

# Georgia Traffic Safety Facts

## 2022 Preliminary Data

January 2024

Other upcoming topics for the 2022 *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).

## PRELIMINARY MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC FATALITIES IN 2022

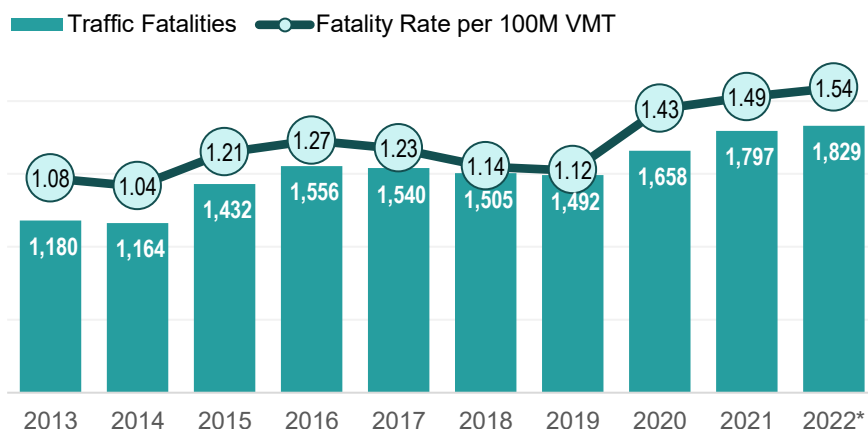
This fact sheet provides a preliminary overview of traffic fatalities, serious injuries, and crashes on Georgia roadways. The 2022 preliminary data were obtained from the *2022 Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) Preliminary Fatality Data* and the *2022 Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System (CODES) Preliminary* datasets. The preliminary 2022 data may differ from the final counts published in the 2022 FARS final and 2022 CODES. Readers are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting the information that uses 2022 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 1,829 motor vehicle traffic fatalities in 2022—a 2% increase from the 1,797 roadway fatalities in 2021. This is the largest number of traffic fatalities recorded by FARS since 1994. The estimated rate of traffic fatalities for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) also increased— from 1.49 in 2021 to 1.54 in 2022.

Figure 1: **Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100M VMT, 2013-2022\***



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).



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## Suspected Serious Crash Injuries

Between 2018 and 2021, the number of suspected serious crash<sup>1</sup> injuries have steadily increased from year to year (Table 1). However, according to preliminary crash data, the number of suspected serious injuries decreased by 277 injuries (-3%)—from 8,937 in 2021 to 8,660 in 2022.

In 2022, there were 7.27 serious traffic injuries per 100M VMT (a 52% increase from 2018) and 2,252.1 serious traffic injuries per 100,000 traffic crashes (a 42% increase from 2018).

Table 1: **Suspected Serious Injuries and Rates, 2018-2022\***

Year	Suspected Serious Injuries	Suspected Serious Injury Rate	
		Per 100M VMT	Per 100,000 Crashes
2018	6,401	4.79	1,590.8
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

Source: FFY2023 GOHS Core Performance Measures, \*2022 CODES Preliminary, 2022 GDOT 445 Report – Mileage by Route Type and Functional Class (Adjusted).

Other injury surveillance sources also showed increased motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in 2022: police crash reports, emergency medical services, emergency room only (emergency department), and hospital inpatient discharge (hospital). 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 3% decrease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities and 14% decrease in serious injuries where EMS reported to a motor vehicle crash incident.
- According to emergency department data, there was a 49% increase in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients receiving care in a Georgia emergency room only.
- According to hospital data, there was an 8% decrease in motor vehicle traffic-related fatalities among patients admitted into a Georgia hospital.

Table 2: **Serious and Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic-Related Injuries by Injury Surveillance Source (2021 and 2022)**

Injury Surveillance Source	Fatal Injuries				Suspected Serious Injuries			
	2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 Percent Change	2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 Percent Change
Crash Reports	1,664	1,797	1,829	▲ 2%	7,620	8,937	8,660	▼ -3%
Emergency Medical Services	913	1,630	1,586	▼ -3%	1,074	5,780	4,977	▼ -14%
Emergency Department	195	116	173	▲ 49%	5,125	5,382	5,398	▲ <1%
Hospital	244	248	228	▼ -8%	2,641	3,221	3,221	▼ -14%

Source: OHIP Hospital Inpatient Discharge and Emergency Room Visit Data 2021-2022, CODES 2021, BioSpatial 2021-2022, \*2022 CODES Preliminary data, \*2022 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data. 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 Injuries Person Types

The number of fatally injured persons (occupants and non-occupants) involved in motor vehicle traffic crashes on public roads increased between 2021 and 2022.

- Passenger vehicle occupant fatalities decreased by 4% and serious injuries increased by 2%.
- Motorcyclist fatalities increased by 17% and serious injuries increased by 10%. The number of un-helmeted motorcyclist fatalities also increased by three—from 14 in 2021 to 17 in 2022.
- Pedestrian fatalities increased by 7% and serious injuries increased by 6%.
- Bicyclist fatalities doubled—from 15 in 2021 to 30 in 2022. The five-year average of bicyclist fatalities was 26 between 2018-2022. Bicyclist serious injuries increased by 28% between 2021 and 2022.

