

TRAFFIC SAFETY DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

January 2019 – December 2021 | Preliminary Data



The purpose of this issue brief is to explore roadway travel and changes in drivers' behavior in Georgia during the first two years of the COVID-19 public health emergency response. On March 14, 2020, the Georgia governor issued an Executive Order declaring a public health state of emergency. There were unprecedented restrictions on travel and movement in response to this order. Additionally, other executive orders led to "shelter-in-place¹," closure of schools, and restricted large gatherings. Many state and local agencies (including law enforcement, driver services, and public schools) adapted their services and activities to the COVID-19 guidelines and executive orders. This issue brief draws from traffic records data sources to better understand how the COVID-19 public emergency responses impacted the traffic safety environment in Georgia.

Data and Limitations

This issue brief contains 2019 and 2020 data 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), Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS), Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS), Hospital Discharge Data, and Emergency Room Data. This issue brief also captures travel patterns in Georgia between January 2019 and December 2021 from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Bureau of Transportation Statistics and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Department of Research & Analysis. The final 2020 FARS data file was not available for this report, therefore FARS preliminary 2020 data was obtained from the State Traffic Safety Information (STSI) at the state-level only.

Figure 1: **Georgia Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)**

Jan	- CDC confirms the first U.S. laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 in the U.S. [Jan 20]
Feb	- Governor's Coronavirus Task Force created [Feb 28]
Mar	- State officials announced the first known cases in Georgia [Mar 2] - Atlanta mayor declared a state of emergency in the city - Georgia Governor declared a Public Health State of Emergency for COVID-19 [Mar 14] - Closing public elementary and secondary schools through April 24, 2020, to stop the spread of COVID-19 [Mar 16] - Limiting large gatherings statewide, ordering "shelter in place" [Mar 23] - MARTA implements their COVID-19 Service Reductions plan. [Mar 31]
Apr	- K-12 schools close through the end of the 2019–20 academic year [Apr 1] - Executive order issuing the Public Health Emergency [Apr 8] and extended to Feb 7, 2021, through multiple executive orders - Sheriffs and law enforcement officers are permitted to assist in the State's response to COVID-19 at local businesses, establishments, for-profit corporations, non-profit corporations, and organizations [Apr 3]
May	- DDS temporarily suspends on-the-road test on May 12 and applicants that received their license under this waiver are required to complete the on-the-road test to maintain their license by Sept 30, 2020.
Jun	
Jul	
Aug	
Sep	
Oct	
Nov	- Additional guidelines issued through executive orders for Empowering a Healthy Georgia in response to COVID-19
Dec	

Note: This timeline is not an all-inclusive list of COVID-19 responses in Georgia, but only highlights key responses that might have impacted and influenced traffic safety across various topic areas of interest.

¹ Shelter-in-place shall mean a person is required to remain in their home or place of residence and take every possible precaution to limit social interaction to prevent the spread or infection of COVID-19 to themselves or any other person.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted surveillance systems used to track and monitor injuries, including crash data systems. Due to the COVID-19 response, many traffic safety law enforcement officers were reassigned to other critical and high-priority areas. Traffic enforcement officers continued to report on fatal or injury crashes and some property-damage-only (PDO) crashes. Many PDO crashes were self-reported by drivers involved in a crash using forms provided by the local law enforcement agency and were not included in the State crash repository. Additionally, for crashes where law enforcement reported the incident, the interaction may have been abbreviated and, in some cases, may have impacted the completeness of crash reports. Readers are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting the information that uses 2020 crash data due to the completeness and quality of the preliminary dataset. Refer to the 'Data Considerations' section at the end of this publication for more information.

