7%	168	12.2%
Alcohol	2,171	24.4%	418	24.4%	161	11.7%
Reckless, aggressive, or negligent driving	1,190	13.3%	334	19.5%	51	3.7%
Failed to keep in proper lane	941	10.6%	200	11.7%	116	8.4%
Ran off road	929	10.4%	205	11.9%	120	8.7%
Distracted	619	6.9%	128	7.5%	88	6.4%
Failure to yield right-of-way	585	6.6%	119	6.9%	191	13.9%
Over-correcting or over-steering	441	4.9%	144	8.4%	37	2.7%
Ran red light/stop sign	432	4.8%	88	5.1%	74	5.4%
Swerved or Avoided	270	3%	66	3.8%	29	2.1%

Finally, researchers examined these contributing factors at the crash level to identify which factors co-occurred the most frequently across different types of crashes. When examining all crashes, the contributing factor observed the most frequently as the only contributing factor in the crash was “Failure to Yield Right-of-Way,” which was the singular identified contributing factor in 36,798 crashes. The most frequent co-occurrence of multiple behavioral factors was speeding and following too closely, which were both present in a total of 7,516 crashes (2.1 percent of all crashes) and which were the only two factors in 5,434 crashes (1.5 percent).

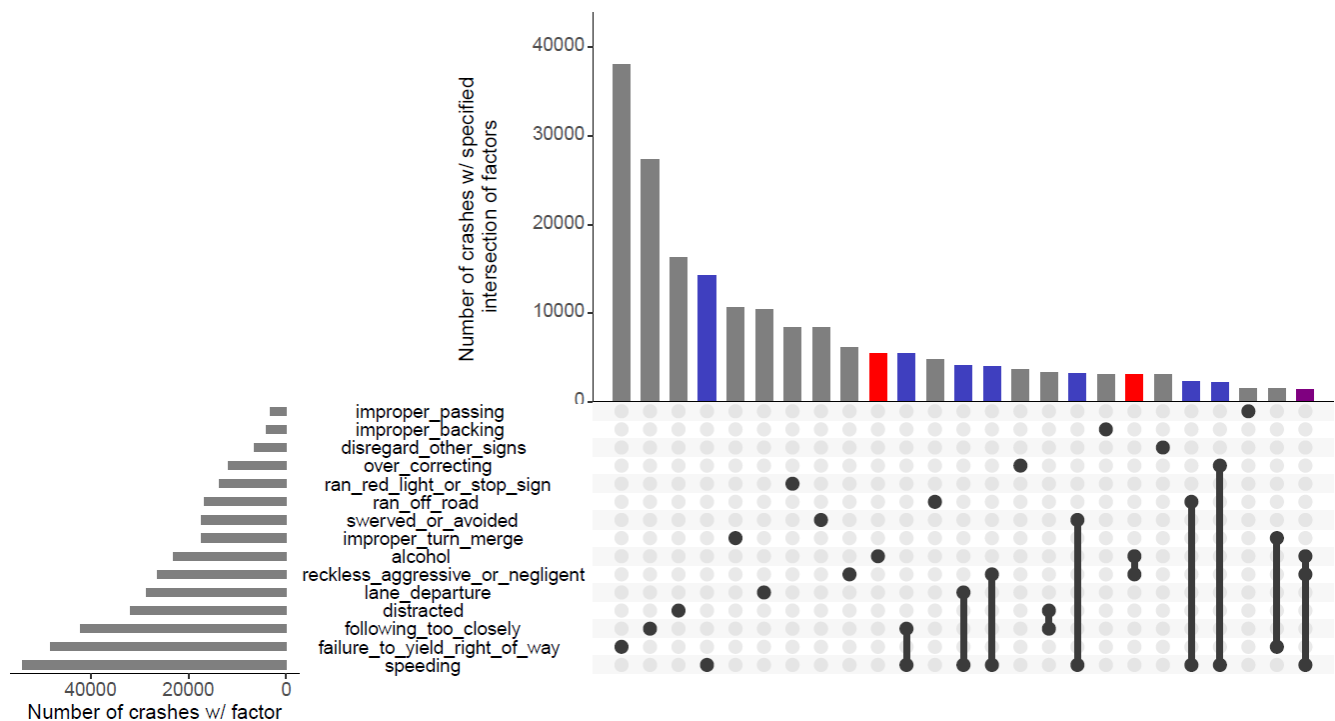


Figure 19: Upset plot showing the co-occurrence/intersection of behavioral contributing factors across all crashes (since 2020). Blue indicates speeding, red indicates alcohol, purple indicates both. The histogram in the lower left indicates the total number of crashes where a given factor was present, while the main histogram indicates the number of crashes with a given combination of factors. Combinations of two or more factors are indicated by connected dots in the dot-matrix.

Examining the intersections of contributing factors in serious injury and fatal crashes alone further emphasizes the critical importance of both alcohol and speeding behaviors in these crashes (highlighted in red and blue, respectively). A total of 4,286 severe and fatal crashes (37.4 percent) had at least one of alcohol or speeding as a factor, and 946 of those crashes (8.3 percent) had both. These two behaviors co-occurred with a variety of other behavioral factors, with hundreds of crashes relating to alcohol+negligent driving, alcohol+lane departure, etc. Here the potential relationship between failure to yield right of way and serious/fatal outcomes can again be seen; it was the single most common contributor in severe and fatal crashes where there was only one contributing factor reported (1,231 crashes total).

