Utah Crash Facts 2017

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2017 Utah Crash Flow Chart

- Total Crashes: 62,855
  - Property Damage Only Crashes: 44,523
    - People Not Injured: 131,911
  - Injury Crashes: 18,085
    - People Injured: 25,833
  - Fatal Crashes: 247
    - People Killed: 273
Overview

In 2017:

- 62,855 motor vehicle crashes occurred in Utah, including 247 fatal crashes, which resulted in 25,833 injured persons and 273 deaths.

- On average, a motor vehicle crash occurred in Utah every 8.4 minutes, a person was injured in a crash every 20 minutes, and a person died in a crash every 32 hours.

- Traffic deaths decreased for the first time after 5 years, and the death rates have decreased in the last three years.

- Drivers age 15-24 years had the highest crash rates per licensed driver.

**Driver Contributing Circumstances* for All Crashes (% of all crashes)**

1. Followed too Closely (21%)
2. Speed (11%)
3. Failed to Keep in Proper Lane (9%)
4. Improper Lane Change (3%)
5. Disregard Traffic Signals (3%)

Driver distraction was a factor in 8.9% of all crashes

**Driver Contributing Circumstances* for Fatal Crashes (% of fatal crashes)**

1. Failed to keep in proper lane (21%)
2. Speed (17%)
3. Failed to Yield the Right-of-Way (14%)
4. Ran Off Road (6%)
5. Disregard Traffic Signals (4%)

* Based on data from driver of vehicle number 1
Overview

Motor Vehicle Crashes by Hour (Utah 2017)

- Crashes were the highest between 3:00 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Traffic Crashes by Year (Utah 2008-2017)

- The total number of crashes has been increasing since 2014. However, the rate of change in 2017 decreased compared to 2016 and 2015.

County Crash Rates by Miles Traveled (Utah 2017)

- Salt Lake, Weber, Utah, Cache, Davis, and Wasatch counties (in that order) had the highest crash rates per miles traveled.

Urban/Rural Location (Utah 2017)

- Urban areas had a higher rate of total crashes per miles traveled, while rural areas had a higher fatal crash rate.
- Rural crashes were 3.5 times more likely to be fatal than urban crashes.
Unrestrained Occupant Deaths by Year
(Utah 2008-2017)

- 2013 had the lowest and 2017 had the highest number of unrestrained occupant deaths over the last 10 years.

Unrestrained Crash Occupants by County
(Utah 2017)

- Urban counties had lower percent of unrestrained occupants in crashes compared to rural counties.

Unrestrained Injured Crash Occupants by Age
(Utah 2017)

- Occupants in rural crashes were 3.2 times more likely to be unrestrained than urban occupants.

Wearing a seat belt is one of the best ways to decrease injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes.

- Unrestrained crash occupants were 4 times more likely to be injured in a crash than restrained crash occupants.
- Also, unrestrained crash occupants were 30 times more likely to die in a crash than restrained injured occupants.

- Urban counties had lower percent of unrestrained occupants in crashes compared to rural counties.
Occupant Protection

Restraint Use by Injury Severity (Utah 2017)

Restraint Use by Vehicle Type (Utah 2017)

Child Safety Seat Recommendations:

- Children should ride rear facing until at least two years of age and 30 pounds.
- Children should ride forward-facing with a harness until at least four years of age and 40 pounds, or longer if the car seat allows.
- Children who are at least four years of age and 40 pounds can ride in a booster seat. Use the booster seat until the seat belt fits correctly and until the child is 4’9”.
- Children under 13 years old should ride in the back seat.
- Never place a rear-facing child safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag.

Seat Belt Recommendations:

- Always use both the lap and shoulder belt. When worn properly, the shoulder belt should fit across the collar bone and the lap belt should fit low over the hips.
- Never place the shoulder strap under the arm or behind the back.
- Always buckle up to stay safe and set a good example.

Safety Restraint Laws:

- Utah law requires all motor vehicle occupants to wear a seat belt.
- Children age 7 years and under must ride in an approved child safety seat.

