DANGEROUS BY DESIGN *2024*

State of the States

Smart Growth AMERICA

National Complete Streets Coalition

Smart Growth America advocates for people who want to live and work in great neighborhoods. We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. Learn more at www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

The National Complete Streets Coalition, a program of Smart Growth America, is a non-profit, non-partisan alliance of public interest organizations and transportation professionals committed to the development and implementation of Complete Streets policies and practices. A nationwide movement launched by the Coalition in 2004, Complete Streets is the integration of people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. www.completestreets.org

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Smart Growth America created this brief to help highlight number of traffic fatalities and injuries nationally and identify the top 20 deadliest metros for people walking. Increasing safety for people walking is part of the CDC's Active People, Healthy Nation℠ Initiative that is working to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027.

SGA and NCSC also thank the **American Society of Landscape Architects** and **Michael Baker International** for their generous support of this project.

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This pedestrian safety crisis continues to grow worse because our nation's streets are dangerous by design, designed primarily to move cars quickly at the expense of keeping everyone safe.

Memphis photo by Forever Ready Productions

This is the state-level addendum to the national/metro edition of Dangerous by Design 2024, released on May 30, 2024. Find that at smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/

Our first *Dangerous by Design 2024* release took a national and metro-focused look at the crisis of people struck and killed while walking on streets across America, deaths that have increased by 75 percent since 2010. Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people, older adults, and people walking in low-income communities are killed at much higher rates. **Our current approach to roadway safety is not working.**

To continue our exploration into how the design of our streets—designed primarily to move cars quickly at the expense of keeping everyone safe—is connected to this historic increase in pedestrian deaths, we are releasing this addendum looking more closely at state-level trends.

Why states matter

States have a significant role (and an opportunity) in stemming the tide of pedestrian fatalities. That's because the most dangerous streets and roads for people walking are owned and managed by state departments of transportation. Within the 101 largest metro areas we analyzed, two out of three traffic deaths occur on state-owned roads. Nationally, despite the fact that only 20 percent of the nation's road network is owned by states, 54 percent of all pedestrian deaths occur on these roads.[1]

Photo by Steve Davis / Smart Growth America

Design prioritizes speed and produces danger

Roads designed to enable high speeds where people and activity are present are the most dangerous type of road. Roadway design influences how people drive, providing nonstop guidance and visual cues that shape behavior and encourage high speeds. Many of the most dangerous roads have multiple wide, straight, high-speed lanes along with other design elements that send powerful, but unconscious, signals to drivers that the street is built primarily for moving vehicles as quickly as possible, even when it's filled with numerous destinations and people walking to reach them.

In addition, these multi-lane roads often have frequent curb cuts and driveways that put people walking in harm's way. Many roads lack frequent crosswalks or signals to protect people crossing the street, or safe crossings are missing in the places where people most often want to cross. All of these design elements are focused on improving throughput or prioritizing moving as many vehicles as quickly as possible over the needs of other people using the road, like those walking.

Despite being designed primarily for moving cars quickly, these streets also serve as neighborhood streets, economic drivers for local commerce, and vital connections to work, school, parks, and more. They move a lot of cars *through communities*. But in doing so, they create substantial risk for the people who live *in these communities* who simply want to cross the street to get to a corner store, park, school, or other everyday destinations.

