Georgia Traffic Safety Facts

2023 Preliminary Data

January 2025

Other upcoming topics for the **2023 Georgia Traffic Safety Facts** publication series are:

- Distracted Driving
- Non-Motorists
- Motorcycles
- Risky Driving
- Occupant Protection
- Roadside Deaths and Injuries
- Young Adult Drivers
- Older Drivers

This fact sheet contains information from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) crash data modified by Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System (CODES) at the Department of Public Health (DPH), and Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) at the University of Georgia (UGA).

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Preliminary Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2023

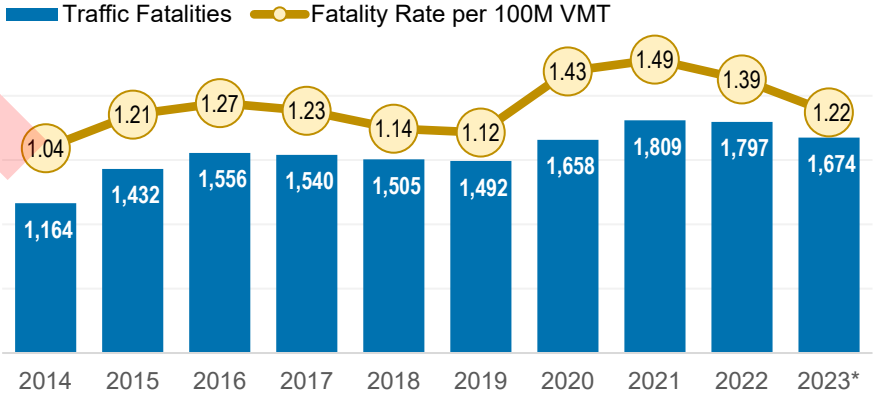
This fact sheet provides a preliminary overview of traffic fatalities, serious injuries, and crashes on Georgia roadways. The 2023 preliminary data were obtained from the *2023 Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) Preliminary Fatality Data* and the *2023 Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System (CODES) Preliminary* datasets. The preliminary 2023 data may differ from the final counts published in the 2023 FARS final and 2023 CODES. Readers are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting the information that uses 2023 preliminary crash data due to the potential incompleteness and the quality of the preliminary dataset. Refer to the 'Data Considerations' section at the end of this publication for more information.

Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries

Fatalities and Injury Rates

Preliminary crash data in Georgia shows 1,674 motor vehicle traffic fatalities in 2023—a 7% decrease from the 1,797 roadway fatalities in 2022. The estimated rate of traffic fatalities for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) also decreased— from 1.39 in 2022 to 1.22 in 2023.

Figure 1: **Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100M VMT, 2014-2023***



Source: FARS 2013–2021, *2022 Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) Preliminary Fatality Data, and 2022 GDOT 445 Report – Mileage by Route Type and Functional Class (Adjusted).

Suspected Serious Crash Injuries

Between 2019 and 2021, the number of suspected serious crash injuries steadily increased year over year (Table 1). However, according to preliminary crash data, the number of suspected serious injuries decreased by 3% between 2021 and 2022, with 277 fewer serious injuries. This decline continued into 2023, with a further reduction of 6% from 2022 to 2023, representing 489 fewer serious injuries.

In 2023, there were 5.96 serious traffic injuries per 100M VMT (an 18% decrease from 2022) and 2,184.7 serious traffic injuries per 100,000 traffic crashes (a 3% decrease from 2022).

Table 1: **Suspected Serious Injuries and Rates, 2019-2023***

Year	Suspected Serious Injuries	Suspected Serious Injury Rate	
		Per 100M VMT	Per 100,000 Crashes
2019	7,308	5.53	1,808.9
2020	7,606	6.58	2,293.0
2021	8,937	7.41	2,306.7
2022	8,660	7.27	2,252.1
2023*	8,171	5.96	2,184.7

Source: FFY2024 GOHS Core Performance Measures, *2023 CODES Preliminary, 2023 GDOT 445 Report – Mileage by Route Type and Functional Class (Adjusted).