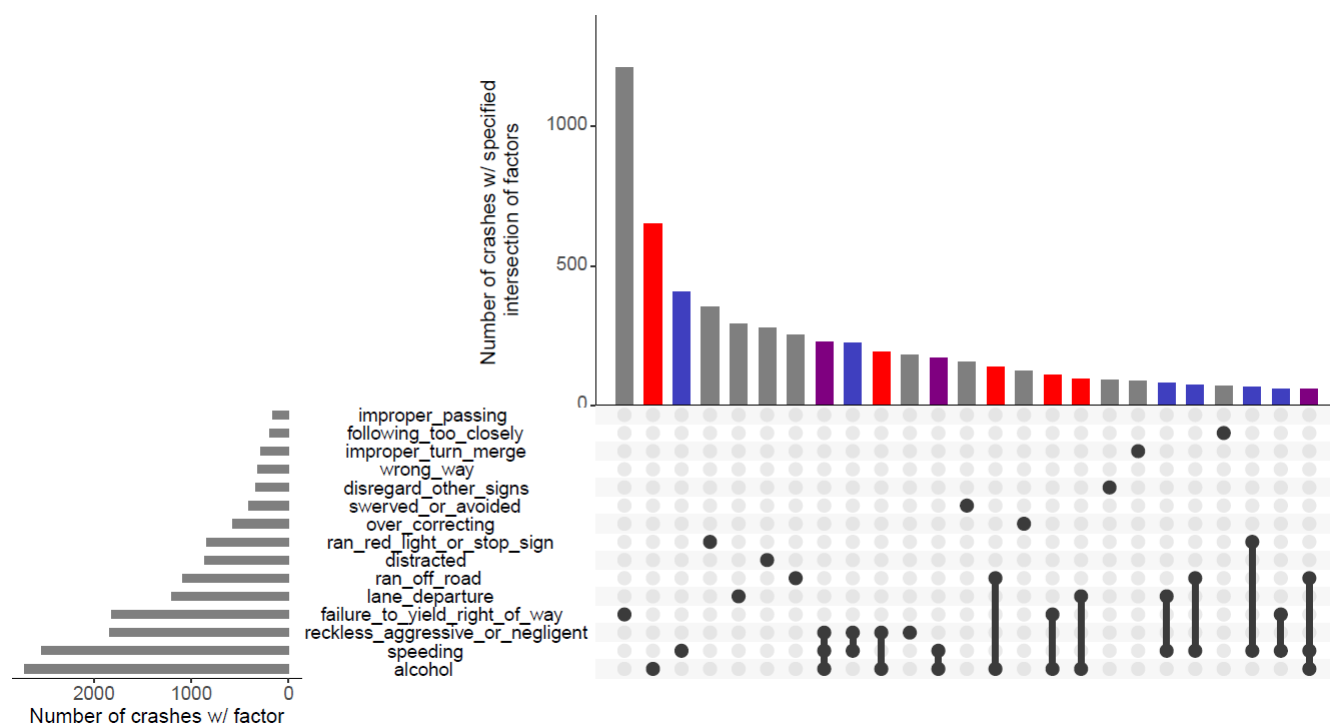


Figure 20: Upset plot showing the co-occurrence/intersection of behavioral contributing factors across serious injury and fatal crashes only (since 2020). Blue indicates speeding, red indicates alcohol, purple indicates both. The histogram in the lower left indicates the total number of serious injury or fatal crashes where a given factor was present, while the main histogram indicates the number of serious injury or fatal crashes with a given combination of factors. Combinations of two or more factors are indicated by connected dots in the dot-matrix.

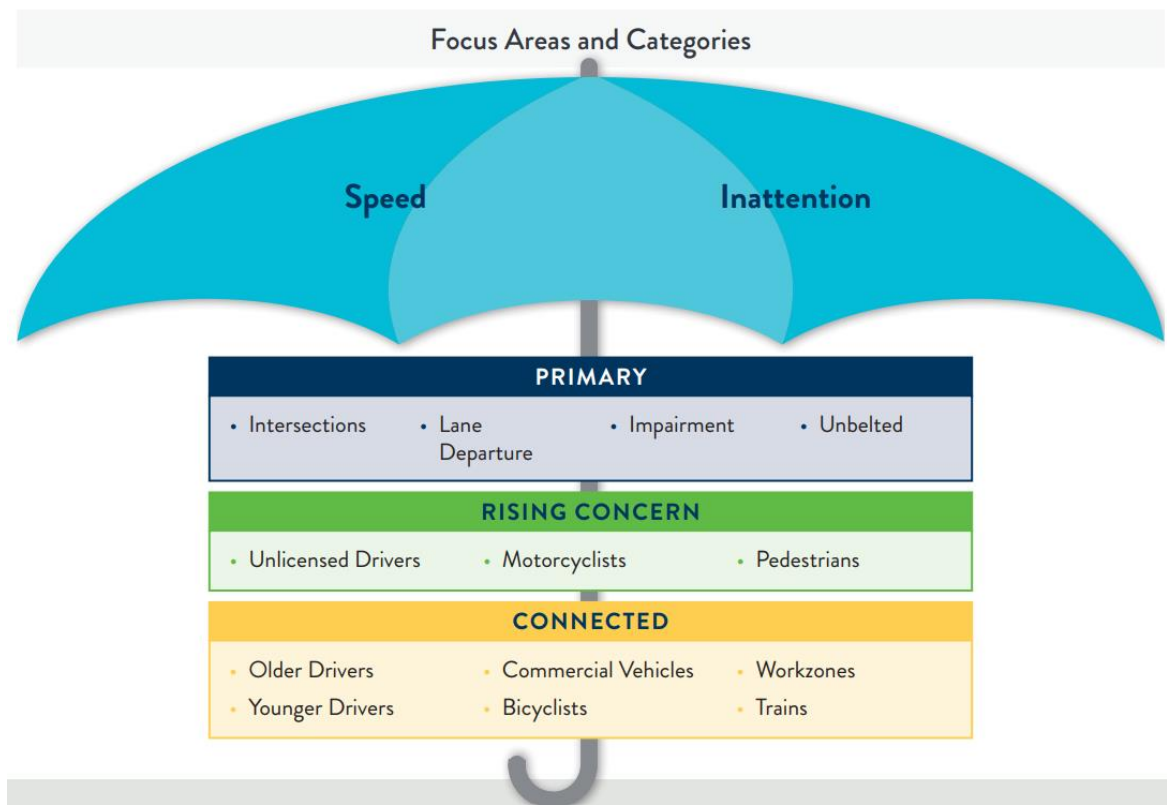
State Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

The SHSP is a key framework for addressing traffic safety issues and is arranged around focus areas and strategies. The SHSP represents the best collective thinking of the traffic safety partners in Minnesota and has been recently updated after a statewide review. The OTS Triennial Highway Safety Plan is another key document that informs these focus areas, with an emphasis on addressing safety at a local level.

Focus areas

As mentioned before, any one crash may exhibit one or more factors or behaviors that contributed to the crash. These factors can be grouped into categories, or focus areas, for analysis, planning and to prioritize traffic safety projects and strategies by highlighting the most problematic issues. The most recent SHSP uses an “umbrella” of highest priority, followed by subsequent priority areas in descending order.