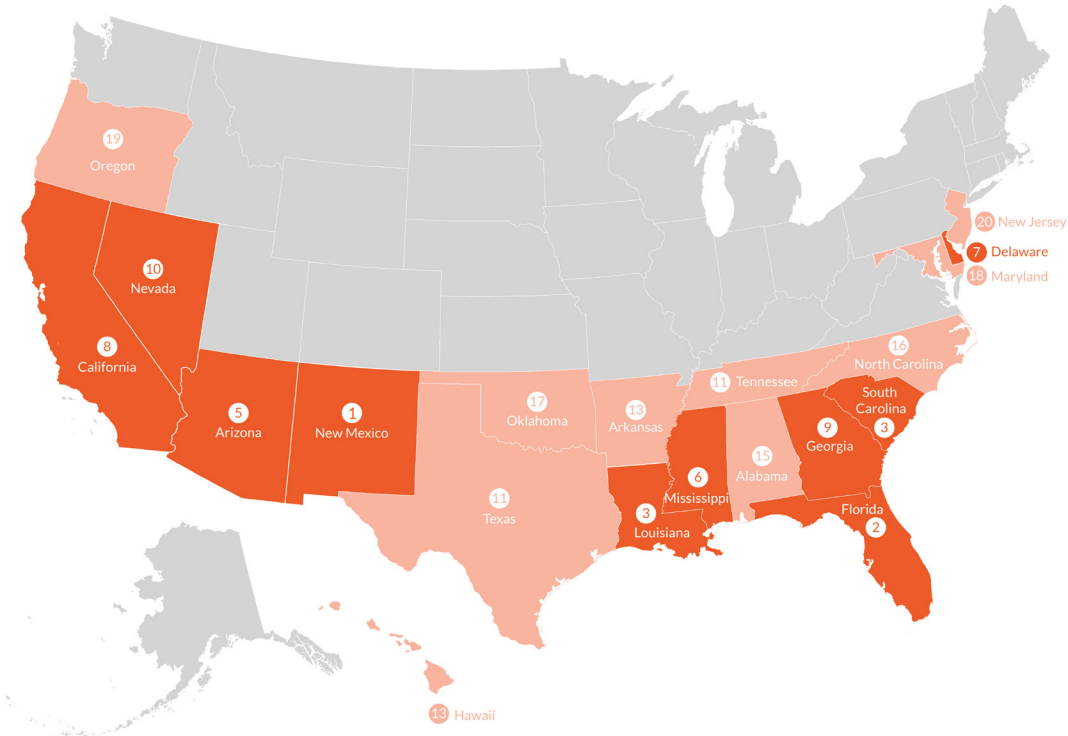
The good news is that actively designing for slower speeds can produce significant safety benefits, even with minimal impact on traffic delays and congestion.[2,3]

The data in Dangerous by Design continues to demonstrate that the epidemic of preventable deaths and injuries for people walking is getting worse, not better. Using a different approach to street design and funding decisions that prioritizes safety over speed is critical to solving this problem.

Photo by Steve Davis / Smart Growth America

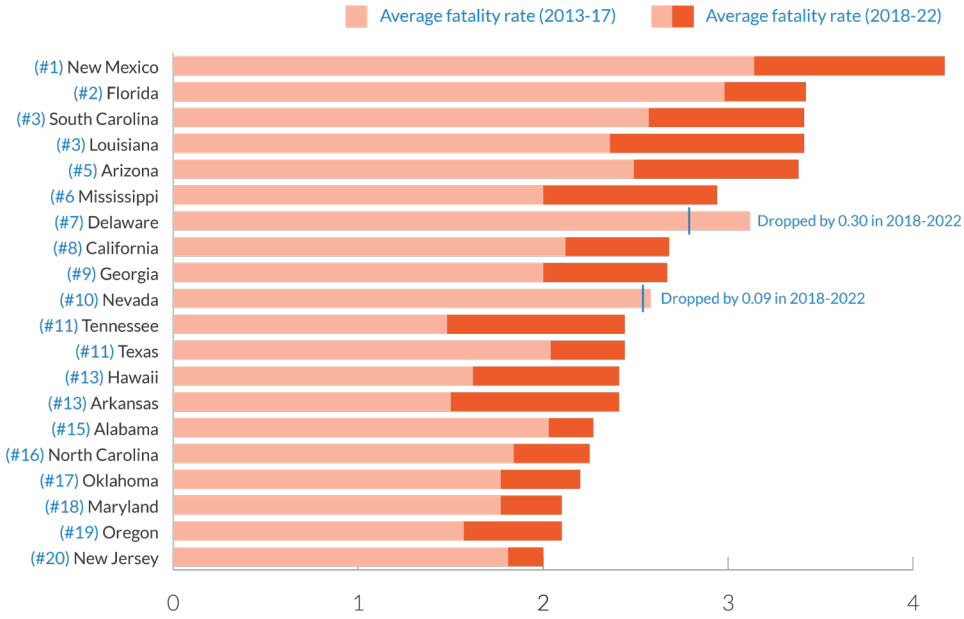
The top 20 most deadly states for people walking