Other injury surveillance sources also showed *de*creased motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in 2023: police crash reports, emergency medical services, emergency room only (emergency department), hospital inpatient discharge (hospital), and trauma registry. These surveillance systems are independent, so the number of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries may differ for each data source.

- According to Emergency Medical Services (EMS), there was a 7% *de*crease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and a 6% decrease in serious injuries where EMS reported to a motor vehicle crash incident.
- According to emergency department data, there was a 4% *in*crease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients receiving care in a Georgia emergency room only.
- According to hospital data, there was a 27% *in*crease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients admitted into a Georgia hospital.
- According to trauma registry data, there was a 6% *de*crease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients fitting the inclusion criteria and treated in designated Trauma Centers.

Table 2: **Serious and Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic-Related Injuries by Surveillance Source, 2021-2023**

Injury Surveillance Source	Fatal Injuries					Suspected Serious Injuries				
	2021	2022	2023	2022-2023 Percent Change		2021	2022	2023	2022-2023 Percent Change	
Crash Reports	1,809	1,797	1,674	▽	-7%	8,937	8,660	8,171	▽	- 6%
Emergency Medical Services	1,660	1,624	1,492	▽	-8%	5,802	5,007	4,847	▽	- 3%
Emergency Department	116	173	180	▲	4%	5,382	5,398	8,215	▲	52%
Hospital	245	228	290	▲	27%	3,221	3,221	5,740	▲	78%
Trauma	586	576	542	▽	-6%	3,066	2,932	2,945	▲	<1%

Source: OHIP Hospital Inpatient Discharge and Emergency Room Visit Data 2022-2023, CODES 2022, BioSpatial 2022-2023, *2023 CODES Preliminary data, *2023 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data.
Note: Counts include all persons involved in a Georgia crash receiving care in a Georgia emergency department or hospital, regardless of their state residency. EMS arrivals to motor vehicle traffic crashes with reported serious injuries and fatalities may or may not have resulted in transport to a medical facility.

Traffic Injuries Person Types

The number of fatally injured persons (occupants and non-occupants) involved in motor vehicle traffic crashes on public roads decreased between 2022 and 2023.

- Passenger vehicle occupant fatalities decreased by 4%, and serious injuries decreased by 5%.
- Motorcyclist fatalities decreased by 10%, and serious injuries decreased by 4%. The number of un-helmeted motorcyclist fatalities also decreased by ten—from 27 in 2022 to 17 in 2023.
- Pedestrian fatalities decreased by 8%, and serious injuries decreased by 7%.
- Bicyclist fatalities decreased from 29 in 2022 to 22 in 2023. The five-year average of bicyclist fatalities was 24 between 2019-2023. Bicyclist serious injuries decreased by 4% between 2022 and 2023.

Table 3: **Traffic Injuries by Severity and Person Type (2022-2023*)**

Person Type	Fatal Injuries					Suspected Serious Injuries				
	2022	2023*	2022-2023 Change			2022	2023*	2022-2023 Change		
			Number		Percent			Number		Percent
Total Injuries	**1,797**	**1,674**	**-123**	▽	**-7%**	**8,660**	**8,171**	**-489**	▽	**-6%**
Passenger Vehicle Occupant	1,092	1,052	-40	▽	-4%	6,445	6,124	-321	▽	-5%
Motorcyclist	221	199	-22	▽	-10%	933	892	-41	▽	-4%
Pedestrian	345	319	-26	▽	-8%	608	564	-44	▽	-7%
Bicyclist	29	22	-7	▽	-24%	122	117	-5	▽	-4%
Other	110	80	-30	▽	-27%	552	474	-78	▽	-14%

Source: 2022 FARS, 2022 CODES, *2023 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data, *2023 CODES Preliminary
Note: Historically, the fatality counts published in the FARS final are typically lower than the TSREG preliminary dataset.

Police Reported Crashes

The number of police-reported motor vehicle crashes on public roads, injury crashes, and Property-Damage-Only (PDO) crashes fluctuated between 2019 and 2023, as shown in Table 4. As noted in the other publications[1], the decrease in crashes and PDO crashes between 2019 and 2020 can be attributed to several factors, including the reduction in the number of drivers on Georgia roadways and fewer police officers reporting to crashes with no injuries. Between 2022 and 2023, there was a 3% decrease in total police-reported crashes, a 7% increase in fatal traffic crashes, a 5% decrease in serious injury crashes, and a 5% decrease in PDO crashes.