Speed and inattention are the areas of greatest priority in the SHSP framework, due to their association with fatal and serious injury crashes and consistent identification as areas of concern as a cause of crashes. The value of slowing down and paying attention in reducing traffic deaths cannot be overstated. Within the “umbrella” of these two factors, the next most-prioritized group is the Primary focus area. Below that in prioritization is the Rising Concern focus area, followed by the Connected focus area. Taken together the Umbrella, Primary, Rising Concern and Connected focus areas account for every fatal and serious injury crash in Minnesota.



Action-oriented strategies

Pages 25-40 of Minnesota's 2025-2029 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) details specific action-oriented strategies for each of these four focus areas, with the intent of reducing crashes in each area. These strategies are summarized below:

Umbrella

Speed

- Develop a comprehensive plan to systematically reduce speeds
- Improve speed-related crash data and driver violation history
- Assess and expand the pilot use of speed safety cameras and related public education efforts
- Strengthen speed enforcement campaigns and public visibility
- Strengthen driver awareness of speed-related consequences
- Design roadways to encourage appropriate speeds and reduce crash severities

Inattention

- Improve the quality of inattentive driving crash data
- Improve education and awareness to reduce inattentive driving
- Strengthen enforcement tools and criminal penalties to reduce inattentive driving
- Support the advancement of technology improvements to reduce inattentive driving

Primary

Intersections

- Improve safety through intersection design changes and alternative intersections
- Incorporate enhanced safety features at intersections
- Update intersection planning policy

Lane departure

- Design roadways to reduce the frequency and severity of lane departure crashes
- Design horizontal curves to reduce the frequency and severity of lane departure crashes
- Evaluate and implement existing and new safety features and technologies

Impairment

- Strengthen DWI strategic planning and program operations
- Reduce excessive drinking through responsible alcohol service, community outreach, and employer-based intervention programs
- Strengthen support for law enforcement to deter and remove impaired drivers
- Strengthen DWI sanctions as well as the prosecution and adjudication of DWI offenders
- Increase public awareness campaigns to reduce drugged-impaired driving

Unbelted

- Improve data quality to strengthen problem identification of unrestrained occupants
- Examine allocation of resources to strengthen seatbelt use
- Strengthen the enforcement and monitoring of unrestrained occupants and the adjudication of citations issued
- Strengthen public outreach and training to increase seatbelt and child restraint use

Rising Concern

Unlicensed drivers

- Enhance law enforcement contact with unlicensed drivers
- Employ sanctions to identify and prevent invalid licensed driving
- Improve real-time driver monitoring and feedback to promote safe driving for inexperienced drivers
- Increase driver awareness of and improve driver education and training for all drivers

Motorcyclists

- Strengthen public awareness and education to improve motorcycle safety
- Improve motorcycle safety-related policies
- Strengthen enforcement to discourage motorcycle rider high-risk behaviors

Pedestrians

- Improve road design and maintenance for pedestrian safety
- Promote policy changes that reduce severe pedestrian crashes
- Increase education and awareness about pedestrian safety for all road users

Connected

Older drivers

- Strengthen the reporting/referral and assessment of at-risk older drivers
- Strengthen licensing practices of at-risk older drivers to extend driving while enhancing safety
- Equip older drivers to plan for and adopt safe driving practices
- Use roadway design that meets the needs of older drivers

Younger drivers

- Strengthen younger driver program planning and coordination
- Engage young drivers to improve younger driver safety
- Strengthen parent/guardian empowerment to engage with and monitor teen drivers
- Strengthen graduated driver licensing safety provisions for young drivers
- Publicize, enforce, and adjudicate young driver safety laws
- Strengthen young and inexperienced driver education and training

Commercial vehicles

- Improve enforcement for commercial vehicles
- Plan, design, and maintain roads and rest areas for commercial vehicle safety
- Increase education on commercial vehicle safety
- Support safety-related commercial vehicle technology

Bicyclists

- Improve road design and maintenance for bicyclist safety
- Promote policy change that reduces severe bicycle crashes
- Increase education and awareness for drivers and cyclists

Work zones

- Reduce speeding within work zones
- Improve work zone notifications and education
- Use technologies and innovative work zone planning techniques to improve work zone safety

Trains

- Design at-grade railroad crossings to reduce severe crashes between trains and road users
- Increase awareness of rail crossing risks and education on rail crossing safety and laws

Annual program highlights

Transformative power of partnerships and collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration are key to success in the multi-disciplinary work of traffic safety. The 36-member Advisory Council on Traffic Safety has brought together diverse and experienced leaders to tackle the most pressing traffic safety issues in our state. New members, like the Minnesota Department of Education, Insurance Federation of Minnesota, Council on Disability and Minnesota Department of Human Services have added valuable perspectives to the Council's discussion.

These partnerships allow agencies and organizations to move forward with a shared understanding and singular, unified direction. Council Member Jeppson, representing the Association of Minnesota Counties, illustrates the transformative effect:

"I've had the privilege of seeing how essential collaboration, partnerships, and dialog is to make meaningful change.....Not only are we making real progress towards zero deaths, I am also able to bring these discussions and work back to AMC and my other county colleagues. No longer are our agencies working in silos, feeling independently burdened by the overwhelming task that is traffic safety, but by working together, moving in an agreed upon direction, we are saving lives."

Anoka County Commissioner Julie Jeppson, representing the Association of Minnesota Counties

Furthermore, the Council ensures that vital community stakeholders, such as those focused on vulnerable populations and school transportation, are actively engaged. As Council Member Martini, representing the Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation, affirms:

"...on behalf of the pupil transportation industry in Minnesota, we appreciate the opportunity to have a stake in the conversations."

Nick Martini, Council Member representing Minnesota Assoc. for Pupil Transportation

This commitment to inclusion guarantees that strategies are practical, broadly executable and built on consensus, proving that genuine collaboration is the most effective vehicle for saving lives.

Rural high-risk roads

Rural roadways can be problematic in traffic safety due to a lack of engineered roadway safety features, an abundance of speeding drivers and relatively distant medical facilities for crash aftercare. Determining the most problematic rural roadways will allow for additional law enforcement patrols and targeting educational efforts.

As defined on page 22 of the 2025-2029 SHSP, a high-risk rural road is functionally classified as a rural major collector, rural minor collector or rural local road with significant safety risks. This safety risk is either a high probability of fatal and serious crashes or a fatal and serious injury crash rate above the statewide average for similarly classified roadways. To address these risks, funds were allocated for roadway design and related improvements that reduce speeds and eliminate intersection interactions on rural high-risk roadways.