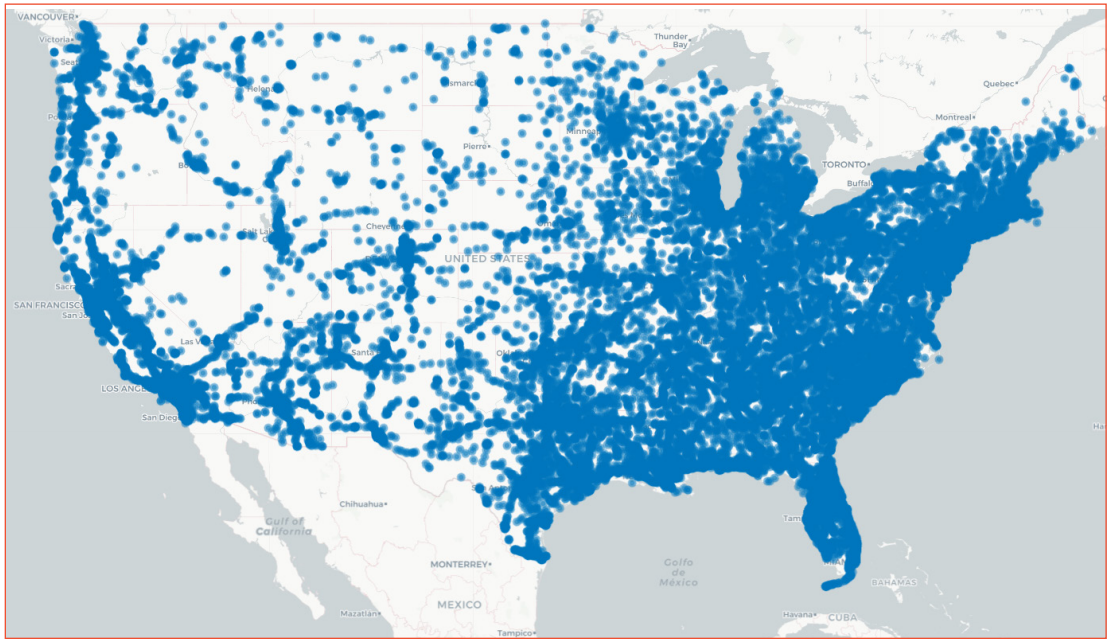
By number of deaths per 100,000 people, 2018-2022

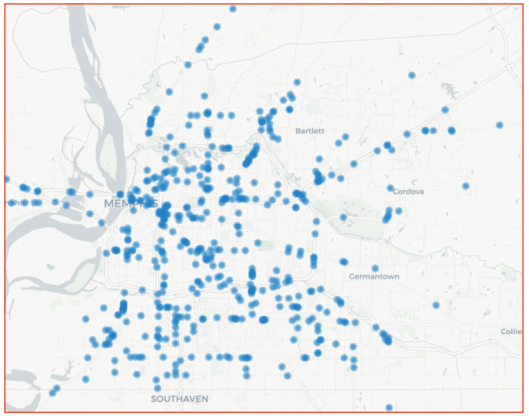


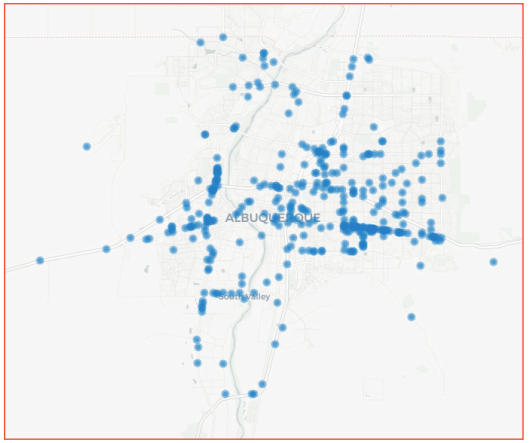
All but two of the top 20 states are getting more deadly