Table 4: **Police-Reported Crashes by Crash Severity, 2019-2023**

Crash Severity	Year					2022-2023 Change			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*	Number		Percent	
Total Crashes	403,897	331,710	387,444	384,527	373,135	▽	-11,392	▽	-3%
Fatal Crashes	1,378	1,522	1,670	1,678	1,562	▽	-116	▽	-7%
Non-Fatal Crashes	402,519	330,188	385,760	382,849	372,446	▽	-11,276	▽	-3%
Serious Injury Crashes	6,069	6,370	7,531	7,253	6,872	▽	-381	▽	-5%
Property-Damage-Only Crashes**	289,184	234,142	278,916	281,892	268,470	▽	-13,422	▽	-5%

Source: FARS 2019-2022, *2023 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data, Numetric 2019-2023 (extracted December 2024)
** Property-Damage-Only crashes are crashes that do not occur on private property and do not result in serious or fatal injuries to occupants or non-occupants.

[1] Georgia Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System. (2022, February). Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: 2020 preliminary data. (Georgia Traffic Safety Facts). Atlanta, GA: Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

2024 Seat Belt Use & Distraction Observations

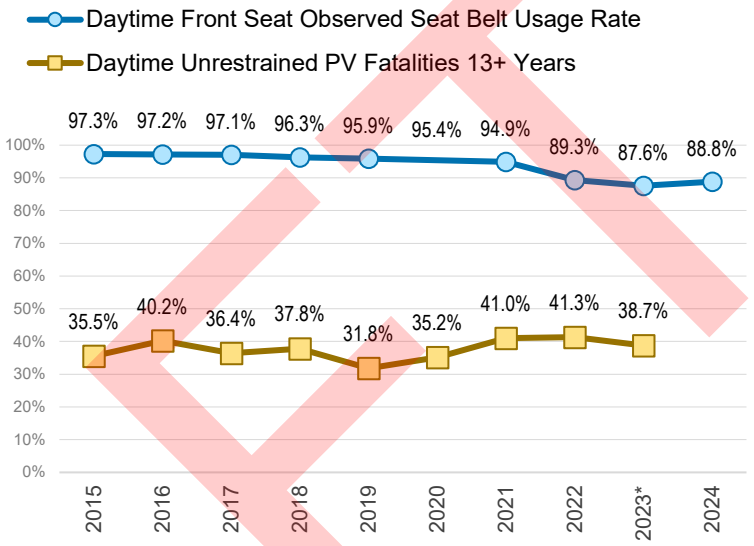
Passenger Vehicle Restraint Use and Fatalities

According to the 2024 Georgia Seat Belt Observational Survey[2], the rate of seat belt use for drivers and front right-seat passengers in passenger vehicles[3] increased from 87.6% in 2023 to 88.8% in 2024 (Figure 2). The seat belt usage rate for drivers (88.7%) was lower than for front seat passengers (90.3%).

In 2023, 38.7% of fatally injured front-seat, daytime passenger vehicle occupants aged 13+ years were unrestrained—more than three times the rate of observed unrestrained front-seat passengers during the seat belt survey (12.4%). The percentage of daytime unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities (13 years of age and older) decreased from 41.3% in 2022 to 38.7% in 2023.

Unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities decreased by 6% from 518 in 2022 to 489 in 2023. However, the proportion of fatally injured occupants who were unrestrained remains relatively consistent at 46.7% in 2023 compared to 47.4% in 2022.

Figure 2: **Georgia Seat Belt Usage Rate and Daytime Front Seat Passenger Vehicle (PV) Occupant Fatalities Ages *13+ Years* by Restraint Use, 2015-2024**



Source: 2024 Seat Belt Observational Survey and *2023 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data
* Note: Georgia opted not to conduct the Seat Belt Observational Survey in 2020 under the NHTSA waiver through the CARES Act. Therefore, Georgia safety belt usage data is not available for 2020.