- 99% of persons who survived a crash were restrained compared to about half (48%) of the persons killed.
- Occupants in heavy trucks and pickup trucks were the most likely to be unrestrained in a crash.
- The older the child the less likely they were using a child safety seat.
- While 93% of 1-year-olds in a crash were in a child safety seat, only 80% of 4-year-olds, 67% of 5-year-olds, 48% of 6-year-olds, and 34% of 7-year-olds were in a child safety seat.
- The decrease in child safety seat use for children aged 4-8 years is concerning and indicates that children are moving to adult-sized seat belts too early.
In 2017, a total of 9,815 speed-related crashes occurred in Utah, which resulted in 4,358 injured persons and 80 deaths. 27% of fatal crashes were speed-related and resulted in 29% of all motor vehicle crash deaths.

Drivers aged 15-24 years had the highest percentage of total speed-related crashes.

Salt Lake, Morgan, Wasatch, Box Elder, Utah, Rich, and Summit counties (in that order) had the highest speed-related crash rates per miles traveled.

Note: A crash is considered speed-related when at least one of the drivers was exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions, as indicated by the police officer in the crash report under the driver contributing circumstances.
**Speed**

### Speed-Related Crashes by Hour (Utah 2017)

- Speed-related crashes were more frequent during nighttime and morning hours compared to all other crashes, particularly between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.

### Speed-Related Crashes by Day of Week (Utah 2017)

- Speed-related crashes were more frequent on Mondays and Thursdays and also occurred in higher proportion during those days in comparison to all other crashes.

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**Speeding is one of the leading factors contributing to traffic crashes. Speeding is dangerous because it:**

- Magnifies drivers’ errors;
- Extends the distance necessary to stop a vehicle;
- Increases the distance a vehicle travels while the driver reacts to a situation;
- Reduces a driver’s ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the road;
- Decreases the effectiveness of vehicle design features, such as seat belts;
- Reduces the stability of the vehicle structure;
- Increases the number of crashes;
- Increases the severity of crashes. Speeding crashes were twice more likely to be fatal than other crashes.

Drivers need to remember that there is a reason for speed limits. Roadways are to be driven with caution and the speed limits are designed to protect everyone—drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

The posted speed limit is the law. Slow down and obey speed limits.
Alcohol

- 1,825 alcohol-related driver crashes occurred in Utah, which resulted in 1,095 injured persons and 55 deaths. Out of the 55 deaths, 36 occurred in crashes with at least one drunk driver (BAC >= 0.08).
- 2.9% of the crashes in Utah involved an alcohol-related driver.

Alcohol-related crashes were 6.7 times more likely to be fatal than other crashes.

Percent of Total crashes with an Alcohol-Related Driver by Hour (Utah 2017)

Rate of Alcohol-Related Drivers in Crashes per Licensed Driver (Utah 2017)

Alcohol-Related Driver Crashes by Day of Week (Utah 2017)

- Drivers aged 21 to 29 had the highest rates of alcohol-related crashes.
- 152 (8%) of the drivers were under the age of 21 years.
- While 3% of total crashes involved an alcohol-suspected driver, 15% of crashes occurring during the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. involved an alcohol-related driver.
- The highest percentage of alcohol-related driver crashes occurred on weekends (44%).

Note: A non-fatal crash is considered alcohol-related when at least one driver tested positive for alcohol, or if the investigating officer suspected the driver used alcohol. A drunk driver fatal crash is a crash resulting in one or more deaths involving at least one driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter or above.
Alcohol

Alcohol-Related Driver Crashes (Utah 2008-2017)

- The number of alcohol-related driver crashes decreased for the third straight year.

Deaths from Drunk Drivers (BAC >=0.08) (Utah 2008-2017)

- The number of deaths from drunk drivers (BAC >= 0.08) remained unchanged (36 deaths) in 2017 compared to 2016.

Alcohol-Related Driver Crashes by County (Utah 2017)

- Salt Lake, Weber, Wasatch, Morgan, Tooele, Summit, Washington, and Uintah counties (in that order) had the highest alcohol-related crash rates per miles traveled.