Solicitation of projects for funding by the Rural High-Risk Roads grants took place in 2024 and funds have been awarded to the various agencies sponsoring these projects, including MnDOT, Wright County and Wadena County. Projects funded by this program include dynamic speed feedback signs, roundabouts and rumble strips, some of which are still in the planning phase and others of which have already started implementation. In addition, these funds also contributed to the statewide enforcement grant program to focus on speed enforcement. Future work will assess the impact of these improvements on crash risk and crash severity.

Safe road zones

A new program entitled Safe Road Zones was developed in 2023, allocating funding for state fiscal year 2024 for the development and delivery of public awareness and educational campaigns about safe road zones via community and local engagement. Through this funding, 23 different projects received Safe Road Zone grants, for cities such as Eden Prairie and Coon Rapids and for counties such as Winona County and Sherburne County.

Examples of projects include:

- Dynamic speed feedback signs
- Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
- Portable radar trailers
- Bicycle helmets and coloring books
- Safety campaigns
- Road safety audits

This program received positive feedback from both the fund recipients (who were grateful that smaller entities were not overlooked) and from community members (who noticed the impact of these projects in their area):

“The new signage in our area will be fantastic for the next decade or more. The pedestrian crossing signs have been installed and are quite the eye-catcher in our small town. It’s amazing how a small upgrade to a crosswalk is the talk of the town!”

Community feedback for Safe Road Zone

Specifically, through this funding Coon Rapids launched the “Be Aware. Get There.” campaign with a specific focus on Northdale Boulevard, which saw 218 traffic-related incidents and 64 crashes in the previous year. This safety campaign included targeting drivers who failed to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks along the boulevard,

and the installation of dynamic speed display signs. This campaign integrated both education and enforcement in a target manner to address specific problems in this community. Similarly, the city of Anoka utilized a Safe Road Zone grant to install dynamic speed signs and station extra patrols for speeding enforcement.

The success of this initial funding through the Safe Road Zone program paves the way for a potential regular, recurring source of funding, as opposed to the current one-time allocation.

Safe Roads Coalitions

The Minnesota Safe Roads Coalitions are community-based partnerships committed to reducing traffic-related fatal and serious injuries. By uniting diverse stakeholders and fostering community ownership, coalitions strengthen advocacy, sustain long-term efforts and implement resilient, community-driven solutions that no single entity could achieve alone.

Coalitions deliver creative, localized solutions across the state; examples include:

- DWI Prevention (LeSueur County): The JOYRIDE program has provided over 2,220 reliable, alcohol-free rides home in communities lacking other transportation options.
- Older Driver Safety (AARP Partnership): Communities are expanding CarFit and older driver education. CarFit improves driver fit for maximum safety and mobility, with counties like Renville and McLeod assisting dozens of drivers in 2025.
- Youth Safety Culture (Impact Teen Driver - ITD): Collaborations with TZD and the State Patrol are using the ITD program to shift attitudes and intended behaviors around safe driving, with student surveys demonstrating positive changes in perception.

Despite success, persistent gaps—namely insufficient funding, limited coalition capacity, and restricted funding flexibility—hinder effectiveness and reach. Without stable and flexible funding, the coalition anticipates:

- Reduced community-level leadership and outreach.
- Delayed progress toward safety goals.
- Inability to evaluate effectiveness and adjust strategies quickly.

Addressing these funding shortfalls is essential to expand reach, strengthen community leadership and ensure accountability through evaluation. Additional investment will accelerate progress toward the ultimate goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on Minnesota roads.

Additional project highlights

Roadside oral fluid testing pilot

To improve screening for impaired driving at the time of enforcement, OTS and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) coordinated with 41 law enforcement agencies across 36 counties, with the goal of testing the capabilities of roadside oral fluid testing. The [results](#) of this pilot were submitted to the legislature in early 2025.

Two instruments were tested in their ability to detect six different classes of drugs: amphetamines, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine, methamphetamines and opiates. Three hundred twenty-nine tests were conducted over the course of the pilot (January through August 2024). Overall, these tests detected positive drug results 87.2 percent of the time, and 62 percent of tests detected more than one drug in a single subject. When compared against more extensive blood or urine tests conducted by the BCA, these preliminary oral screening tests accurately detected substances with match rates generally exceeding 82 percent. This pilot testing program found that both instrumental methods met requirements of ease of use, reliability, accuracy and practicality and recommended equipping officers with these tools.



The SoToxa Oral Fluid Mobile Test System, one of the instruments tested

Trauma data analyst hired at Minnesota Department of Health

MDH's Injury Prevention and Mental Health Division, along with the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care, now supports a full-time trauma data analyst. Designated trauma hospitals across Minnesota report cases who meet trauma registry criteria to the statewide trauma registry, MN Trauma, within 60 days of patient discharge. The trauma data analyst provides data management and analysis support for the trauma registry and shares trauma data with key stakeholders to inform trauma system improvements and enhance public health surveillance and epidemiology. Hospitals can use metrics provided by MDH's statewide trauma system to identify opportunities to improve patient outcomes. Key stakeholders include MDH's Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES), the MN Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Registry, the University of Minnesota Center for Learning Health System Sciences, the Medical University of South Carolina and State and Regional Trauma Advisory Councils (STAC/RTACs). Adding this capacity to the trauma system enables the MDH team to perform data analyses that can lead to meaningful improvements in trauma system performance and outcomes.

Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) Dashboard Goes Live

Crash data alone are insufficient to fully describe the medical and financial impacts of motor vehicle crashes. The CODES program allows safety practitioners to link crash and driving behavior characteristics to their specific

medical and financial outcomes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of motor vehicle crash outcomes.

The CODES dashboard was published in October 2025: [Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System - MN Dept. of Health](#). The dashboard includes a summary of hospital-treated injuries due to motor vehicle crashes in Minnesota overall and by gender and admission status (hospitalized vs. emergency department treated only), as well as proportions of crash injuries when risky behaviors (e.g., speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, driving while intoxicated or distracted) are present. This new dashboard is the first time linked data have been shared for TZD regions specifically. This region-specific data can be used to inform traffic safety planning and evaluation efforts within TZD regions.

Affordable teen driver education

The Minnesota Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association, an ACTS member organization, developed a plan to leverage newly approved technology to provide driver education to every ninth-grade student in Brooklyn Center in 2025. This program enabled students to complete the 30-hour classroom drivers education requirement through an affordable (\$20 or less), fully online, self-paced, asynchronous course. The initiative proved highly successful and will expand to St. Cloud and Minneapolis Public Schools in 2026.