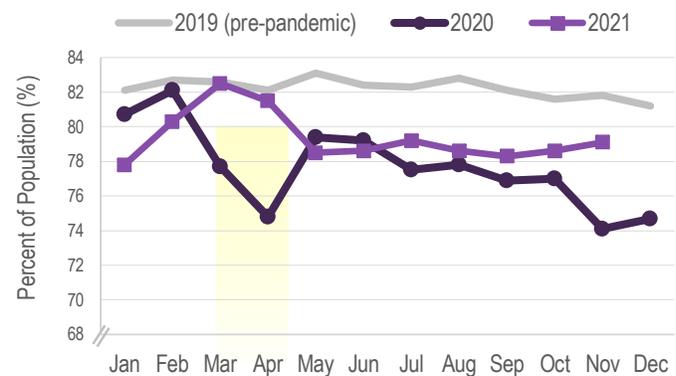
Travel Patterns

The COVID-19 pandemic had a clear impact on travel behaviors in Georgia. In response to the "shelter-in-place" Executive Order effective in March and April 2020, a substantial proportion of the Georgia population stayed at home, did not travel on Georgia roadways, and did not utilize the public transportation systems. These trends are indicated by the decline in the percent not staying at home (Figure 2), vehicle miles traveled (Figure 3), and ridership on railways and buses (Figure 4).

According to the FHWA Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the proportion of Georgia's population that was not staying at home was nearly 82 percent throughout the months in the pre-pandemic 2019 year. In response to the Executive Order, the proportion of Georgia's population not staying at home decreased from 82 percent in February 2020 to 78 percent in March 2020 and 75 percent in April 2020.

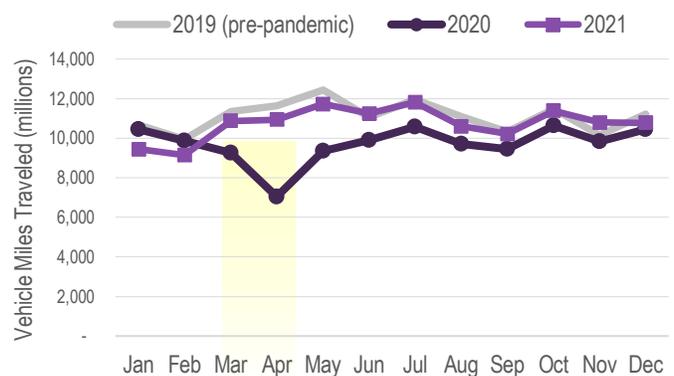
The estimated vehicle miles traveled in Georgia decreased by 13 percent from 133,333 million miles in 2019 to 115,884 million miles in 2020. The decrease in the VMT started in March 2020 and continued throughout the year. Preliminary VMT estimates suggest that VMT patterns in most regions and roadways returned to pre-pandemic levels in the second half of 2020.

Figure 2: **Average Percentage of Population Not Staying Home Daily by Month** (Jan 2019-Nov 2021)



Source: FHWA Bureau of Transportation Statistics (Nov 2021)

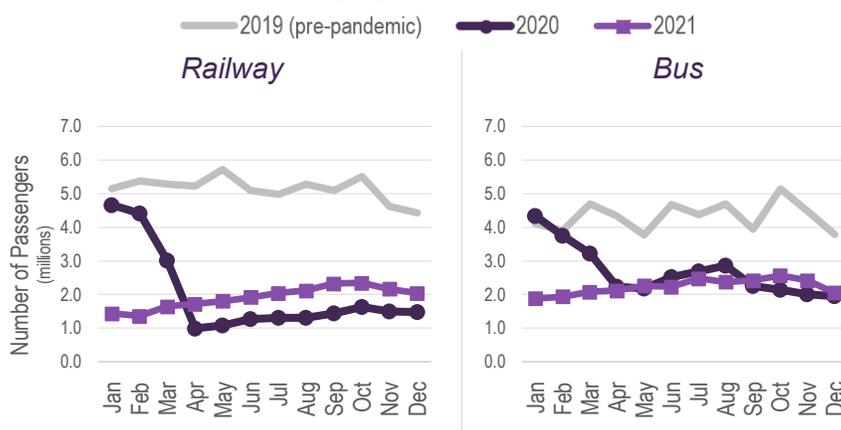
Figure 3: **Georgia Estimated Vehicle Miles Traveled by Month** (Jan 2019-Dec 2021)



Source: FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information Traffic Volume Trends (Dec 2021)

MARTA, which provides public transit service to the Atlanta region, suspended 70 out of its 110 bus routes and reduced rail services between April 2020 and May 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ridership (number of passengers) decreased dramatically in March 2020. Between 2019 and 2020, MARTA railway ridership decreased by 61 percent (61.7 million to 24.0 million), and bus ridership decreased by 38 percent (51.8 million to 32.1 million).