Table 3. **Traffic Injuries by Severity and Person Type (2021-2022\*)**

Person Type	Fatal Injuries					Suspected Serious Injuries				
	2021	2022*	2021-2022 Change		2021	2022*	2021-2022 Change			
			Number	Percent			Number	Percent		
<b>Total Injuries</b>	<b>1,797</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>▲</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8,937</b>	<b>8,660</b>	<b>- 277</b>	<b>▽</b>	<b>- 3%</b>
Passenger Vehicle Occupant	1,182	1,135	- 47	▽	- 4%	6,344	6,445	101	▲	2%
Motorcyclist	185	217	32	▲	17%	848	933	85	▲	10%
Pedestrian	306	327	21	▲	7%	572	608	36	▲	6%
Bicyclist	15	30	15	▲	100%	95	122	27	▲	28%
Other	109	120	11	▲	10%	1,078	552	- 526	▽	- 49%

Source: 2021 FARS, 2021 CODES, \*2022 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data, \*2022 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 2018 and 2022, as shown in Table 4. As noted in the other publications<sup>2</sup>, 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 2021 and 2022, there was a 1% decrease in total police-reported crashes, 2% increase in fatal traffic crashes, 4% decrease in serious injury crashes, and 1% increase in PDO crashes.

Table 4: **Police-Reported Crashes by Crash Severity, 2017-2021**

Crash Severity	Year					2021-2022 Change	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Number	Percent
Total Crashes	402,227	403,897	331,710	387,444	384,527	- 2,917	▽ -1%
Fatal Crashes	1,408	1,378	1,522	1,670	1,704*	34	▲ 2%
Non-Fatal Crashes	400,819	402,519	330,188	385,760	382,823	- 2,937	▽ -1%
Serious Injury Crashes	5,252	6,069	6,370	7,531	7,253	- 278	▽ -4%
Property-Damage-Only Crashes**	295,190	289,184	234,142	278,916	281,892	2,976	▲ 1%

Source: FARS 2018-2021, \*2022 TSREG Preliminary Fatality Data, Numetric 2018-2022 (extracted January 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 2023 Seat Belt Use & Distraction Observations

### Passenger Vehicle Restraint Use and Fatalities

According to the 2023 Georgia Seat Belt Observational Survey<sup>3</sup>, the rate of seat belt use for drivers and front right-seat passengers in passenger vehicles<sup>4</sup> decreased from 89.3% in 2022 to 87.6% in 2023 (Figure 2). The seat belt usage rate for drivers (86.8%) was lower than front seat passengers (92.4%).

In 2022, 44.8% of fatally injured front-seat, daytime passenger vehicle occupants aged 13+ years were unrestrained—nearly four times more than the observed unrestrained front seat passengers during the seat belt survey. The number of daytime unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities (13 years of age and over) has increased from 42.0% in 2021 to 44.8% in 2022.

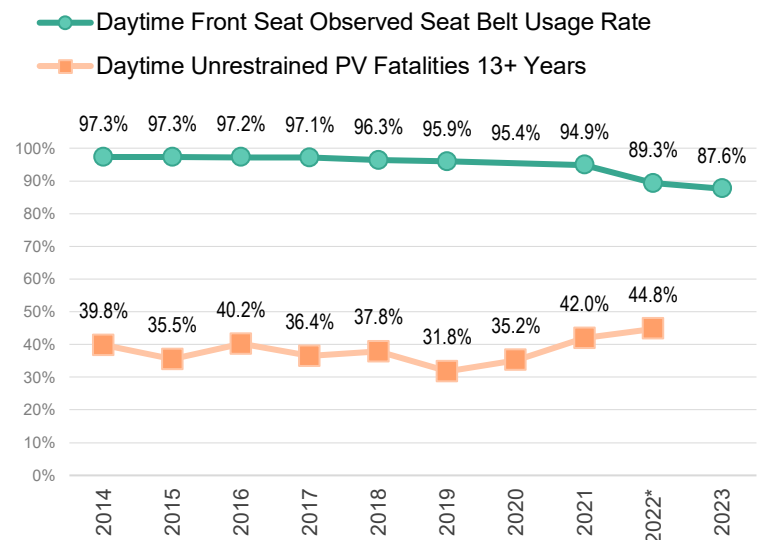
Unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities decreased by 5% from 555 in 2021 to 527 in 2022. In 2022, 46.7% of PV occupants involved in a crash and fatally injured were unrestrained (a slight decrease compared to 2021).

### Distractions Driving

According to the observational study “2023 Estimates of Driver Distraction in the State of Georgia,”<sup>5</sup> 19.6% of Georgia drivers were observed to be distracted while operating a motor vehicle (see data considerations for categories of distraction used in the study). The rate of hand-held device distractions was greater for drivers who were unbelted (8.5%) than those who were belted (6.1%). The proportion of drivers observed to be using a handheld device in Georgia was higher than national observation data (6.8% in Georgia vs. 5.9% nationally).

Distractions driving also decreased with increasing age and was higher among women than among men.

Figure 2. Georgia Seat Belt Usage Rate and Daytime Front Seat Passenger Vehicle (PV) Occupant Fatalities Ages 13+ Years by Restraint Use, 2014-2023



Source: 2023 Seat Belt Observational Survey and \*2022 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 2023, Georgia estimated the **child safety usage rate** (children 8 years of age or younger) to be **85.3%**.

**19.6%** of Georgia drivers 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.

<sup>3</sup> Rupp, Jonathan. 2022. "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

<sup>4</sup> Passenger vehicles are defined as passenger cars, light trucks (including vans, sport utility vehicles (SUV), and pickup trucks).

<sup>5</sup> Rupp, Jonathan. 2022. "2023 Estimates of Driver Distraction in the State of Georgia: Results from the 2022 Roadside Observational Seatbelt Survey". 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 injuries 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:*

Georgia Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System. (2024, January). *Preliminary Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2022: 2022 Preliminary Data.* (Georgia Traffic Safety Facts). Atlanta, GA: Governor's Office of Highway Safety.