Events

The Minnesota [Toward Zero Deaths Conference](#) was held on Oct. 21-22, 2025, at the Mystic Lake Event Center in Prior Lake. This annual event provides the state's leading forum for sharing best practices across the multiple disciplines of traffic safety with the goal of reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Minnesota roads. This year's conference featured 38 concurrent sessions on critical topics, including data analytics and predictive modeling, distracted and impaired driving, child passenger safety, first responder safety and updates on safe-driving programs and projects. The event drew nearly 900 attendees and offered a crucial opportunity for ACTS members and stakeholders to align goals, foster cross-disciplinary partnerships and commit to the unified vision of zero deaths on Minnesota roadways.

In addition, the [Tribal Traffic Safety Summit](#), a complement to the statewide Toward Zero Deaths Conference, was held March 24-26, 2025, at Prairie's Edge Casino in Granite Falls. The summit is designed to bring together traffic safety professionals, invested stakeholders and community members to share knowledge and raise awareness of crash-related injuries and deaths affecting Minnesota's Tribal communities. Over 100 stakeholders

"The Traffic Safety Advisory Council has been instrumental in connecting traffic safety advocates across Minnesota to advance initiatives that promote safe driving and keep advocates informed on upcoming efforts by our state agencies."

Josie Donohue, Council Member representing AAA – The Auto Club Group

attended the event, including representatives from nine of the 11 tribes that share borders with Minnesota. A full report describing the Summit can be found [online](#).

Emerging issues

Electric assisted bikes (e-bikes) and motos (e-motos)

E-bikes have become increasingly popular across Minnesota, particularly since the introduction of the state's successful e-bike rebate program. However, this growing popularity elevates the need for clarity regarding safety and compliance, particularly concerning youth riders. A significant challenge is the confusion regarding the legal distinction between e-bikes (legal in Minnesota) and e-motos (which are illegal). Traffic safety leaders must prioritize balancing the state's goal of encouraging the use of legal e-bikes as a sustainable transportation alternative with the need for clear, consistent education and enforcement of illegal motorized vehicles.

To address this complexity, and as directed by the Minnesota State Legislature, ACTS and the Active Transportation Advisory Committee plan to collaboratively publish the Youth e-bike Safety Report by February 1. The draft report concludes that current state statutes are generally robust, but it identifies a critical need for targeted, statewide education to ensure safe operation and regulatory compliance.

The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, an ACTS member organization, is actively leading legislative efforts to formally define e-motos in state law. This work includes crucial public education on the regulatory distinctions between legal e-bikes and illegal e-motos.

An exchange at the 2025 TZD Conference highlighted the urgency of this issue. ACTS member Cheryl Quinn had a critical discussion with local law enforcement, which centered on a serious pedestrian injury caused by an underage user of an e-moto. Initially, law enforcement personnel considered a blanket ban on all e-bikes; however, through discussion, they were persuaded to support balanced solutions that preserve e-bikes' valuable transportation opportunities while ensuring public safety.

Traffic Incident Management to protect roadside responders

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) is a coordinated effort by all traffic incident responders to accommodate their safety, victims' safety, incoming traffic's safety and overall mobility, with goals of reducing responder exposure, secondary crashes, incident clearance time and travel delay.

Each year, Minnesota's emergency responders (including law enforcement, fire, EMS and road maintenance personnel) are involved in an average of 106 crashes while working to protect the public and manage incidents on our state's roadways. This unacceptable toll highlights the immediate danger these dedicated workers face, who regularly sacrifice their own safety to preserve the lives of others. To address this crisis, the ACTS Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Subcommittee will dedicate 2026 to developing comprehensive updates to Minnesota's [Quick Clearance legislation](#), with the intent of presenting these critical amendments during the 2027 Legislative Session.

AI-assisted distracted driving camera pilot

From January 2025 to June 2025, thanks to Safe Road Zone funding, the [Highway 7 Road Safety Coalition](#) led efforts to reduce crashes on Highway 7. The intent of this pilot program was to focus on decreasing dangerous behaviors such as speeding, distracted driving and cell phone use through the utilization of new technologies such as AI cameras. These specialized cameras were capable of detecting distracted driving, including use of cell phones and seatbelts, and could subsequently notify nearby officers for potential traffic stops.

Analysis of the crash data through the grant period is ongoing, but preliminary results indicate that there was a significant reduction in distracted driving crashes, with a reduction of roughly 55 percent in distracted driving crashes across all crash severity levels (relative to the average number of crashes in the same months in the previous five years). Further, anecdotal feedback from public outreach suggests that many drivers actively avoided distracted or impaired driving in the pilot jurisdiction.



One of the cameras used to detect distracted driving on Highway 7

Speed safety camera pilot

Minnesota's [Traffic Safety Camera System Pilot Project](#) kicked off in 2025 with the state legislature authorizing MnDOT and the cities of Minneapolis and Mendota Heights to use traffic safety cameras to provide for education and enforcement of speeding violations, traffic-control signal violations, or both. Speed safety cameras are used in other states and have been found to be effective at reducing fatal and life-changing crashes in areas where they are deployed.

In Minneapolis, cameras were installed in five initial locations and may expand up to a maximum of 42 locations. When comparing data from the pilot's first month to analysis conducted prior to the program launch, [city staff found](#):

- Across all five camera locations over the first month of operations, the rate of drivers recorded traveling 10 or more miles over the speed limit was reduced by almost 30 percent compared to the rate prior to installation.
- Across all five camera locations over the first month of operations, the rate of drivers recorded traveling 20 or more miles over the speed limit was reduced by 76 percent compared to the rate prior to installation.
- The vast majority of drivers -- 98 percent -- were not violating the traffic safety cameras.

These positive initial results can only be attributed to signage and initial warnings sent out. Results in other cities with traffic safety camera programs have shown further reductions in unsafe speeding as more people receive warnings and citations are issued.

In Mendota Heights, one camera was installed based on results from a Transportation Safety Action Plan that considered existing data regarding speed and crashes, frequency and type of roadway use, engineering interventions already in use and feedback from adjacent residents and frequent road users.