Figure 4: **MARTA Ridership by Mode** (Jan 2020-Dec 2021)



Source: MARTA Department of Research & Analysis (Dec 2021)

Note: Ridership data is compiled from unlinked passenger trips for each mode reported to the National Transit Database. MARTA waived fares for railway and bus services between April and September 2020.

Police Reported Crashes

In comparison to pre-pandemic years (2016-2019), the number of police-reported motor vehicle crashes on public roads, injury crashes, and PDO crashes changed notably between 2019 and 2020 as shown in Table 1. Between 2019 and 2020, police-reported traffic crashes and property-damage-only (PDO) crashes (crashes with no bodily injuries to occupants or non-occupants) decreased by 19 percent. Despite this decrease, the number of fatal crashes (crashes with at least one fatal injury) increased by 15 percent and suspected serious injury² crashes (crashes with at least one serious injury) increased by 5 percent.

The decrease in crashes and PDO crashes can be attributed to several factors, including the reduction in the number of drivers on Georgia roadways and fewer police officers reporting to non-injury crash incidences. The challenges traffic enforcement faced are also evident in the number of citations issued after a motor vehicle crash. The proportion of citations issued to drivers involved in traffic crashes decreased from 64 percent in 2019 to 59 percent in 2020 – indicative of law enforcement issuing fewer citations during the pandemic period. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of citations issued after a crash incident decreased by 24 percent.

Table 1: **Police-Reported Crashes by Crash Severity, 2016-2020**

Crash Severity	Year					2019-2020 Change	
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Number	Percent
Total Crashes	405,332	404,548	402,380	404,043	330,327	▽ 73,716	▽ 18%
Property-Damage-Only Crashes	301,943	288,677	301,075	299,440	241,845	▽ 57,595	▽ 19%
Serious Injury Crashes	4,354	4,469	5,253	6,085	6,385	▲ 300	▲ 5%
Fatal Crashes	1,424	1,440	1,407	1,377	1,578*	▲ 201	▲ 15%

Source: FARS 2016-2019; CODES 2016-2020; GEARS 2016-2020 (extracted February 2022); 2020 Preliminary Georgia FARS dataset

*Preliminary numbers obtained from the 2020 Preliminary Georgia FARS dataset may be different from numbers published in the 2020 FARS final

Note: The 2019 Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes Georgia Traffic Safety Facts included Property-Damage-Only crashes that occurred on private property. The PDO crashes displayed in this table do not include private property crash incidences.

² Suspected Serious Injuries are reported by law enforcement responding to a motor vehicle crash scene. Suspected serious injury is used when any injury, other than fatal injury, prevents the injured person from walking, driving, or normally continuing the activities the person was capable of before the injury occurred. See Data Considerations for more information on serious injuries.

Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries

Despite the decrease in the number of crashes, injury surveillance sources (police-crash reports, emergency medical services, and emergency department / hospital) show an increase in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. These surveillance systems are independent, so the number of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries may not be the same for each data source.

- 12 percent increase in the number of traffic-related fatalities that occurred as a result of a crash on Georgia roadways according to police crash reports (from 1,491 in 2019 to 1,664 in 2020).
- 17 percent increase in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities where EMS reported to a motor vehicle crash incident (from 779 to 913).
- 114 percent increase (more than double) in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients receiving care in a Georgia emergency room only (from 91 to 195).
- 10 percent increase in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients admitted into a Georgia hospital (221 to 244).

