

# Traffic Safety Facts

2004 Data

## Older Population

*“In 2004, older people accounted for 12 percent of all traffic fatalities and 16 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.”*

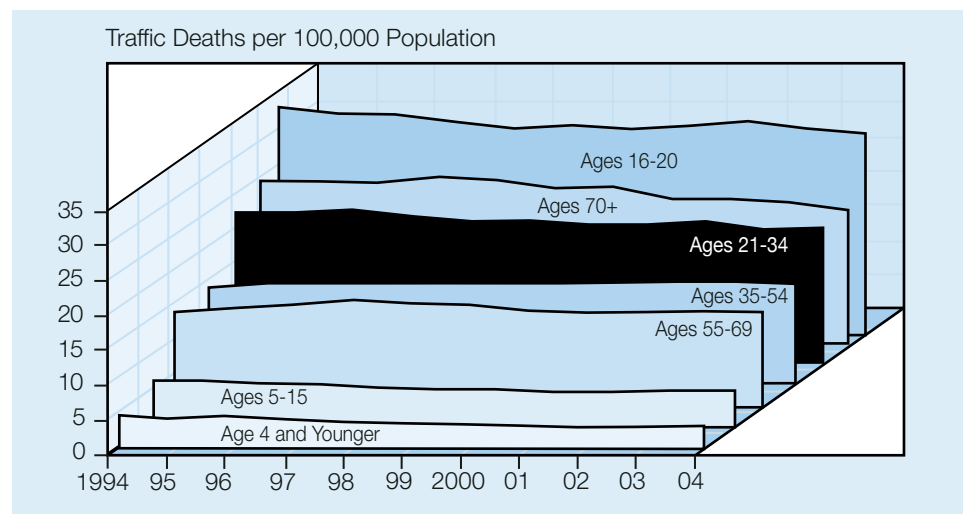
There are over 26 million people age 70 and older in the United States. In 2004, this age group made up 9.0 percent of the total U.S. resident population, compared with 8.9 percent in 1994. From 1994 to 2004, the growth rate for this older segment of the population was 4 percent higher than the growth rate of the total population.

There were 19.8 million older licensed drivers in 2003 (2004 data not available) — a 27-percent increase from the number in 1993. In contrast, the total number of licensed drivers increased by only 13 percent from 1993 to 2003. Older drivers made up 10 percent of all licensed drivers in 2003, compared with 9 percent in 1993.

In 2004, 141,000 older individuals were injured in traffic crashes, accounting for 5 percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes during the year. These older individuals made up 12 percent of all traffic fatalities, 11 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 16 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 2004 occurred during the daytime (81%), on weekdays (72%), and involved another vehicle (74%).

Figure 1  
**Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates by Age Group, 1994-2004**



Older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest proportion of total drivers involved with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher of all adult drivers. Fatally injured older pedestrians also had the lowest proportion with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher of all adult pedestrian fatalities.