- Piute, Juab, Rich, and Wayne counties had the lowest rates of alcohol-related crashes.
Drugs

- 1,002 drug-related driver crashes occurred in Utah which resulted in 732 injured persons and 94 deaths.
- 1.6% of the crashes in Utah involved a drug-related driver, and these crashes resulted in 34% of the deaths from motor vehicle crashes.

**Drug-related crashes were 32 times more likely to be fatal than other crashes.**

**Drug-Related Driver Crashes by Hour**
(Utah 2017)

- Drug-related driver crashes were the highest between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

**Rate of Drug-Related Drivers in Crashes per Licensed Driver**
(Utah 2017)

- Drivers aged 21 to 39 years had the highest rates of drug-related crashes.

**Drug-Related Driver Crashes by Driver Gender**
(Utah 2017)

- There were at least twice as many male drivers in drug-related crashes than female.

Drug presence does not necessarily imply impairment. For many drug types, drug presence can be detected long after any impairment that might affect driving has passed. Also, whereas the impairment effects for various concentration levels of alcohol is well understood, little evidence is available to link concentrations of other drug types to driver performance.

Note: A non-fatal crash is considered drug-related when at least one driver had a positive drug test, or if the investigating officer suspected that the driver used drugs. A drug-positive driver fatal crash is a crash resulting in one or more deaths involving at least one driver with a positive drug test.
The number of drug-related driver crashes in 2017 is the second highest on record in Utah.

While the proportion of alcohol-related driver crashes was higher on weekends, drug-related crashes were more spread throughout the week.

Daggett, Weber, Salt Lake, Tooele, Sevier, Utah, and Wasatch counties (in that order) had the highest drug-related crash rates per miles traveled.
Distraction

- 5,825 distracted driving crashes occurred in Utah in 2017, which resulted in 3,085 injured persons and 23 deaths.
- 9% of all crashes in Utah involved a distracted driver, and over half of the distracted driving crashes (56%) were rear-end crashes.

Driving is a multitask job and demands the full attention of the driver.

Percent of Crashes Involving Distracted Drivers by Year (Utah 2017)

- Younger drivers had the highest rates of driver distraction crashes.

Crashes Involving Drivers on Cell Phones and Texting (Utah 2008-2017)

- In 2007, a law was passed prohibiting handheld telephone use which could only be enforced if a moving traffic violation was committed.
- In 2009, a law was passed prohibiting texting while operating a moving motor vehicle.
- In 2011, texting was added to the distracted driving options on the police traffic crash report.
- Crashes involving drivers on cell phones have increased year over year since 2010.
Distraction

Distracted Driving Crashes by Distraction Type (Utah 2017)

1. Cell Phone (16%)
2. Other Inside Distraction (13%)
3. Other External Distraction (11%)
4. Passengers (10%)
Other Distraction (36%)

Distracted Driver Crashes by Hour (Utah 2017)

• The highest number of distraction crashes by hour occurred between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Distracted Driver Crashes by County (Utah 2017)

• Salt Lake, Davis, Utah, Weber, and Cache counties (in that order) had the highest distracted driver crash rates per miles traveled.

Note: While driver distraction numbers are significant, they may not state the true size of the problem, since the identification of distraction and its role in the crash by law enforcement can be very difficult.
Drowsy Driving

- 1,251 motor vehicle crashes in Utah (2% of all crashes) involved a drowsy driver.
- Fatalities from drowsy driver crashes have accounted for 6% of all fatalities over the last 10 years.

Drowsy Driver Deaths by Year (Utah 2008-2017)

- In 2017, fatalities from drowsy driver crashes were lower than the previous two years, but have fluctuated significantly in the last ten years.

Drowsy Driver Crashes by Year (Utah 2008-2017)

- Drivers aged 24 and younger had the highest percent of crashes with a drowsy driver.

Age of Drowsy Drivers in Crashes (Utah 2017)

- Male drivers in crashes were 2.4 times more likely to be driving drowsy than female drivers in crashes.

Gender of Drowsy Drivers in Crashes (Utah 2017)
While 2% of total crashes involved a drowsy driver, 8.4% of crashes occurring between midnight and 6 a.m. involved a drowsy driver.