Table 2: **Serious and Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic-Related Injuries by Injury Surveillance Source** (2019 and 2020)

Data Source	2019		2020		2019-2020 Percent Change	
	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities
Crash Reports	7,308	1,491	7,620	1,664	▲ 4%	▲ 12%
Emergency Medical Services	959	779	1,074	913	▲ 12%	▲ 17%
Emergency Department	4,190	91	5,125	195	▲ 22%	▲ 114%
Hospital	2,903	221	2,641	244	▼ 9%	▲ 10%

Source: FARS STSI 2020 preliminary tables, FARS 2019, OHIP Hospital Inpatient Discharge and Emergency Room Visit Data 2019-2020

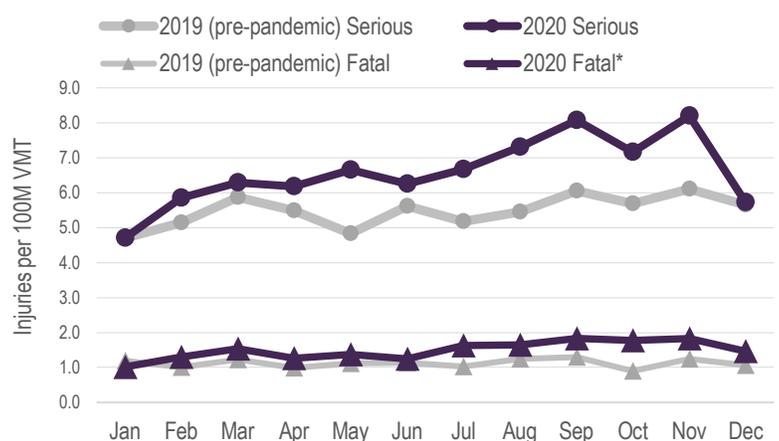
Note: All persons involved in a Georgia crash receiving care in Georgia ED or Hospital regardless of their state residency. EMS arrivals to motor vehicle traffic crashes with reported serious injuries and fatalities may or may not have resulted in transport to a medical facility.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic responses in 2020, there was less traffic volume and fewer vehicle miles traveled than in 2019. The increase in fatalities and serious injuries indicated that the traffic crashes that occurred tended to be more severe. Therefore, the rate of fatal injuries and serious injuries for every 100 million VMT increased in 2020:

- 34 percent increase in the fatality rate (from 1.12 in 2019 to 1.49 in 2020), and
- 20 percent increase in the serious injury rate (from 5.47 in 2019 to 6.58 in 2020).

Figure 5 shows the fatal and serious injury rate by month for 2019 and 2020. In December 2020, the fatality rate and serious injury rate were returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 5: **Fatal and Serious Injury Rate (per 100M VMT) by Month (2019 and 2020)**



Source: CODES 2019, 2020 Preliminary Georgia FARS dataset, FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information Traffic Volume Trends 2019-2020

*Preliminary numbers obtained from the 2020 Preliminary Georgia FARS dataset may be different from numbers published in the 2020 FARS final

Person Type

The number of fatally and seriously injured persons (occupants and non-occupants) involved in a motor vehicle traffic crash on public roads increased between 2019 and 2020. The comparison of these injuries by person type is shown in Table 3.

- Motorcyclist serious injuries increased by 18 percent and motorcyclist fatalities increased by 13 percent. Despite these increases, the helmet use among those seriously or fatally injured in a crash remained the same from 2019 and 2020 (85 percent).
- While pedestrian and bicyclist serious injuries decreased by 11 percent, the number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities increased by 21 percent.
- The number of serious injuries among other persons, particularly persons on recreational vehicles including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and golf carts, increased by 33 percent.

Table 3: **Fatal and Serious Injuries by Person Type, 2019 and 2020**

Person Type	2019		2020		2019-2020 Percent Change	
	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities
Passenger Vehicle Occupant*	5,686	990	5,832	1,072	▲ 3 %	▲ 8 %
Motorcyclists	705	170	834	192	▲ 18 %	▲ 13 %
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	483	257	429	311	▼ 11 %	▲ 21 %
Other**	322	43	416	***	▲ 33 %	***
Large Truck Occupant	112	31	109	***	▼ 3 %	***
Total	7,308	1,491	7,620	1,664	▲ 4 %	▲ 12 %

Source: FARS STSI 2020 preliminary tables, FARS 2019, CODES 2019-2020 *Passenger Vehicles includes passenger cars and light-trucks (Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs), pickup trucks, and vans) **Other includes persons on recreational vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and golf carts *** 2020 FARS Final Files data not available, therefore, the number of large truck occupants and other person types cannot be computed. FARS STSI preliminary tables report 1,664 total traffic fatalities for 2020.

