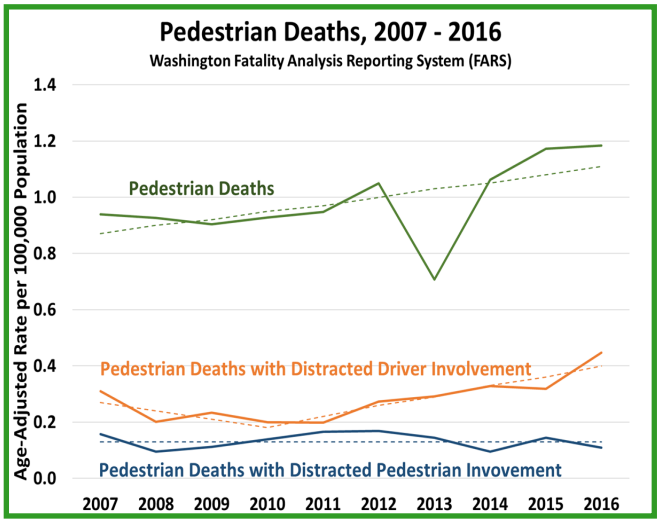
WASHINGTON Traffic Safety COMMISSION

Brief No. 2
May 2018

Pedestrian Deaths and Distraction

Trends show a steady upward climb in pedestrian deaths. During the years 2007-2016, the age-adjusted pedestrian death rate rose from 0.94 (±<0.5) to 1.2 (±<0.5) per 100,000 population. In addition to the recent rise in impaired walking and driving (see Brief No.1 on Pedestrian Deaths and Impairment), the steady rise in distracted driving since 2010 is a notable contributor to this rise in pedestrian deaths.



Did you know?

⇒ Pedestrians 45-54 and drivers ages 15-24 appear to have the highest risk for being in deadly pedestrian crashes involving distraction. That said, the risk is elevated among all age groups with cell-phone use or other distracted behavior.

⇒ Males are more at risk for pedestrian death or hitting a pedestrian when walking or driving distracted.

⇒ Non-Hispanic whites have the highest number of pedestrian deaths due to walking distracted. No significant differences in rates are observable due to small numbers.

⇒ Most pedestrian deaths involving distracted walking or driving happen on weekdays and on urban roads.

I care, because 697 pedestrians died in Washington during the years of 2007-2016, which was about 14% of all traffic deaths. Pedestrian deaths are closely associated with distracted driving or walking.

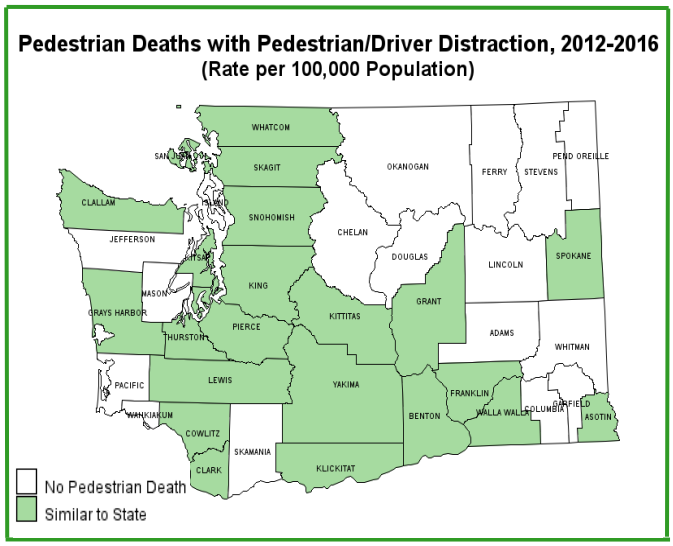
Either distracted driving or distracted walking were involved in nearly 40% (269) of pedestrian deaths during the ten year period. Twenty five percent (173) of all pedestrian deaths were caused by drivers distracted by non-driving activities such as smart phone or other electronic device use; 10% (68) involved pedestrians walking distracted; 4% (28) involved both distracted drivers and pedestrians

After Impairment, Distraction is the Number Two Cause of Pedestrian Deaths.

Geographic Distribution of these deaths showed hardly any variation during the years 2012-2016:

⇒ No pedestrian deaths involving Pedestrian or Driver Distraction occurred in 16 counties: *Jefferson, Mason, San Juan, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Lincoln, Adams, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Garfield, Whitman, Columbia, Skamania, Pacific and Wahkiakum.*

⇒ No county had rates significantly higher than the state for pedestrian deaths involving pedestrians or drivers walking or driving while distracted.



Data Sources

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

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

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Characteristics of Distraction Involved Pedestrian Deaths, 2012-2016

	Pedestrians Walking Distracted		Striking Drivers That Are Distracted	
	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)
Age (Years)*				
0-14	8	0.12 (±0.07)	-	-
15-24	8	0.17 (±0.10)	27	0.58 (±0.20)
25-34	9	0.19 (±0.10)	18	0.37 (±0.15)
35-44	7	0.15 (±0.09)	18	0.39 (±0.16)
45-54	14	0.29 (±0.13)	23	0.48 (±0.18)
55-64	11	0.24 (±0.12)	15	0.33 (±0.15)
65+	6	0.12 (±0.08)	16	0.33 (±0.14)
Gender*				
Male	46	0.26 (±0.08)	79	0.57 (±0.13)
Female	17	0.09 (±0.04)	38	0.27 (±0.09)
Race/Ethnicity*#				
Non-Hispanic White	44	0.17 (±0.05)	-	-
Hispanic Origin	6	0.17 (±0.16)	-	-
Black	0	-	-	-
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander^	4	0.16 (±0.16)	-	-
Native American /Alaska Native	6	1.34 (± 1.08)	-	-

* Both the numerators (events) and denominators (exposures) are specific to the demographic sub-group under study to calculate the risk for that specific demographic group.
# Race/Ethnicity information is only available for fatalities.

	Pedestrian Crash Factors Involving Pedestrians or Drivers That Are Distracted	
	Number of Deaths	Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100,000 Population (95% CI)
Pedestrians were Hit On+		
Urban (Land Use) Roads	124	0.34 (±0.06)
Rural (Land Use) Roads	28	0.08 (±0.03)
Pedestrians were Hit During+		
Weekends (Friday 6:00pm-Monday 5:59am)	43	0.12 (±0.04)
Weekdays (Monday 6:00am-Friday 5:50pm)	109	0.29 (±0.06)
Daytime (6:00 am-5:59 pm)	66	0.18 (±0.04)
Nighttime (6:00 pm-5:59 am)	86	0.24 (±0.05)
Winter (Jan, Feb, March)	39	0.10 (±0.03)
Spring (April, May, June)	28	0.08 (±0.03)
Summer (July, August, September)	38	0.10 (±0.03)
Fall (October, November, December)	47	0.13 (±0.04)

+ Denominator is overall state population. ^ Rates based on 5 or less events should be interpreted with caution.