

TRAFFIC SAFETY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

A total of 600 people were killed in New Hampshire traffic crashes from 2015 to 2019, an average of 120 fatalities per year.ⁱ The chart below details the number of annual fatalities statewide and in each New Hampshire county from 2015-2019, and the average number of fatalities during the five-year period.

COUNTY	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	15-19 Avg.
Belknap	6	8	11	13	4	42	8.4
Carroll	6	10	6	9	5	36	7.2
Cheshire	2	11	10	8	3	34	6.8
Coos	7	6	7	6	10	36	7.2
Grafton	9	14	5	12	9	49	9.8
Hillsborough	24	27	20	27	27	125	25
Merrimack	16	13	12	24	17	82	16.4
Rockingham	29	28	16	29	20	122	24.4
Strafford	12	15	12	11	3	53	10.6
Sullivan	3	4	3	8	3	21	4.2
STATEWIDE	114	136	102	147	101	600	120

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

New Hampshire's overall traffic fatality rate of 0.73 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2019 is lower than the national average of 1.11.ⁱⁱ The traffic fatality rate on the state's rural roads is disproportionately high. The fatality rate on New Hampshire's non-interstate rural roads in 2019 was nearly two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads in the state (1.21 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 0.5).ⁱⁱⁱ

From 2015 to 2019, there were 55 pedestrian and 9 bicycle fatalities in New Hampshire, 11 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state.^{iv}

Year	Total Fatalities	Pedestrian Fatalities	Bicycle Fatalities	Share Bike and Ped.
2015	114	8	3	10%
2016	136	17	2	14%
2017	102	11	2	13%
2018	147	9	2	7%
2019	101	10	0	10%
TOTAL	600	55	9	11%
AVERAGE	120	11	2	11%

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Three major factors are associated with fatal vehicle crashes: driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway features. It is estimated that roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of fatal traffic crashes. Roadway features that

impact safety include the number of lanes, lane widths, lighting, lane markings, rumble strips, shoulders, guard rails, other shielding devices, median barriers and intersection design.

Traffic crashes in New Hampshire imposed a total of \$1.3 billion in economic costs in 2019.^v TRIP estimates that roadway features, while not the primary cause, were likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal traffic crashes, resulting in \$424 million in economic costs in New Hampshire in 2019.^{vi} According to a [2015 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) report](#), the economic costs of traffic crashes includes work and household productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, congestion costs, and emergency services.^{vii}

Improving safety on New Hampshire's roadways can be achieved through further improvements in vehicle safety; improvements in driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior; and, a variety of improvements in roadway safety features. The severity of serious traffic crashes could be reduced through roadway improvements, where appropriate, such as converting intersections to roundabouts; removing or shielding roadside objects; the addition of left-turn lanes at intersections; the signalization of intersections; adding or improving median barriers; improved lighting; adding centerline or shoulder rumble strips; providing appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including sidewalks and bicycle lanes; providing wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; providing better road and lane markings; and updating rail crossings.

The U.S. has a \$146 billion backlog in needed roadway safety improvements, according to a 2017 [report](#) from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The report found implementing these cost-effective and needed roadway safety improvements on U.S. roadways would save approximately 63,700 lives and reduce the number of serious injuries as a result of traffic crashes by approximately 350,000 over 20 years.

ⁱ Federal Highway Administration National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2015-2019.

ⁱⁱ TRIP analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Highway Administration data (2021). Data is for 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ TRIP analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Highway Administration data (2019).

^{iv} [Ibid.](#)

^v TRIP estimate based on NHTSA report "The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), 2016. P. 146.

^{vi} [Ibid.](#)

^{vii} The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised) (2015). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. P. 1. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812013>