Changes in Risky Behaviors by Crash Types

Speeding

A speeding-related crash is when any driver in the crash receives a speeding-related traffic violation or if a police officer indicates that racing, driving too fast for conditions, exceeding the posted speed limit, or evading the police was a contributing factor in the crash.

In 2020, the number of crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities that were speeding-related increased compared to 2019. Twenty-three percent of all traffic fatalities (380 out of 1,664 fatalities) and 8 percent of all serious injuries (588 out of 7,620 injuries) were speeding-related. Among all speeding-related crashes that occurred in 2020, 58 percent were single-vehicle crashes (a net 2-point increase from 2019), and 42 percent were multi-vehicle.

Table 4: **2019 and 2020 Percent Change in Speeding-Related Crashes, Injuries, Citations, and Convictions**

Traffic Measure		2019-2020 Percent Change
Crashes	Speeding-related crashes	▲ 11.7 %
	Speeding-related serious injury crashes	▲ 10.2 %
Persons Involved	Speeding-related fatalities	▲ 46.2 %
	Speeding-related serious injuries	▲ 10.7 %
Drivers	Speeding-related citations after a crash	▲ 12.2 %
	Speeding-related convictions (crash or non-crash)	▼ 45.6 %

Source: FARS STSI 2020, FARS 2019, CODES 2019-2020, DDS 2019-2020

Note: See the call-out box on page 6 for an explanation regarding speeding-related convictions.

Studies have shown that reduced traffic movements and roadway congestion lead to increased driving speeds. Elvik (2005) found that a 10% increase in the average speed of traffic was likely to have an adverse impact on traffic fatalities. In other words, reduced congestion can lead to higher speed resulting in an increased risk of crashes and the severity of injuries resulting from those crashes.

Impairment (Alcohol and Drug)

An alcohol- and/or drug-related crash is when any driver in the crash is confirmed or suspected of impairment by consuming alcohol and/or drugs.

Drivers suspected of alcohol may have an alcohol test administered; however, the results or findings were not validated or included in the police crash report. While the number of alcohol- and/or drug- related crashes stayed nearly the same between 2019 and 2020, the number of serious and fatal injuries associated with these crashes increased.

In 2020, the number of alcohol-impaired³ fatalities increased by 13 percent from 355 fatalities in 2019 to 402 in 2020. Twenty-four percent of all traffic fatalities (402 out of 1,664 fatalities) were related to alcohol-impaired drivers, and 11 percent of all serious injuries (855 out of 7,620 injuries) were related to drivers confirmed or suspected of alcohol- and/or drug-impairment. Among all alcohol- and/or drug- related crashes that occurred in 2020, 65 percent were single-vehicle crashes (a net 3-point increase from 2019), and 35 percent were multi-vehicle.

Distractions Driving

Driver distraction⁴ occurs when drivers divert their attention from the driving task to focus on some other activity. In 2020, the number of motor vehicle traffic crashes that fit the criteria of having at least one confirmed or suspected distracted driver decreased by 32 percent. Forty-seven percent of all crashes were distraction-related – a net 9-point decrease from 2019. Of the 603,948 drivers involved in a crash on Georgia roadways in 2020, 2 percent were confirmed to be distracted and another 45 percent were suspected of distraction. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of distraction-related citations issued after a crash decreased by 17 percent, and distraction-related convictions (crash or non-crash) decreased by 50 percent. See the call-out box for an explanation regarding distraction-related convictions. Among all distraction-related crashes that occurred in 2020, 21 percent were single-vehicle crashes (a net 2-point decrease from 2019) and 78 percent were multi-vehicle.