Table 1  
**Age and Alcohol, 2004**

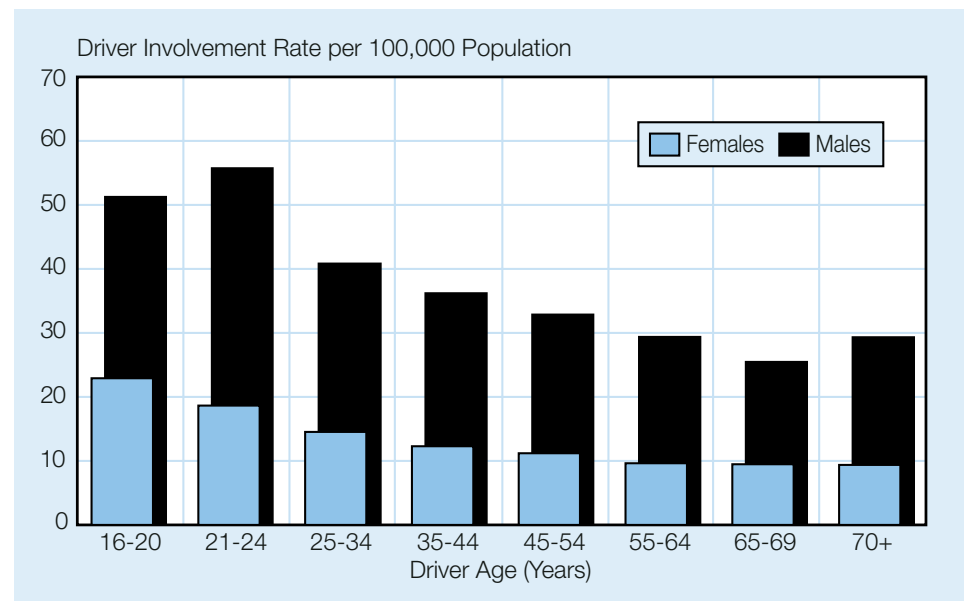
Age Group (years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Pedestrian Fatalities		
	Total	BAC .08 or Higher		Total	BAC .08 or Higher	
		Number	Percent of Total		Number	Percent of Total
<16	344	33	10	393	16	4
16-20	7,709	1,314	17	265	74	28
21-34	17,561	5,077	29	875	430	49
35-54	19,784	4,149	21	1,622	788	49
55-69	7,244	835	12	687	188	27
70+	4,528	221	5	753	50	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>*58,080</b>	<b>11,791</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>**4,641</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>34</b>

\*Includes 910 drivers of unknown age.

\*\*Includes 46 pedestrian fatalities of unknown age.

*“Older drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2004 had the lowest proportion of intoxication of all adult drivers.”*

Figure 2  
**Driver Involvement Rates in Fatal Crashes by Age and Sex, 2004**



Three-fourths (75%) of all older occupants of passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes were using restraints at the time of the crash, compared to 61 percent for other adult occupants (18 to 69 years old).

For older people, 66 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 2004 occurred at non-intersection locations. For other pedestrians, 82 percent of fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations. In two-vehicle fatal crashes involving an older driver and a younger driver, the vehicle driven by the older person was twice as likely to be the one that was struck (64% and 29%, respectively). In 44 percent of these crashes, both vehicles were proceeding straight at the time of the collision. In 27 percent, the older driver was turning left — 7 times more often than the younger driver.

*“In two-vehicle fatal crashes with an older and a younger driver, the older driver’s vehicle was twice as likely to be the one that was struck.”*

Table 2

**Involvement of the Older Population in Traffic Fatalities, 1994 and 2004**

	1994			2004			Percentage Change, 1994-2004		
	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 70+	Percentage of Total	Number		Percentage Age 70+
							Total	Age 70+	
<b>Population (thousands)</b>									
Total	260,327	23,244	8.9	293,655	26,338	9.0	13	13	0.4
Male	127,049	9,012	7.1	144,537	10,521	7.3	14	17	2.6
Female	133,278	14,232	10.7	149,118	15,817	10.6	12	11	-0.7
<b>Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes</b>									
Total	54,549	4,438	8.1	58,080	4,528	7.8	6	2	-4.2
Male	40,233	3,060	7.6	42,045	3,063	7.3	5	0	-4.2
Female	13,567	1,377	10.1	15,268	1,465	9.6	13	6	-5.5
<b>Driver Fatalities</b>									
Total	23,691	2,914	12.3	26,756	2,989	11.2	13	3	-9.2
Male	17,548	1,958	11.2	20,015	1,988	9.9	14	2	-11.0
Female	6,142	956	15.6	6,739	1,001	14.9	10	5	-4.6
<b>Total Traffic Fatalities</b>									
Total	40,716	5,425	13.3	42,636	5,062	11.9	5	-7	-10.9
Male	27,411	2,972	10.8	29,320	2,863	9.8	7	-4	-9.9
Female	13,293	2,451	18.4	13,310	2,199	16.5	0	-10	-10.4
<b>Occupant Fatalities</b>									
Total	34,318	4,364	12.7	37,142	4,222	11.4	8	-3	-10.6
Male	22,888	2,356	10.3	25,379	2,356	9.3	11	0	-9.8
Female	11,418	2,006	17.6	11,760	1,866	15.9	3	-7	-9.7
<b>Pedestrian Fatalities</b>									
Total	5,489	1,021	18.6	4,641	753	16.2	-15	-26	-12.8
Male	3,757	577	15.4	3,215	426	13.3	-14	-26	-13.7
Female	1,732	444	25.6	1,423	327	23.0	-18	-26	-10.4

### Older Population Age Groups

The following table and graphs provide data for subgroups of the older population: 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, and 85+ years.