The most dangerous states are getting more deadly









Memphis and Albuquerque—two of the most dangerous metros in Tennessee (#11) and New Mexico (#1)—as displayed in the interactive map.

Where are people struck and killed?

Use our interactive map of U.S. pedestrian deaths to find the most dangerous corridors and intersections near you. Search for your address or your town/city to see all the deaths of people walking since location data started being recorded in 2008.

Find the map at smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design

This report includes pedestrian fatality statistics and ranks the top 20 most deadly states. All states are too dangerous. As with the 2022 edition of this report, we examine a five-year period (2018-2022) to get a broader sample size for each state. Long-term fatality rates are calculated by comparing the average rate for 2013-17 to the average for 2018-22. (Data for all 50 states can be found on page 12.)

Rank	State	Avg. annual pedestrian fatality rate per 100k people (2018-2022)	Pedestrian deaths (2013-2017)	Pedestrian deaths (2018-2022)	Long term trend in fatality rate
1	New Mexico	4.17	327	440	+1.03
2	Florida	3.43	3023	3705	+0.44
3-t	South Carolina	3.41	629	878	+0.84
3-t	Louisiana	3.41	550	791	+1.05
5	Arizona	3.38	847	1211	+0.89
6	Mississippi	2.93	298	434	+0.94
7	Delaware	2.82	147	140	-0.30
8	California	2.68	4135	5280	+0.56
9	Georgia	2.66	1018	1428	+0.67
10	Nevada	2.49	373	387	-0.09
11-t	Tennessee	2.44	488	845	+0.96
11-t	Texas	2.44	2791	3567	+0.40
13-t	Hawaii	2.41	115	175	+0.79
13-t	Arkansas	2.41	223	364	+0.91
15	Alabama	2.27	492	570	+0.24
16	North Carolina	2.25	926	1180	+0.41
17	Oklahoma	2.20	345	437	+0.43
18	Maryland	2.10	531	646	+0.33
19	Oregon	2.09	315	443	+0.53
20	New Jersey	2.00	813	925	+0.19

Notable state findings

New Mexico reaches historic levels to take the top spot. The rate of death (per 100,000 people) increased 65 percent over the decade from 2013 to 2022, from 2.53 up to 4.19. In absolute terms, these deaths have nearly doubled over that period, increasing by 90 percent. New Mexico is also getting worse faster than other states—New Mexico had the second largest increase in the rate of death (+1.03) when comparing average rates for consecutive five-year periods. To put that long-term increase in perspective, the total pedestrian fatality rate in the United Kingdom in 2022 (0.57 deaths per 100k people) was approximately half of New Mexico's long-term increase.

All but two of the 20 most deadly states are getting worse. Only Delaware (-0.30) and Nevada (-0.09) in the top 20 saw improvements in their long-term fatality rate (comparing average rates for 2013-2017 to 2018-2022). The rest of the 18 most deadly states are growing more deadly.

Six other states are trending less deadly, though most with only modest gains. Rhode Island saw the biggest improvement of any state at -0.50. The other five states trending less deadly only saw modest improvements, with a -0.31 total cumulative decrease in MA, ME, NH, NY, and UT **added together**. While these decreases are relatively small, it's worth noting that eight total states improved in this report, compared to just four in our 2022 report.

