

Fatal Crashes Involving Speeding in Washington, 2004-2008

How Significant is the Problem?

On Washington roadways, there were 1,045 speeding involved fatal crashes between 2004 and 2008. These crashes resulted in a total of 1,166 deaths, which is an average of 233 deaths per year. This accounts for approximately 40% of all traffic deaths during the five year period.

Who Dies in Speeding-Related Crashes?

Over half (630 of 1,166; 54.0%) of the persons who died in speeding-related crashes were between 16 and 30 years old (data not shown).

Nearly all (97.3%) of speeding-related deaths were motor vehicle drivers and passengers.

Person Type	Deaths	Percentage
Driver	811	69.6%
Passenger	323	27.7%
Pedestrian	28	2.4%
Pedalcyclist	2	0.2%
Other Non-motorist	2	0.2%
Total	1166	100%

What are the Contributing Factors?

Road and Area Type

Over half of speeding-related deaths occurred in rural areas (663 of 1,166; 56.9%). Urban and rural county roads accounted for 40.6% (473 of 1,166) of all speeding-related deaths.

The second largest number of speeding-related deaths was on US/State Highways with 26.5% (309 of 1,166). Interstates had the fewest speeding-related deaths (101 of 1,166, 8.7%).

Road Classification	Rural	Urban	Total
Interstates	5.0%	3.7%	8.7%
US/State Highways	18.5%	8.0%	26.5%
County Roads	29.2%	11.0%	40.6%
City Streets	1.2%	20.1%	21.3%
Other/Unknown	2.9%	0.0%	3.0%
Total by Area Type	56.9%	42.7%	100.0%

Location

The Top 5 counties represented half (590 of 1,166, 50.6%) of all speeding-related deaths in Washington between 2004 and 2008.

Top 5 Counties	Deaths	% of State Total
King	246	21.1%
Pierce	134	11.5%
Snohomish	94	8.1%
Yakima	58	5.0%
Thurston	58	5.0%

Time

Three out of five (717 of 1,166, 61.5%) speeding-related deaths occurred between 6:00 PM and 5:59 AM.

Time of Day	Deaths	Percentage
6:00 AM to 8:59 AM	86	7.4%
9:00 AM to 11:59 AM	70	6.0%
Noon to 2:59 PM	107	9.2%
3:00 PM to 5:59 PM	180	15.4%
6:00 PM to 8:59 PM	152	13.0%
9:00 PM to 11:59 PM	202	17.3%
Midnight to 2:59 AM	260	22.3%
3:00 AM to 5:59 AM	103	8.8%
Time unknown	6	0.5%

Two out of five (494 of 1,166, 42.4%) speeding-related deaths occurred on Saturday or Sunday. An additional 14.0% were on Friday.

Day of Week	Deaths	Percentage
Sunday	255	21.9%
Monday	116	9.9%
Tuesday	112	9.6%
Wednesday	132	11.3%
Thursday	149	12.8%
Friday	163	14.0%
Saturday	239	20.5%

Half (585 of 1,166, 50.2%) of all speeding-related deaths occurred during the weekend, between 6:00 PM Friday and 5:59 AM Monday.

What are the Contributing Factors?

Nearly one-third (347 of 1,166; 29.8%) of all speeding-related deaths occurred from July through September. The fewest deaths occurred during the winter months, from December through February.

Month of Year	Deaths	Percentage
January	77	6.6%
February	75	6.4%
March	96	8.2%
April	97	8.3%
May	93	8.0%
June	101	8.7%
July	122	10.5%
August	113	9.7%
September	112	9.6%
October	103	8.8%
November	99	8.5%
December	78	6.7%

Crash Type

Three out of five speeding-related deaths involved a single vehicle (736 of 1,166; 63.1%).

The Driver

There were 1,053 speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes between 2004 and 2008. Of these drivers, 85.0% (895 of 1,053) were male. Moreover, 38.7% (407 of 1,053) were males age 25 or younger.

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
< 20	18.5%	4.6%	23.1%
21-25	20.1%	2.0%	22.1%
26-30	11.5%	1.9%	13.4%
31-35	7.5%	1.1%	8.6%
36-40	5.8%	1.2%	7.0%
41-45	6.1%	1.5%	7.6%
46-50	4.4%	1.0%	5.4%
51-55	3.6%	0.4%	4.0%
56-60	2.8%	0.5%	3.3%
61-70	2.8%	0.4%	3.2%
71+	1.8%	0.3%	2.1%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Total	85.0%	14.9%	100%

Each driver involved in a fatal crash may have up to four contributing factors reported by crash investigators. Three out of five speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes were also impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Common Driver Errors	Drivers	Percentage
Alcohol/Drug Impairment	633	60.1%
Distracted/Inattentive	225	21.4%
Overcorrecting	72	6.8%

Three out of five (63.8%) speeding drivers involved in a fatal crash were operating a passenger car, SUV, or van.

Motorcycles were the second most common (17.3%) vehicle type operated by speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes.

Vehicle Type	Drivers	Percentage
Passenger auto, SUV, or van	672	63.8%
Motorcycle	182	17.3%
Pickup or light truck	156	14.8%
Bus, motor home, or heavy truck	24	2.3%
ATV	16	1.5%
Other/Unknown	3	0.3%
Total	1053	100%

Almost 60% (618 of 1,053) of speeding drivers were the sole vehicle occupant or rider. One-third (350 of 1,053) of speeding drivers carried one or two passengers during the crash.

Seat Belt Use

Exactly 44% of speeding passenger vehicle drivers involved in a fatal crash were not wearing a seat belt. The majority (87.1%) of these non-belted drivers were male.

There were a total of 873 passenger vehicle occupant deaths from speeding-related crashes. Half (51.2%) of these deaths 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.