May, June, and July had the highest proportion of drowsy crashes with respect to all crashes. However, four of the eight drowsy driver fatal crashes occurred in January and December.

Wayne, Sevier, Millard, Daggett and Tooele (in that order) had the highest drowsy driver crash rates per miles traveled.

Before driving:
- Get adequate sleep - most adults need 7-9 hours to maintain proper alertness during the day.
- Schedule proper breaks - about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips.
- Arrange for a travel companion someone to talk with and share driving.
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medications - check your labels or ask your doctor.
Teenage Drivers (15-19 Years)

- In 2017, teenage drivers were involved in 13,154 motor vehicle crashes in Utah, representing 21% of all crashes.
- Teenage drivers accounted for 8.7% of the licensed drivers in Utah, yet they were in 21% of all motor vehicle crashes.

Teenage drivers were 1.7 times more likely to be in a crash than drivers of other ages.

Crash Rates per Licensed Driver by Age (Utah 2017)

- Out of all age groups, drivers aged 17 and 18 years had the highest total crash rate per licensed driver.
- After normalizing by the number of registered teen drivers, male and female teen drivers were equally likely to be involved in a crash.

Teenage Driver Crashes by Day of Week (Utah 2017)

- Teen driver crashes occurred more often on weekdays.

Leading Contributing Factors of Teenage Driver Crashes (Utah 2017)

1. Followed too Closely (25%)
2. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (19%)
3. Speed too Fast for Conditions (13%)
4. Failed to Keep in Proper Lane (10%)
5. Improper Turn (5%)

11% of teen driver crashes were also associated with distracted driving. The most common distraction was cell phone use and passengers.
Teenage Drivers (15-19 Years)

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Law in Utah

GDL allows beginning drivers the chance to build experience before they are exposed to more high-risk situations, such as carrying teen passengers and nighttime driving. Easing young drivers onto the roadways can reduce the number of traffic crashes involving young drivers.

Learner Permit
A person must be at least 15 years old to apply for a learner permit. Anyone who is under 18 years of age is required to hold a learner permit for six months before applying for a license.

Supervised Driving
Everyone under 18 years of age applying for a license must complete 40 hours of driving, of which at least 10 hours must be during night hours. This allows beginning drivers to practice and gain supervised experience.

Driver License
A person must be at least 16 years of age to get a driver license. Everyone who has never been licensed to drive a motor vehicle must complete an approved driver education course.

Night-time Restrictions
Anyone under the age of 17 years may not drive from midnight to 5:00 a.m. except in a limited number of situations. The majority of fatal teen crashes take place at night.

Passenger Restrictions
For the first six months of licensure, teen drivers can not drive with any passenger who is not an immediate family member with a few exceptions. Teen drivers are more likely to crash with passengers in the car, especially teen passengers. The more passengers, the greater the risk.

Seat Belt Restrictions
Utah law requires all motor vehicle occupants to wear a seat belt.

- The teenage driver crash rate per licensed driver decreased 37% from 2008 to 2017, but it shows a flat trend in the last five years.

- Teenage-driver crashes had the highest frequencies during after-school hours, between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Older Drivers (Age 65+)

- Older drivers were involved in 8,252 motor vehicle crashes (13% of all crashes), which resulted in 3,955 injuries and 63 deaths.

- Senior drivers have the lowest crash rates of any drivers and represented 7% of people in crashes, but 21% of the total deaths.

Crash Rates per Licensed Driver by Age (Utah 2017)

- The older the driver, the less likely they were in a crash per licensed driver.

Leading Contributing Factors of Older Driver Crashes Compared to All Drivers (Utah 2017)

Drivers Age Less than 65 Years in Crashes

1. Followed Too Closely (23%)
2. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (16%)
3. Too Fast for Conditions (14%)
4. Failed to Keep in Proper Lane (12%)
5. Improper Turn (4%)

Drivers Age 65+ Years in Crashes

1. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (28%)
2. Followed Too Closely (15%)
3. Failed to Keep in Proper Lane (10%)
4. Improper Turn (7%)
5. Improper Lane Change (7%)

- The leading contributing factor for older drivers was “Failing to Yield the Right of Way”, whereas for younger drivers it was “Following too Closely”.