Rankings shift, but the most deadly states are far worse than ten years ago

(#1) New Mexico - **4.17**
(#2) Florida - **3.43**
(#3) South Carolina - **3.41**
(#3) Louisiana - **3.41**
(#5) Arizona - **3.38**
(#6 Mississippi - **2.93**

(#7) Delaware - **2.82**
(#8) California - **2.68**
(#9) Georgia - **2.66**
(#10) Nevada - **2.49**
(#11) Tennessee - **2.44**
(#11) Texas - **2.44**
(#13) Hawaii - **2.41**
(#13) Arkansas - **2.41**
(#15) Alabama - **2.27**
(#16) North Carolina - **2.25**
(#17) Oklahoma - **2.20**
(#18) Maryland - **2.10**
(#19) Oregon - **2.09**
(#20) New Jersey - **2.00**

Every state above this line is more deadly than the highest rate ten years ago.

(**2.83** *per 100k people in Dangerous by Design 2014*

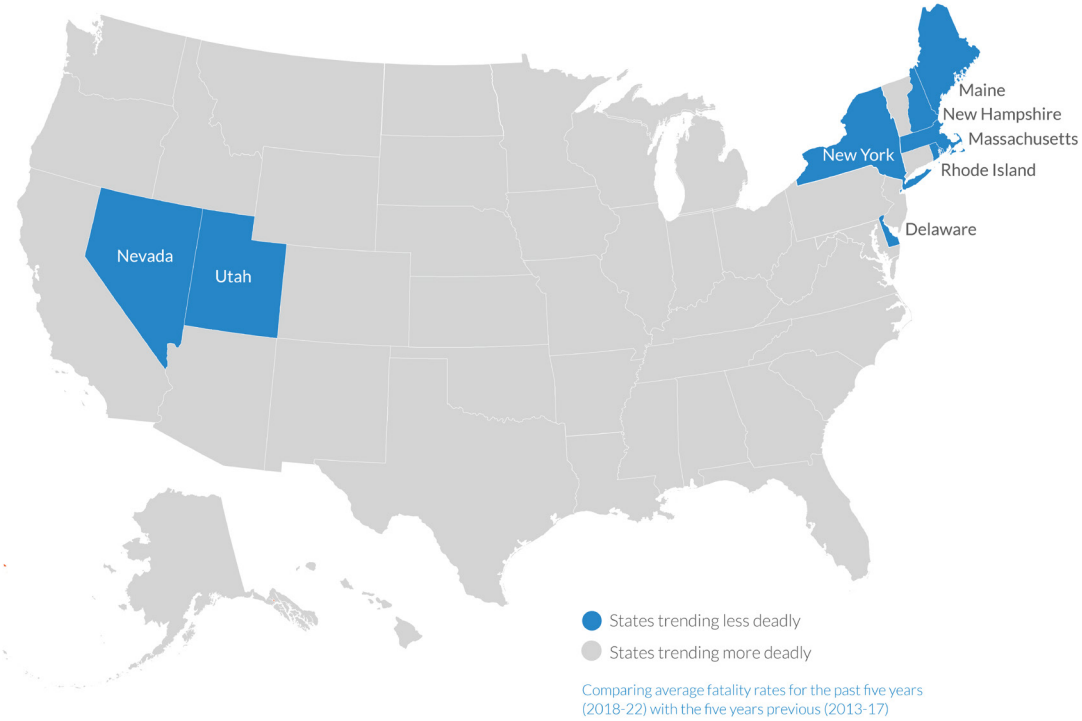
Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people

The order of the top 20 shifts, but the the most deadly states remain the same. While rankings have shifted around compared to our last edition of this report in 2022, the list of states included in the top 20 is the same.

State transportation agencies own and control the most dangerous roadways. Nationally, from 2018-2022, 54 percent of the deaths of people struck and killed while walking occurred on streets and roads owned by states.