Table 3  
**Driver Involvement in Fatal Crashes and Pedestrian Fatalities in the Older Population by Age Group, 2004**

	Age Group (years)				Total
	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes	1,386	1,371	1,058	713	<b>4,528</b>
Pedestrian Fatalities	197	211	199	146	<b>753</b>

Figure 3  
**Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates in the Older Population by Age Group, 1994-2004**

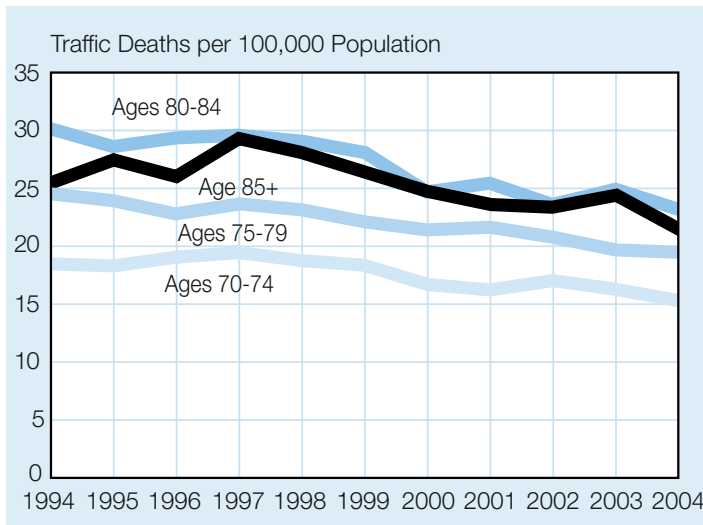
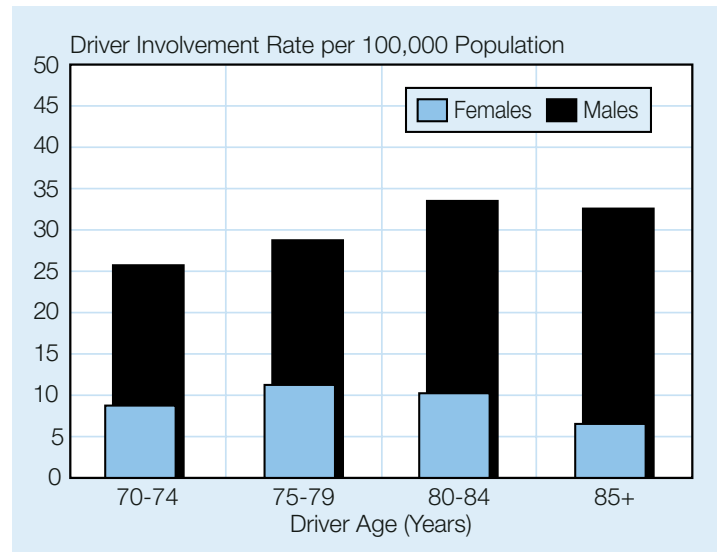


Figure 4  
**Involvement Rates for Older Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Age Group and Sex, 2004**



#### For more information:

Information on speeding involvement in traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NPO-121, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA information can also be obtained by telephone or by fax-on-demand at 800-934-8517. Fax messages should be sent to 202-366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/ncsa](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/ncsa). To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236.

Other fact sheets available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis are *Overview, Alcohol, Occupant Protection, Speeding, Children, Young Drivers, Pedestrians, Pedalcyclists, Motorcycles, Large Trucks, School Transportation-Related Crashes, State Traffic Data, and State Alcohol Estimates*. Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System*.