

# Fatal Crashes Involving Impairment in Washington, 2004-2008

## How Significant is the Problem?

On Washington roadways, there were 1,221 impairment involved fatal crashes between 2004 and 2008. These crashes resulted in a total of 1,363 deaths, which is an average of 273 deaths per year. This accounts for approximately 46% (1,363 of 2,942) of all traffic deaths during the five year period. A driver with a BAC $\geq$ .08 or a positive drug test result is impaired.

## Who Dies in Impairment Crashes?

Half (49.2%) of impairment deaths were persons between 16 and 30 years old (data not shown).

Nearly all (97.6%) of impairment-related deaths were vehicle drivers and passengers.

Person Type	Deaths	Percentage
Driver	1,047	76.8%
Passenger	283	20.8%
Pedestrian	28	2.1%
Pedalcyclist	4	0.3%
Other Non-motorist	1	0.1%
Total	1,363	100.0%

## What are the Contributing Factors?

### Road and Area Type

Almost two-thirds of impairment-related deaths were in rural areas (854 of 1,363; 62.7%). Rural and urban county roads accounted for 38.6% (526 of 1,363) of all impairment-related deaths.

The second largest number of impairment deaths was on US/State Highways with 33.7% (459 of 1,363). Interstates had the fewest impairment-related deaths (101 of 1,363, 7.4%).

Road Classification	Rural	Urban	Total
Interstates	4.1%	3.3%	7.4%
US/State Highways	25.9%	7.8%	33.7%
County Roads	29.7%	8.7%	38.6%
City Streets	0.8%	17.4%	18.2%
Other/Unknown	2.1%	0.0%	2.1%
Total by Area Type	62.7%	37.2%	100.0%

## Location

The Top 5 counties represent almost half (644 of 1,363; 47.2%) of all impairment-related deaths in Washington.

Top 5 Counties	Deaths	% of State Total
King	252	18.5%
Pierce	142	10.4%
Snohomish	100	7.3%
Yakima	89	6.5%
Clark	61	4.5%

## Time

Two out of three (898 of 1,363; 65.9%) impairment-related deaths occurred between 6:00 PM and 5:59 AM.

Time of Day	Deaths	Percentage
6:00 AM to 8:59 AM	81	5.9%
9:00 AM to 11:59 AM	69	5.1%
Noon to 2:59 PM	99	7.3%
3:00 PM to 5:59 PM	207	15.2%
6:00 PM to 8:59 PM	210	15.4%
9:00 PM to 11:59 PM	225	16.5%
Midnight to 2:59 AM	336	24.7%
3:00 AM to 5:59 AM	127	9.3%
Unknown	9	0.7%

Two out of five (576 of 1,363, 42.3%) impairment-related deaths occurred on Saturday or Sunday. An additional 14.1% were on Friday.

Day of Week	Deaths	Percentage
Sunday	299	21.9%
Monday	134	9.8%
Tuesday	143	10.5%
Wednesday	154	11.3%
Thursday	164	12.0%
Friday	192	14.1%
Saturday	277	20.3%

More than half (708 of 1,363; 51.9%) of all impairment-related deaths occurred during the weekend, between 6:00 PM Friday and 5:59 AM Monday.

## What are the Contributing Factors?

Two out of five (41.7%) impairment-related deaths occurred from June through September. The fewest deaths occurred in February.

Month of Year	Deaths	Percentage
January	100	7.3%
February	78	5.7%
March	110	8.1%
April	98	7.2%
May	109	8.0%
June	132	9.7%
July	165	12.1%
August	143	10.5%
September	128	9.4%
October	117	8.6%
November	87	6.4%
December	96	7.0%

## Crash Type

Three out of five impairment-related deaths involved a single vehicle (787 of 1,363; 57.7%).

## The Driver

Between 2004 and 2008, a total of 1,252 drivers involved in fatal crashes were impaired. Of these impaired drivers, 83.7% (1,050 of 1,252) were male. Moreover, two out of five impaired drivers (533 of 1,252; 42.6%) were males age 16 to 30.

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
< 21	11.3%	2.3%	13.6%
21-25	19.3%	2.2%	21.6%
26-30	12.0%	1.9%	13.9%
31-35	8.6%	1.5%	10.1%
36-40	5.8%	1.7%	7.4%
41-45	7.6%	1.8%	9.4%
46-50	7.3%	1.4%	8.8%
51-55	5.2%	0.7%	5.9%
56-60	2.9%	0.9%	3.8%
61-70	2.0%	0.9%	2.9%
71+	1.9%	0.7%	2.6%
Total	83.9%	16.1%	100.0%

Each driver involved in a fatal crash may have up to four contributing factors reported by crash investigators. Three out of five (60.1%) impaired drivers involved in a fatal crash were also speeding. Nearly a quarter (22.7%) was distracted or inattentive.

Common Driver Errors	Drivers	Percentage
Speeding	633	50.6%
Distracted/Inattentive	284	22.7%
Overcorrecting	72	5.8%

Two out of three (65.9%) impaired drivers involved in a fatal crash were operating a passenger car, SUV, or van. Light trucks were the second most common (17.1%) vehicle type closely followed by motorcyclists (14.5%).

Vehicle Type	Drivers	Percentage
Passenger auto, SUV, or van	825	65.9%
Pickup or light truck	214	17.1%
Motorcycle	182	14.5%
Bus, motor home, or heavy truck	14	1.1%
ATV	13	1.0%
Other/Unknown	4	0.3%
Total	1,252	100%

Two-thirds (836 of 1,252; 66.8%) of impaired drivers were the sole vehicle occupant or rider. Over a quarter (350 of 1,252; 28.0%) of impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes carried one or two passengers during the crash.

## Seat Belt Use

Two out of three (44.9%) of impaired passenger vehicle drivers involved in the fatal crash were not wearing a seat belt. The majority (85.8%) of non-belted drivers were male.

There were 1,061 passenger vehicle occupant deaths involving impaired drivers. Half (54.8%) of those killed were not using seat belts. Statewide, 43.0% of all passenger vehicle occupant deaths were not using seat belts.

Data source for all figures is Washington Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) year 2004 through 2008. Data for 2008 is preliminary and subject to change as more information becomes available.