Almost all states are trending more deadly for people walking

Only eight states saw a long-term improvement in fatality rates



II: States are setting targets for pedestrian safety

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided states and metro areas with historic levels of federal transportation funding. The IIJA was paired with promises of improved safety, lower emissions, improved condition of roads and bridges, and better access to jobs and opportunities, just to name a few. How will taxpayers assess progress on these indicators? One answer is found in something that happened nearly a decade before the IIJA passed. The 2012 federal transportation law (MAP-21) created a modest new system of performance measures for assessing progress. One of the required measures was for safety overall, which included a separate measure specifically for the safety of people walking and biking.

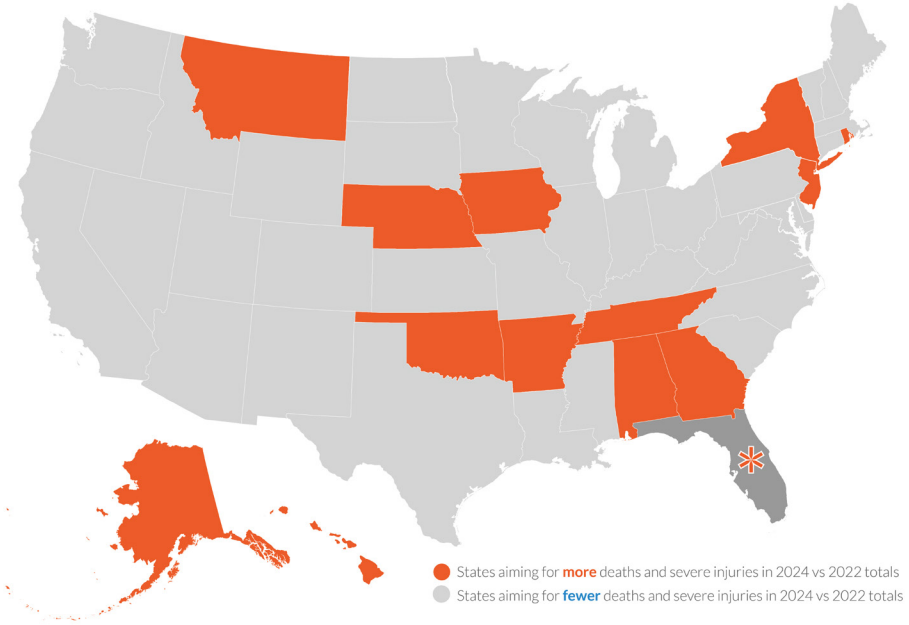
While there are no significant penalties for states that miss the safety performance targets they set, the process created by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allows people to see their state's goals, which states are setting ambitious targets, and which states have met those targets.

13 total states set targets for more people to be killed or seriously injured while walking (and biking) in 2024 than were killed or injured in 2022.[4] That list includes seven of the top 20 most deadly states in this report—**Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.** 36 other states set targets in 2024 to reduce the number of roadway deaths and injuries from their 2022 numbers. 35 states in total are setting targets that are higher than their roadway fatalities and injury totals for 2010.

(**Note:** Florida has set a target of zero deaths every year, while the number of non-motorized deaths and injuries have dipped below 3,200 just once since this performance tracking program began in 2020. They are the only state to do so.)

13 states are planning for more people to be killed or injured

State safety performance targets for 2024 vs. 2022 total deaths and severe injuries (walking + biking)



