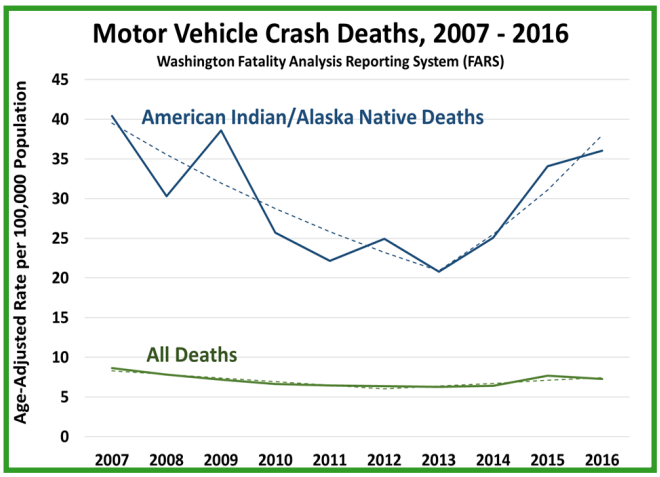
WASHINGTON Traffic Safety COMMISSION

Brief No. 3
June 2018

Motor Vehicle Deaths in the American Indian/Alaska Native Community

Trends show that up until 2013 the rate American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) motor-vehicle crash deaths were declining. The rate per 100,000 AI/AN population declined from 40.4 (±<13.5) in 2007 to 20.8 (±<10.0) in 2013. Since then the rate reversed trend and rose to 36.1 (±<13.0) in 2016. The death rate for all deaths in the state remained comparatively flat during the same time frame.



Did you know?

⇒ AI/ANs in most age groups are more at risk for crash death than the general population.

⇒ Impairment and speeding are in the top three fatal crash factors for AI/ANs as well as for the state. The third highest risk behavior for AI/ANs is unrestrained motor-vehicle use while it is distraction for the general population.

⇒ AI/ANs have higher crash death rates involving high risk factors than the state population:

- Impairment → 2.5 times higher
- Unrestrained → 9.0 times higher
- Speeding → 4.0 times higher
- Distraction → 3.4 times higher
- Pedestrian → 5.0 times higher

I care, because 124 AI/AN individuals died in Washington during 2012-2016. AI/AN deaths constituted about 5% of all motor-vehicle deaths. They, however, exhibited the highest age-adjusted crash death rate among all racial/ethnicity groups. AI/ANs had higher age-adjusted death rates relative to the state average; 29.90 (±3.70) per 100,000 AI/AN population vs. 7.08 (±0.20) per 100,000 state population during 2012-2016.

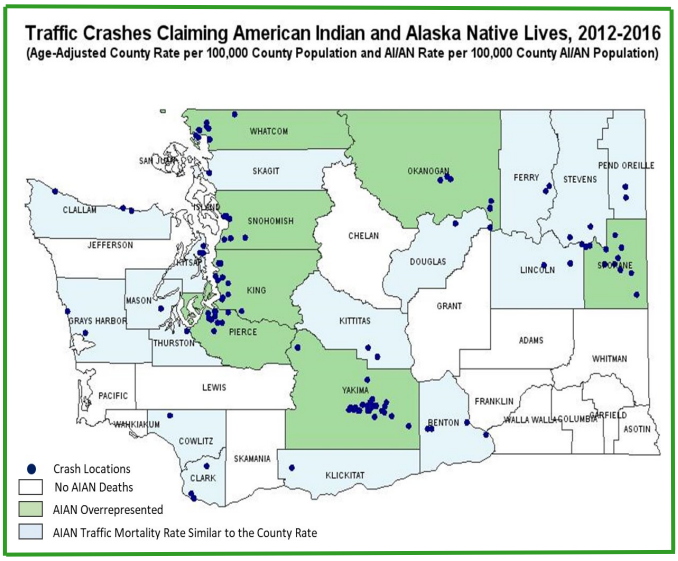
AI/ANs Are Four Times More at Risk for Dying In a Crash Than the State.

Geographic Distribution of AI/AN crash deaths showed some variation during the years 2012-2016:

⇒ No AI/AN crash deaths occurred in 16 counties that tend to have a small AI/AN community: *Jefferson, Asotin, San Juan, Chelan, Adams, Whitman, Columbia, Skamania, Wahkiakum, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Island, Lewis, Pacific, and Walla Walla.*

⇒ Seven counties shown with green had significantly higher AI/AN crash death rates than the overall county. These tend to be the counties that have either large urban AI/AN populations or large tribal areas: *Whatcom, Okanogan, Spokane, Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Yakima.*

⇒ Sixteen counties shown in light blue had motor-vehicle crashes claiming AI/AN lives, but the risk of AI/AN crash death was similar to the county as a whole: *Benton, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Mason, Pend Oreille, Skagit, Stevens, and Thurston.*



For more information, *please contact Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Research and Data Division at (360) 725-9860.*

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Characteristics of American Indian/Alaska Native Traffic Deaths, 2012-2016

	American Indian/Alaska Native		All State	
	Number of Deaths	Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate per 100,000 Population (95% CI)	Number of Deaths	Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100,000 Population (95% CI)
Overall Rate*				
	268	29.90 (±3.70)	4,918	7.08 (±0.20)
Age (Years)*				
0-14^	2	2.05 (±1.35)	73	1.10 (±0.28)
15-24	27	37.35 (±16.97)	506	10.93 (±1.00)
25-34	24	38.12 (±18.60)	371	7.66 (±0.82)
35-44	26	42.98 (±20.01)	334	7.33 (±0.83)
45-54	23	36.01 (±18.02)	352	7.38 (±0.81)
55-64	11	20.54 (±16.21)	324	7.10 (±0.82)
65+	11	26.02 (±20.57)	461	9.37 (±0.90)
Gender*				
Male	80	118.80 (±26.89)	1,704	16.49 (±0.79)
Female	44	64.23 (±19.96)	715	7.02 (±0.52)
Impairment Involvement+				
	80	18.34 (±0.09)	2,562	7.39 (±0.29)
Unrestrained Occupant+				
	62	14.39 (± 3.69)	567	1.6 (± 0.14)
Speeding Involvement+				
	42	9.48 (± 2.93)	817	2.38 (± 0.16)
Distraction Involvement+				
	26	6.56 (± 2.69)	697	1.94 (± 0.15)
Pedestrian Deaths+				
	25	5.15 (± 2.04)	378	1.04 (± 0.11)

+ Denominator is overall state population.

^ Rates based on 5 or less events should be interpreted with caution.

* Both the numerators (events) and denominators (exposures) are specific to the demographic sub-group under study to calculate the risk for that specific

Data Sources

Washington Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), *Washington Traffic Safety Commission,*
Washington Population Estimates for Counties*, The Office of Financial Management*

Fatal crash data for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) : This data is captured using the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). FARS receives the race and ethnicity information for motor-vehicle crash fatalities from state death certificates.