Connected and automated vehicles

The goMARTI automated vehicle program in Grand Rapids has been active since 2022, providing 30,000 rides in self-driving vehicles. In 2025, goMARTI is expanded its operations and is now covering more miles and serving additional communities like LaPrairie and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation. Additionally, Southwest Transit in Eden Prairie, MN started testing and operating automated vehicles as part of their Southwest Prime Micro-mobility transit service. In November of 2025, Waymo started mapping and testing their automated vehicles in downtown Minneapolis with the plans to expand their mapping area and lead to full commercial operations in the future. Additionally, MnDOT recently tested automated vehicle technology in work zones to improve worker safety through an [Automated Truck Mounted Attenuator \(ATMA\) project](#). The project found that the technology may need improvement before full rollout but that there was a potential future for driverless host vehicles in work zones.

Minnesota is currently one of 16 states that is considered silent on the legality of driverless vehicles operating in the state. The [Governor's Council on Connected and Automated Vehicles](#) has been proactively preparing automated vehicle policy framework recommendations throughout 2025 by:

- Engaging key stakeholders.
- Meeting with and learning from other states on past automated vehicle legislation.
- Assessing our current legislation to identify our future needs.

Based on these actions, the council's policy recommendations will be shared with the Governor and legislators in early 2026.

Lane splitting and lane filtering

A new law passed in 2024 went into effect in Minnesota on July 1, 2025, that allowed motorcycles to engage in both lane splitting and lane filtering. Lane splitting refers to motorcycles sharing a lane with and passing vehicles in slow-moving traffic, while lane filtering refers to moving through traffic that is stopped; in both cases motorcyclists may only travel no more than 15 mph over the speed of surrounding traffic. Future work will attempt to assess the impact of this legislation once more data is collected.

Appendix A – Legislative priorities

Advisory Council on Traffic Safety 2026 Policy Positions

1. Adopt a framework policy

The Advisory Council on Traffic Safety endorses and supports the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan along with the companion Triennial Highway Safety Plan as the framework for the focus areas, strategies and tactics to address our state’s most pressing traffic safety needs.

The Advisory Council recommends the state provides the necessary authorities, resources and staff to fully implement the plan, including ongoing funding for regional and local traffic safety efforts like Safe Road Zones and county-based traffic safety coalitions.

The Advisory Council believes the plan was developed with sufficient feedback, reflects sound transportation policy including the Safe System Approach, recognizes the range of roadway users and their vulnerabilities, and provides a linkage between existing and new additional traffic safety efforts.

2. Address critical needs in 2026

- A. Speed Reduction - Speed makes everything worse and speeds on Minnesota roads are too high leading to more fatalities and injuries for drivers, passengers and other people in the roadway.

The Advisory Council recommends the state pursue the following policy and funding strategies to reduce excessive speeds on Minnesota roads:

- i. Ensure sufficient law enforcement grant funding is available to increase speed enforcement.

Law enforcement has increased traffic enforcement over the past two years. Much of this increased activity was funded through state grants. An enforcement presence reduces speeding. Preliminary fatalities are down in 2025. Support is needed to continue this trend.

- ii. Support a progressive penalty structure that includes increased fines, penalties, required education and other control measures like intelligent speed assist for repeat and excessive speed offenders.

Elements of a progressive penalty structure include:

- A progressive fine structure that dramatically steps up for repeat offenses and/or speeding more than 20 miles per hour over the posted speed.
- Mandatory defensive driver education for third time offenders.
- Mandatory driver’s license revocation or installation and use of intelligent speed assist for four-time offenders or driving more than 100 miles per hour.

- iii. Increased focus on and funding for roadway calming with emphasis on low cost, rapid deployment, functional roadway features like raised crosswalks/speed tables, reduced lane widths, and radar-feedback devices.

These measures are more readily added to existing roadways to reduce speeds, reduce intersection crash risks, and improve pedestrian safety – especially in urban areas.

- iv. Increased focus on measures to prevent or reduce the severity of lane-departure crashes like cable median barriers and rumble (murmur) strips.

These measures reduce the frequency and impact of roadway crashes often related to excessive speed, distraction or fatigue.

- B. Distraction - Modify the Criminal Vehicular Homicide and Criminal Vehicular Operation statutes to specifically include “use of an electronic device while driving.”

Distraction, most frequently caused by an electronic device, remains a serious contributing factor to severe crashes. Statutes addressing penalties for causing severe injuries or death need to include distraction as a factor.

- C. Impairment – Fully authorize the use of roadside oral fluid testing as a preliminary screen for suspected drug impaired driving.

- D. Vulnerable Roadway Users – Current data show pedestrians, cyclists and other roadway users remain at risk for fatal and serious crashes. Roadway calming measures like those described in the speed reduction section help improve vulnerable roadway user safety. Other specific measures supported by the Advisory Council are:

- i. Clarify the school bus stop arm language to address the need for vehicles to stop while the stop arm is being deployed.

There is a need to clarify what is required of vehicle operators to ensure vehicles do not pass or move around school buses while the stop arm is being deployed, an action which immediately precedes students moving off the buses into the roadway.

- ii. Address the fatal and serious injury crash risks of any allowed use of the shoulder of paved highways by ATV/UTVs.

These vehicles are not designed for roadway use and increased conflict with other motorized roadworthy vehicles has a significant potential to increase life changing crashes on Minnesota highways.

- iii. Clarify the legal definition of e-motos, as a distinct vehicle separate from e-bikes, and the prohibition against operation on sidewalks, public trails, and other public pathways including consequences of illegal operation with required education and any other penalties for riders operating illegally. This definition should also consider educational requirements for new owners and riders.

Appendix B – Definitions, data sources and acronyms

ACTS - Advisory Council on Traffic Safety. An advisory council established in 2023 with the goal of improving traffic safety and reducing the number severe injury and fatal crashes in Minnesota.

BAC - Blood Alcohol Concentration

BCA - Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Big Four - Four driver behaviors (speeding, seatbelt non-use, alcohol impairment and distraction) linked to highway deaths and injuries.

Citation data - Charges obtained from the Minnesota Judicial Branch (MJB) for speeding citations or texting violations cited by law enforcement officers.

CTS - The Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota

DPS - Department of Public Safety

DWI - Driving While Intoxicated

FARS Data - Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) is statewide fatality data collected and reported to NHTSA.

Fatal Crash - A traffic crash in which a death has resulted.

Fatality Rate - Rate of roadway fatalities per 100K population, 10K registered motor vehicles, or 100M vehicle miles traveled, as calculated by NHTSA.

