

News Brief

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Early Estimates Show Increase in Traffic Fatalities for 2022

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first half of 2022. The report found that an estimated 20,175 people have died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, the highest number of deaths during the first half of the year since 2006. This number is also up a marginal 0.5% from the 20,070 projected fatalities for the first half of 2021.

However, while the fatality number rose 7% during the first quarter of 2022, the second quarter showed a decrease of almost 5%—the first decrease since 2020. In addition, the preliminary data shows that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased by 43.2 billion miles, a 2.8% increase from the same time period last year. Rhode Island saw the most impressive improvement, with the number of fatalities decreasing by 56.6% compared to the first half of 2021. Its fatality rate—the number of deaths per 100 million VMT—also dropped from 0.93 to 0.38. Massachusetts and Minnesota tied for the next lowest fatality rate at 0.68. The national fatality rate also decreased to 1.27, down from the projected rate of 1.30 fatalities per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2021.

“Traffic deaths appear to be declining for the first time since 2020, but they are still at high levels that call for urgent and sustained action,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “These deaths are preventable, not inevitable, and we should act accordingly.”

Earlier this year, the NHTSA unveiled its comprehensive [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), which aims to reduce serious injuries and deaths on highways, roads and streets. In addition, President Joe Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) with unprecedented funding to achieve its long-term goal of reaching zero roadway fatalities.

“Although it is heartening to see a projected decline in roadway deaths in recent months, the number of people dying on roads in this country remains a crisis,” said NHTSA’s Acting Administrator Ann Carlson. “Now is the time for all stakeholders, including states, local transportation entities, industry, nonprofits and others, to leverage the significant funding and tools provided under the president’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and join with USDOT in implementing the National Roadway Safety Strategy’s safe system approach, so we can turn the tide on years of increasing deaths.”

For more information, view the report’s [statistical summary](#).

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