Table 5: 2019 and 2020 Percent Change in Alcohol- and/or Drug- Impaired Crashes, Injuries, Citations, and Convictions

Traffic Measure		2019-2020 Percent Change	
Crashes	Alcohol- and/or drug-impaired crashes	▽	0.7 %
	Alcohol- and/or drug-impaired serious injury crashes	▲	4.6 %
Persons Involved	Alcohol-impaired fatalities	▲	13.2 %
	Alcohol- and/or drug-impaired serious injuries	▲	5.3 %
Drivers	Alcohol- and/or drug-impaired citations after a crash	▲	7.9 %
	Alcohol- and/or drug-impaired convictions (crash or non-crash)*	▽	63.4 %

Source: FARS STSI 2020 preliminary tables, FARS 2019, CODES 2019-2020, DDS 2019-2020

* Reckless driving convictions that may have had an alcohol- or drug- related citation are not included. See the call-out box for an explanation regarding alcohol/drug impairment-related convictions.

*The COVID-19 response caused many Georgia courts to temporarily postpone court hearings, including traffic court. Therefore, many convictions for **speeding**, **alcohol/drug impairment**, and **distracted** driving may not have been reported to the Department of Driver Services. The number of convictions reported with a citation date occurring in 2020 may be updated in future reports as the judicial circuit reduces its backlogs.*

Table 6: 2019 and 2020 Proportion of Distraction-Related Crashes

Traffic Measure		2019	2020
Crashes	Motor vehicle traffic crashes with at least one confirmed or suspected distracted driver	56 %	47 %
Drivers Involved	Confirmed distracted driver	4 %	2 %
	Suspected distracted driver	52 %	45 %

Source: FARS STSI 2020 preliminary tables, FARS 2019, CODES 2019-2020, DDS 2019-2020.

³ According to FARS, a driver is considered alcohol-impaired when their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is 0.08 g/dL or higher

⁴ See Data Considerations for more information on the suspected-distracted driving definition established by the GDOT and CODES

Seat Belt Use

Unrestrained passenger vehicle (PV) occupant fatalities increased by 21 percent from 385 in 2019 to 465 in 2020. Table 7 looks at the percent of PV occupants involved all motor vehicle traffic crashes by injury severity. In 2020, 43 percent of PV occupants involved in a crash and fatally injured were unrestrained (a net 4-point change increase from 2019), and 17 percent of PV occupants involved in a crash and seriously injured were unrestrained (a net 2-point change increase from 2019). Given the increased number of cases with missing/unknown seat belt use among PV occupants with serious injuries (21 percent in 2020), Table 7 should be interpreted with caution.

Table 7: **Passenger Vehicle Occupants (All Ages) Involved in All Traffic Crashes by Injury Severity, 2019 and 2020**

Restraint Use	Fatal Injury		Suspected Serious Injury	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Restrained	514 (52%)	505 (47%)	3,744 (67%)	3,604 (62%)
Unrestrained	385 (39%)	465 (43%)	1,048 (19%)	969 (17%)
Unknown	91 (9%)	102 (10%)	827 (15%)	1,199 (21%)
Total	990	1,072	5,619	5,772

Source: FARS STSI 2020 preliminary tables, FARS 2019, CODES 2019-2020

Drivers Involved in Traffic Crashes

Drivers aged 15-to-24 and 25-to-34 years involvement in crashes are overrepresented relative to the proportion of licensed drivers across the following: fatal or serious crashes, speeding, alcohol- and/or drug-impairment, and distraction. Older drivers aged 45 years or older, however, represent a lower proportion of involvement in crashes, speeding, impairment, and distraction compared to the proportion of licensed drivers.

Compared to drivers in other age groups, drivers aged 15-to-24 years represented:

- **16 percent** of all licensed drivers (a net 1-point increase from 2019);
- **20 percent** of all drivers involved in a fatal or serious injury crash (no change from 2019);
- **42 percent** of all speeding drivers involved in a crash (a net 1-point increase from 2019);
- **20 percent** of all drivers confirmed or suspected of alcohol- and/or drug-impairment involved in a crash (a net 1-point increase from 2019); and
- **22 percent** of all drivers confirmed or suspected of distracted driving involved in a crash (a net 1-point increase from 2019).