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration

FFY - Federal fiscal year. While the state fiscal year (SFY) runs July 1 through June 30, the federal fiscal year (FFY) runs October 1 through September 30.

HSIP - Highway Safety Improvement Program. MnDOT's infrastructure improvements funded with money from the Federal Highway Administration.

HSP - Highway Safety Plan. OTS's plan for projects and initiatives for a three-year span.

MDH - Minnesota Department of Health

MDTSEA - Minnesota Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association

MJB - Minnesota Judicial Branch

MNCrash - The state's crash reporting system used by law enforcement officers to enter data related to crashes.

MnDOT - Minnesota Department of Transportation

MVO - Motor vehicle occupant

NHTSA - National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

OTS - Office of Traffic Safety. A division of the Department of Public Safety focused on traffic safety and crashes.

PDO - Property damage only. A traffic crash involving property damage only and no injuries to persons involved.

RHRR - Rural high-risk roads.

Seatbelt use - Data obtained from observational seatbelt use studies. MnDOT conducts an annual seatbelt use study at the regional level. OTS conducts a yearly statewide observational seatbelt use study as required by NHTSA.

Serious Injury Crash - A traffic crash in which a serious (lifechanging) injury has resulted.

SHSP - Strategic Highway Safety Plan. A joint plan by MnDOT, OTS, and MDH for projects and initiatives for a five-year span.

STIP - State Transportation Improvement Program

TZD - Toward Zero Deaths. A statewide program aimed at reducing traffic - related deaths.

VMT - Vehicle Miles Traveled. An aggregate measure of road usage.

YTD - Year-to-date

Appendix C – Reference documents

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) 2025-2029

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/shsp/index.html>

Triennial Highway Safety Plan (HSP) FY24-26

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/document/minnesota-fy2024-2026-highway-safety-plan>

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) 2024 State Annual Report

https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2025-03/HSIP_Report_MINNESOTA_2024_508.pdf

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 2026-2029

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/program/stip.html>

Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts 2023

https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/assets.dps.mn.gov/s3fs-public/2023_Minnesota_Crash_Facts.pdf

2025 Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) conference presentations

<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/events/conference/2025/program>

ACTS homepage

<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS>

Appendix D – About the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety

The Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS) was established during the 2023 state legislative session to improve traffic safety for all users on all Minnesota roads. It consists of 36 council members, each representing a different segment related to traffic safety (see the full list on the following page).

As defined in [Section 4.076](#), primary roles of the Council include:

- Advise the governor and heads of state departments and agencies on policies, programs and services affecting traffic safety.
- Advise the appropriate representatives of state departments on the activities of the Toward Zero Deaths program, including but not limited to educating the public about traffic safety.
- Encourage state departments and other agencies to conduct needed research in the field of traffic safety.
- Review recommendations of the subcommittees and working groups.
- Review and comment on the development and implementation of state and local traffic safety plans.
- Advise the commissioner of public safety on grant agreements for projects that reduce serious and fatal injury crashes, awarded to a local traffic safety coalition, local unit of government, nonprofit organization, law enforcement agency, or educational institution.
- Make recommendations on safe road zone safety measures under section [169.065](#).

Vision statement

Minnesota envisions a future where all roadway users are safe from fatal and life-changing injuries.

Mission statement

The Advisory Council on Traffic Safety is committed to guiding Minnesota toward zero fatal and serious injury crashes by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and promoting innovative safety solutions, best practices and shared expertise. We offer expert advice to agency commissioners and support communities, practitioners and policymakers in building a safe and equitable roadway system for all, while leading the state's Toward Zero Deaths program.

“It’s great to see the cross-discipline collaboration the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety has further brought together. Being able to learn about the differing perspectives greatly improves the success of the Council. Being able to bring items back to the MCEA and the MCEA Safety Committee broadens the breadth of all involved. A number of counties have been able to take advantage of grant funding opportunities through the Council ranging from engineering, to enforcement, and to education. Simply stated, another great organization and effort leading Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.”

Andrew Witter, Council Member representing the Minnesota County Engineers Association

Council members

Mike Hanson, Chair

Office of Traffic Safety
Department of Public Safety
Michael.hanson@state.mn.us

Catherine Diamond, Vice Chair

Injury Prevention and Mental Health Division
Department of Health
Catherine.diamond@state.mn.us

Brian Sorenson, Vice Chair

Office of Traffic Engineering
Department of Transportation
Brian.sorenson@state.mn.us

Paul Aasen
Minnesota Safety Council
paul.aasen@mnscc.org

Abdirahman Ali-Mumin
Amumin188@gmail.com
(Representing vulnerable road users)

Christina Bogojevic
Minnesota State Patrol
Christina.bogojevic@state.mn.us

Gina Calistro
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
ginacalistro@gmail.com
(Representing victim impact organizations)

Aaron Cocking
Insurance Federation of Minnesota
akcocking@insurancemn.org

Josie Donohue
AAA – The Auto Club Group
jlonetti@acg.aaa.com

Dylan Ferguson
Minnesota Office of Emergency Medical Services
dylan.ferguson@state.mn.us

Richard Hansen
Minnesota Operation Lifesaver
mnoperationlifesaver@gmail.com

Chris Hartzell
City of Woodbury
Christopher.hartzell@woodburymn.gov
(Representing League of Minnesota Cities)

John Hausladen
Minnesota Trucking Association
john@mntruck.org

Kristine Hernandez
TZD Statewide Communications and Marketing
Director
Kristine.hernandez@state.mn.us

Pete Hosmer
A+ Driving School
pete@aplusdrivingschool.net
(Representing Minnesota Driver and Traffic Safety
Education Association)

Robert Jacobs
University of Minnesota Physicians Group
robert.jacobs@centracare.com
(Representing Statewide Trauma Advisory Council)

Julie Jeppson
Anoka County
julie.jeppson@anokacountymn.gov
(Representing Association of Minnesota Counties)

Jim Kosluchar
City of Fridley
jim.kosluchar@fridleymn.gov
(Representing City Engineers Association of
Minnesota)

Annette Larson
TZD Statewide Program and Operations Director
Annette.L.Larson@state.mn.us

Reed Leidle
Safety Signs
reed@safetysigns-mn.com
(Representing contractors)

Derek Leuer
Office of Traffic Engineering
Department of Transportation
Derek.leuer@state.mn.us