In 2024, Georgia estimated the ***child safety usage rate*** (children 8 years of age or younger) to be **81.0%**.

Distracted Driving

According to the observational study "*2024 Observational Survey of Driver Distraction in Georgia,*"[4] 14.7% of Georgia drivers (1 out of 7) were observed to be distracted while operating a motor vehicle (see data considerations for categories of distraction used in the study). The overall rate of handheld device use (handheld talking or dialing/texting) was 6.6%. The proportion of drivers observed to be using a handheld device in Georgia was higher than national observation data (6.6% in Georgia vs. 5.2% nationally). Distracted driving also decreased with increasing age and was higher among women than among men.

1 out of **7**
Georgia drivers (14.7%) were observed to be distracted while operating a motor vehicle. This includes using a hand-held device (talking or texting/dialing), talking hands-free, or other distractions such as eating.

[2] Rupp, Jonathan. 2024. "Statewide Use of Seat Belt Restraints: An Observational Survey of Seat Belt Use in Georgia." The Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory (IPRCE), Emory University: Atlanta, Georgia
[3] Passenger vehicles are defined as passenger cars, light trucks (including vans, sport utility vehicles (SUV), and pickup trucks).
[4] Rupp, Jonathan. 2024. "An Observational Survey of Driver Distraction in Georgia". The Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory (IPRCE), Emory University: Atlanta, Georgia

Data Definitions and Considerations:

A traffic crash is defined as an incident that involves one or more motor vehicles where at least one vehicle was in transport, and the crash originated on a public traffic way, such as a road or highway. Crashes that occurred on private property, including parking lots and driveways, are excluded.

Fatal crashes are defined as crashes that involve a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic way customarily open to the public and that result in the death of a motorist or a non-motorist within 30 days of the crash.

The 2022 Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) Preliminary Fatality Data includes all Georgia roadway fatalities for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. Data is derived from the Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) daily fatality reports, cross-referenced with the Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System's (GEARS) online database, and validated with GDOT's Fatal Crash Recording System (FCRS) database. Delays in data availability at the time of analysis are possible due to the inherent nature of reporting roadway fatalities.

Suspected Serious Injuries are reported by law enforcement responding to a motor vehicle crash scene. Suspected serious injury is used when a severe injury prevents continuation of normal activities that may include: • Severe laceration resulting in exposure of underlying tissues/muscle/organs or resulting in significant loss of blood • Broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg) • Crush injuries • Suspected skull, chest, or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations • Significant burns (second and third degree burns over 10% or more of the body) Unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene • Paralysis

Serious injuries reported by Emergency Medical Services were obtained from BioSpatial. Injuries coded as "severe" and "likely fatal" were categorized as suspected serious injuries.

Serious injures reported in the hospital and emergency department dataset used the AIS (ICDPIC Abbreviation Injury Scale) that scores by body region and injury mechanism for each summary record. AIS 3 (serious), AIS 4 (severe), and AIS 5 (critical) were categorized as suspected serious injury.

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the Federal agency responsible for the use of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision (ICD-10) in the United States, has developed a clinical modification (CM) of the classification for morbidity (EMS, trauma, hospital, and ER data) purposes. ICD-10 Codes used were: V30-V39 (.4-.9), V40-V49 (.4-.9), V50-V59 (.4-.9),V60-V69 (.4-.9), V70-V79 (.4-.9), V81.1 V82.1,V83-V86 (.0-.3), V20-V28 (.3-.9),V29 (.4-.9),V12-V14 (.3-.9),V19 (.4-.6), V02-V04 (.1,.9),V09.2,V80 (.3-.5),V87(.0-.8),V89.2

In the observational study for distracted driving, driver distraction was divided into 5 categories: (1) Hand-held device (talking): The driver is observed holding a hand-held device to their ear; (2) Hand-held device (texting/dialing): driver is visibly manipulating a hand-held device; (3) Talking (hands-free): driver is talking or speaking while wearing a visible earpiece or headset, mounted device, or talking to another vehicle occupant (4) Other distraction: driver is otherwise distracted (includes activities such as eating, drinking, or smoking); or (5) No visible distraction.

The suggested APA format citation for this document is:

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