

Bicycle Crash Data

Only 2 percent of motor vehicle-related deaths are bicyclists. Among a majority of those killed, the most serious injuries are head injuries. Because of this, it's important for bicyclists to wear helmets. No state has a bicycle helmet law applying to all riders. Local ordinances in a few states do require some or all bicyclists to wear helmets, and 15 states have helmet laws applying to young bicyclists. Helmets are important for riders of all ages, especially because older bicyclists represent two-thirds of bicycle deaths.

Responsibility for serious collisions between bicycles and motor vehicles corresponds to rider age. (Responsibility refers to crash initiation, not necessarily legal culpability.) Young riders most often are responsible for their crashes, and then probable responsibility decreases with age. Older riders more often aren't responsible for their crashes.

The following facts are based on analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System:

- 808 bicyclists were killed in crashes with motor vehicles in 1997. This is 6 percent more than in 1996 but down 19 percent since 1975.
- Bicycle deaths are most likely to occur in summer. The peak time is 6-9 pm, followed by 3-6 pm.
- Ninety-seven percent of bicyclists killed in 1997 reportedly weren't wearing helmets.

AGE AND GENDER

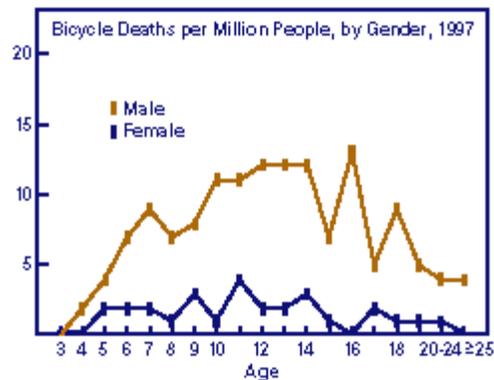
- Thirty-one percent of bicycle deaths in 1997 were riders younger than 16.
- Bicycle deaths per million people rise rapidly beginning at about 5 years old and are highest among 11- and 14-year-old bicyclists. Death rates also are high among 12-13 year-olds and 16 year-olds.
- About 7 times as many bicycle deaths are males compared with females. At every age older than 3 years, more male than female bicyclists are killed. Deaths per million people are higher among males than females at all ages older than 3 years.
- Deaths of older bicyclists are an increasing problem. Sixty-nine percent of 1997 bicycle deaths were riders 16 years and older. This compares with 32 percent of bicycle deaths in 1975.

WHERE THEY DIED

- Four states (California, Florida, New York, and Texas) accounted for 42 percent of bicycle deaths in 1997.
- More bicyclists were killed in urban areas than in rural areas (62 percent compared with 35 percent) in 1997.
- Thirty-four percent of bicycle deaths in 1997 occurred at intersections.

ROAD TYPES

- Fifty-eight percent of bicycle deaths in 1997 occurred on major roads, and 34 percent occurred on local roads.
- Fifty percent of bicycle deaths among children younger than 13 and 27 percent of adult bicycle deaths occur on minor roads. Adult bicyclists are more likely than children to be killed on major roads (64 percent compared with 45 percent).



Percent of Bicycle Deaths Involving People 16 Years and Older		Total Bicycle Deaths			
Year	Percent	Year	Male	Female	Total
1975	32	1975	820	183	1,003
1976	33	1976	751	163	914
1977	33	1977	730	192	922
1978	36	1978	714	178	892
1979	40	1979	759	173	932
1980	45	1980	782	183	965
1981	47	1981	748	181	929
1982	52	1982	720	144	864
1983	47	1983	700	130	830
1984	50	1984	684	153	837
1985	50	1985	732	137	869
1986	52	1986	789	140	929
1987	53	1987	825	114	940
1988	56	1988	773	128	901
1989	55	1989	696	126	822
1990	65	1990	732	121	853
1991	63	1991	715	121	836
1992	58	1992	627	90	717
1993	62	1993	702	104	806
1994	62	1994	687	109	796
1995	65	1995	699	128	827
1996	67	1996	654	107	761
1997	69	1997	710	98	808

Note: Total includes gender unknowns

Distribution of

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bicycle deaths by Month, 1997	
	Percent
January	5
February	5
March	8
April	7
May	9
June	10
July	13
August	12
September	9
October	9
November	7
December	6

bicycle deaths by Time of Day, 1997	
	Percent
Midnight - 3 am	6
3 am - 6 am	3
6 am - 9 am	8
9 am - Noon	8
Noon - 3 pm	11
3 pm - 6 pm	22
6 pm - 9 pm	26
9 pm - Midnight	15

bicycle deaths by Day of Week, 1997	
	Percent
Sunday	13
Monday	13
Tuesday	14
Wednesday	15
Thursday	14
Friday	16
Saturday	15

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