Nick Martini
Northstar Bus Lines/American Student
Transportation
nick@northstarbuslines.com
(Representing Minnesota Association for Pupil
Transportation)

Kerry Meyer
American Bar Association
meyermnjol@gmail.com

Michael Moilanen
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Mike.moilanen@millelacsband.com
(Representing tribal governments)

Gayra Ostgaard
Department of Education
Gayra.ostgaard@state.mn.us

Becky Putzke
Department of Public Safety
Becky.putzke@gmail.com

Cheryl Quinn
Cheryl.I.quinn@gmail.com
(Representing vulnerable road users)

Michael Ramos
Washington County Sheriff's Office
Michael.Ramos@co.washington.mn.us
(Representing Minnesota Sheriff's Association)

Heidi Schallberg
Met Council
Heidi.schallberg@metc.state.mn.us
(Representing metropolitan planning organizations)

Jessica Schleck
Southeast TZD Regional Coordinator
Jessica.Schleck@state.mn.us
(Representing TZD Regional Coordinators)

Michele Severson
Council on Disability
Michele.severson@state.mn.us

Kyle Shelton
Center for Transportation Studies
shelt169@umn.edu

Jeff Tate
Shakopee Police Department
jtate@shakopeemn.gov
(Representing Minnesota Chiefs of Police
Association)

Andrew Witter
Sherburne County
andrew.witter@co.sherburne.mn.us
(Representing Minnesota County Engineers
Association)

Michael Wojcik
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
michael@bikemn.org

Charles Young
Department of Human Services
Charles.young@state.mn.us

Council staff

Holly Kostrzewski
Office of Traffic Safety
Department of Public Safety
Holly.Kostrzewski@state.mn.us

Stephanie Malinoff
Center for Transportation Studies
malinoff@umn.edu

Jackson Piper
Center for Transportation Studies
piper129@umn.edu

Subcommittees and working groups

The following Subcommittees and Working Groups were active in 2025.

- Traffic Incident Management Subcommittee
- Policy and Legislative Affairs Subcommittee
- Strategic Highway Safety Program Working Group
- Rural High - Risk Roads and Safe Road Zones Working Group
- Safe Road Coalitions Working Group

In addition, the Council has started discussions to form an Enforcement and Public Safety Subcommittee, which will begin meeting in early 2026.

Council meetings

February 12, 2025

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180), Minneapolis, MN
<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/february>

April 9, 2025

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180), Minneapolis, MN
<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/april>

June 11, 2025

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180), Minneapolis, MN
<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/june>

August 13, 2025

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180), Minneapolis, MN
<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/august>

October 20, 2025

Mystic Lake Center, Anoka 1 Room, Prior Lake, MN
<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/october>

December 17, 2025

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180), Minneapolis, MN

<https://www.minnesotatzd.org/ACTS/meetings/2025/december>

Appendix E – Safe Roads Coalitions

Minnesota Safe Roads Coalitions: A Collaborative Approach to Traffic Safety

Introduction

Minnesota Safe Roads Coalitions are community-based partnerships formed under the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Safe Roads Program. These coalitions bring together the “5 E’s” — Enforcement, Engineering, EMS, Education, and Everyone — with the shared vision of reducing traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

By engaging diverse partners, building grassroots trust, and fostering community ownership, coalitions strengthen advocacy, sustain long-term efforts, and create more resilient, connected communities.

Coalition Activities

- Identify local traffic safety issues using crash data and community input.
- Develop and implement targeted strategies to address risky driving behaviors.
- Conduct public education campaigns, outreach, and enforcement support.
- Establish Fatal Review Committees (FRCs) to analyze serious crashes.
- Support the Safe System Approach and Minnesota’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

Why Coalitions Work

- **Broader Reach** – Diverse voices and perspectives.
- **Community Ownership** – Local buy-in builds pride and sustainability.
- **Greater Impact** – Coordinated actions address root causes.
- **Capacity Building** – Members share skills and knowledge.
- **Sustainability** – Coalitions continue beyond state-led efforts.
- **Stronger Advocacy** – Unified local voice increases influence.
- **Improved Collaboration** – Stronger relationships across the 5 E’s.

Programs in Action

- **JOYRIDE**: A sober cab program reducing impaired driving.
- **Responsible Beverage Server (RBS) Training**: Educates establishment staff to prevent over-service.
- **Buckle Up for a Buck/Coffee**: Rewards seatbelt use and builds community trust.
- **CarFit**: Improves older driver safety through vehicle fit assessments.

- **Impact Teen Drivers (ITD):** Educates teens on safe driving and passenger behavior.

Post-Crash Reviews

Coalitions conduct Fatal and Serious Injury Crash Reviews using the Safe System Approach to identify contributing factors and develop action plans that prevent future incidents.

Support for Enforcement

Coalitions build public understanding of traffic laws, improving compliance and strengthening trust between law enforcement and communities.

Support for Engineering

Coalitions support engineering by bringing partners together to identify local safety issues, share insights, and advocate for roadway improvements that align with the Safe System Approach and advance the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Challenges and Gaps

- **Insufficient Funding:** Demand exceeds available resources.
- **Limited Coalition Capacity:** Not all counties have active coalitions.
- **Restricted Funding Flexibility:** Limits innovation and local adaptation.

Why Investment Matters

Without sustainable funding:

- Local leadership and momentum are lost.
- Outreach and engagement decline.
- Progress toward safety goals slows.
- Evaluation and data-driven improvements are limited.

Conclusion

Since TZD began, Minnesota has saved hundreds of lives through coordinated, community-driven efforts. Continued investment in Safe Roads Coalitions is essential to expand reach, strengthen leadership, and achieve the ultimate goal of **zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries**.

Appendix F – Report requirements

Annually by Jan. 15, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's (DPS) commissioner must submit a traffic safety report to the governor and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over traffic safety and enforcement. In preparing the report, the commissioner must seek advice and comments from the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS) under Minnesota Statutes, Section 299A.01, Subd. 8, Sect. 4.076. The report must analyze the safety of Minnesota's roads and transportation system, including but not limited to:

- Injuries and fatalities that occur on or near a roadway or other transportation system facility.
- Factors that caused crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities.
- Roadway and system improvements broadly and at specific locations that could reduce injuries and fatalities.
- Enforcement and education efforts that could reduce injuries and fatalities.
- Other safety improvements or programs to improve the quality of the roadway and transportation use experience.
- Existing resources and resource gaps for roadway and transportation system safety improvements.