Table 8: **Licensed Drivers, Drivers Involved in a Fatal or Serious Injury Crash, Speeding Drivers, Alcohol- and/or Drug- Impaired Drivers, and Distracted Drivers Involved in a Crash, 2020**

■ 3% more than percent of licensed drivers ■ 3% less than percent of licensed drivers

Age Group	Licensed Drivers	Involved* in a Fatal or Serious Injury Crash	Speeding Drivers Involved in a Crash	Confirmed or Suspected Alcohol and/or Drug-Impaired Driver Involved in a Crash	Confirmed or Suspected Distracted Driver Involved in a Crash
15-24	16%	20%	42%	20%	22%
15-20	9%	10%	24%	7%	11%
21-24	7%	10%	18%	13%	11%
25-34	18%	25%	28%	32%	24%
35-44	16%	18%	14%	21%	18%
45-54	16%	15%	9%	13%	16%
55-64	16%	12%	5%	10%	12%
65+	17%	10%	3%	3%	7%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: DDS 2020, CODES 2020 * The involvement of drivers in fatal or serious injury traffic crashes does not imply the drivers caused the crash either by their actions or failure to act. Note: Percent are calculated using records with known age.

Data Definitions and Considerations:

A traffic crash is defined as an incident that involved 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.

Serious injuries are those suspected serious injuries reported by law enforcement and used when any injury, other than fatal injury, prevents the injured person from walking, driving, or normally continuing the activities the person was capable of before the injury occurred. A suspected serious injury may result in one or more of the following: • 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 ten percent or more of the body) • Unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene • Paralysis.

Contributing circumstances capture the precrash elements or improper actions of persons (motorcycle operators, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other motorists) that may have caused the crash. Contributing factors in fatal and nonfatal crashes are often underreported in the datasets. There is at least one record per person involved in a fatal crash (FARS Data) and some missing records for persons involved in motor vehicle traffic crashes (Crash Data).

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 ED 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

Emergency department motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries include those that were only seen in a Georgia emergency room. Hospital data include those that were admitted into the hospital and transferred from their corresponding emergency room. The numbers reported in this publication are based on the patient's discharge date.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines confirmed distraction-related activities as anything that takes a driver's eyes off the road (visual distraction), mind off the road (cognitive distraction), or hands off the wheel (manual distraction).

Police crash reports are reviewed in a post hoc analysis by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Transportation using a jointly developed definition of suspected distracted driving based on multiple factors. The imputation of suspected distracted drivers includes drivers that indicate emotional distress and evidence of driver inattention and distraction. The imputation removes driver contributing factors that include drug/alcohol impairment, sleepiness/drowsiness, aggressive/reckless driving, and speeding. The CODES Analytical Reference Guide is available upon request.

The Department of Driver Services provided licensing data for the 2020 year. The driver licensing database is a live database system and represents the information at a point-in-time on the date of extraction. The legal codes used for alcohol-related, distracted driving, and convictions processed by DDS are listed below:

- Distracted driving legal codes: O.C.G.A. 40-6-241, 40-6-241(b), 40-6-241(c), 40-6-241(d), 40-6-241.1, 40-6-241.2, 40-6-241.2(b)(1), 40-6-241.2(b)(2)(A), 40-6-241.2(b)(2)(B), and 40-6-241.2(b)(2)(C).
- Alcohol-related legal codes: O.C.G.A. 40-6-391, 40-6-391(a), 40-6-391(a)(1), 40-6-391(a)(2), 40-6-391(a)(3), 40-6-391(a)(4), 40-6-391(a)(5), 40-6-391(a)(6), 40-6-391(c)(4), 40-6-391(l), 40-6-391(k)(1), 40-6-391(l)
- Speeding-related legal code is O.C.G.A. 40-6-181

References:

Elvik R. Speed and Road Safety: Synthesis of Evidence from Evaluation Studies. Transportation Research Record. 2005;1908(1):59-69. doi:10.1177/0361198105190800108

Other traffic safety facts are available online at the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety and Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation Systems (CODES): Risky Driving (Speeding and Impairment), Distracted Drivers, Occupant Protection, Non-Motorist (Pedestrians and Bicyclists), Motorcycle Safety, Young Adult Drivers, and Older Drivers.

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