Appendix: Full state rankings and data

Rank	State	Avg. ped deaths per 100k people per year (2018-2022)	Pedestrian deaths (2013-17)	Pedestrian deaths (2018-22)	Long term trend in fatality rate	Share of all traffic deaths that were pedestrians	Percent of pedestrian deaths on state-owned roads
1	New Mexico	4.17	327	440	1.03	20%	57%
2	Florida	3.43	3023	3705	0.44	22%	66%
3	Louisiana	3.41	550	791	1.05	19%	76%
3-t	South Carolina	3.41	629	878	0.84	16%	96%
5-t	Arizona	3.38	847	1211	0.89	22%	21%
6	Mississippi	2.93	298	434	0.94	12%	71%
7	Delaware	2.82	147	140	-0.30	21%	74%
8	California	2.68	4135	5280	0.56	26%	33%
9	Georgia	2.66	1018	1428	0.67	17%	70%
10	Nevada	2.49	373	387	-0.09	22%	43%
11-t	Tennessee	2.44	488	845	0.96	14%	66%
11-t	Texas	2.44	2791	3567	0.40	18%	49%
13-t	Arkansas	2.41	223	364	0.91	12%	77%
13-t	Hawaii	2.41	115	175	0.79	29%	63%
15	Alabama	2.27	492	570	0.24	12%	60%
16	North Carolina	2.25	926	1180	0.41	15%	60%
17	Oklahoma	2.20	345	437	0.43	13%	52%
18	Maryland	2.10	531	646	0.33	24%	75%
19	Oregon	2.09	315	443	0.53	16%	54%
20	New Jersey	2.00	813	925	0.19	30%	48%
21	Missouri	1.88	434	577	0.45	12%	58%
22	Kentucky	1.80	343	405	0.25	11%	87%
23	Alaska	1.69	58	62	0.12	17%	30%
24	Connecticut	1.62	238	293	0.30	20%	58%
25	Michigan	1.59	781	798	0.01	15%	45%
26-t	Colorado	1.56	343	449	0.29	14%	51%
26-t	Washington	1.56	395	598	0.45	19%	47%
28	Montana	1.54	73	84	0.12	8%	54%
29	Virginia	1.51	473	649	0.37	14%	69%

Rank	State	Avg. ped deaths per 100k people per year (2018-2022)	Pedestrian deaths (2013-17)	Pedestrian deaths (2018-22)	Long term trend in fatality rate	Share of all traffic deaths that were pedestrians	Percent of pedestrian deaths on state-owned roads
30	Indiana	1.50	438	509	0.18	11%	44%
31	Wyoming	1.45	24	42	0.63	7%	63%
32-t	Illinois	1.43	691	914	0.36	16%	46%
32-t	West Virginia	1.43	116	128	0.16	9%	70%
34	New York	1.37	1464	1368	-0.11	26%	38%
35	Pennsylvania	1.30	776	842	0.08	15%	77%
36-t	Ohio	1.26	564	739	0.28	12%	50%
36-t	South Dakota	1.26	40	56	0.32	9%	59%
38	Utah	1.20	184	197	-0.03	14%	64%
39	Kansas	1.12	146	165	0.12	8%	45%
40	Massachusetts	1.11	382	386	-0.02	20%	50%
41	Maine	1.04	76	71	-0.10	9%	72%
42	Nebraska	1.02	72	100	0.26	9%	56%
43	Wisconsin	0.98	246	287	0.12	10%	50%
44	Vermont	0.96	27	31	0.10	9%	65%
45	North Dakota	0.93	29	36	0.15	7%	54%
46-t	Idaho	0.86	67	80	0.05	7%	48%
46-t	New Hampshire	0.86	60	59	-0.05	10%	59%
48	Rhode Island	0.84	71	46	-0.50	15%	61%
49	Minnesota	0.81	182	230	0.14	11%	37%
50	Iowa	0.74	109	118	0.04	7%	48%

Endnotes

1 The Highway System. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. 2022. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/onh00/onh2p5.htm

2 A National Investigation of the Impacts of Lane Width on Traffic Safety. Hamidi, Shima, PhD., Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. 2024. https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2023/narrower-traffic-lanes-in-cities-could-help-lower-risk-of-traffic-related-collisions

3 The Impact of Lowered Speeds in Urban and Metropolitan Areas. Monash University Accident Research Centre. 2008 https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/216736/The-impact-of-lowered-speed-limits-in-urban-and-metropolitan-areas.pdf

4 2023 State Highway Safety Improvement Program Reports. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. 2024. https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip/reporting

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