- “Too Fast for Conditions” was not in the top 5 contributing factors for older drivers, but “Improper Lane Change” was.
Older Drivers (Age 65+)

- Older driver crashes per year have increased by 20% in the last five years, compared to an increase of 13% in the total number of crashes during the same time period.

- However, the number of older driver crashes per 1,000 drivers in the same age group is at similar levels as in 2013. This indicates a faster growth in registered older drivers compared to other age groups.

- The total number of older driver crash deaths in 2017 was the highest in the last 10 years.

- Washington, Garfield, Weber, Salt Lake, and Wayne counties (in that order) had the highest older driver crash rates per miles traveled.

- People age 65+ were 3.5 times more likely to be killed in a crash than younger people.
Motorcycles

- There were 1,102 motorcycle crashes in Utah, resulting in 966 injured motorcyclists and 39 motorcyclist deaths.
- Motorcyclists accounted for less than 1% of persons in crashes and 14% of deaths.

Motorcycle deaths have been increasing in the last 7 years. However, motorcycle crash rates per registered motorcycles have remained at similar levels in the last five years.


Motorcycle crashes were 9.5 times more likely to result in a death than other crashes.

Helmet Use of Motorcyclists in Crashes (Utah 2017)

- Over one third of motorcyclists in crashes did not wear a helmet.
- Motorcyclists in crashes who wore a helmet were 45% less likely to have fatal injuries compared to those who did not wear a helmet.

Note: Utah law requires anyone under the age of 18 years riding a motorcycle to wear a helmet.
Motorcycles

Number of Vehicles in Motorcycle-related Crashes (Utah 2017)

Age of Motorcycle Drivers in All Crashes (Utah 2017)

- 42% of crashes involving motorcycles did not include a collision with other vehicle, and 55% included only one more motor-vehicle.

- Over 30% of motorcycle drivers in crashes were between 20 and 29 years of age.

Leading Contributing Factors of Motor-Vehicle (Non-motorcycle) Drivers in Motorcycle Crashes (Utah 2017)

1. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (33%)
2. Followed Too Closely (5.9%)
3. Improper Turn (4.9%)
4. Improper Lane Change (4.1%)

* 39% of motor-vehicle (non-motorcycle) drivers had no contributing factor in the crash

Leading Contributing Factors of Motorcycle Drivers in Motorcycle Crashes (Utah 2017)

1. Followed Too Closely (8.3%)
2. Too Fast for Conditions (7.1%)
3. Failed to keep in proper lane (5.6%)
4. Exceeded Posted Speed Limit (4.2%)

* 47% of motorcycle drivers had no contributing factor in the crash

Manner of Collision of Motorcycle-Related Crashes with Two or More Vehicles (Utah 2017)

1. Angle (43%)
2. Front to Rear (30%)
3. Sideswipe Same Direction (14%)

The leading contributing factor of drivers in collisions with motorcycles was failing to yield the right of way. The most common manner of collision was angle (a turning maneuver).
Pedestrians

- In 2017, 772 pedestrians were involved in motor vehicle crashes; 670 were injured and 42 were killed.

- The 42 pedestrian fatalities in 2017 are the second highest in the last 10 years (after 49 fatalities in 2015).

Pedestrians represented about 0.5% of persons in crashes but 15% of deaths.

- 52% of drivers in pedestrian-motor-vehicle crashes were under 40 years old.

- 51% of the pedestrians in crashes were under 25 years old.

Age of Drivers in Pedestrian-Motor Vehicle Crashes (Utah 2017)

Age of Pedestrians in Pedestrian-Motor Vehicle Crashes (Utah 2017)

Leading Contributing Factors of Drivers in Pedestrian Crashes (Utah 2017)

1. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (47%)
2. Hit and Run (17%)
3. Failed to keep in proper lane (3.2%)
4. Improper turn (3.1%)
5. Reckless/aggressive (2.2%)

Leading Contributing Factors of Pedestrians in Pedestrian Crashes (Utah 2017)

1. Improper Crossing (32%)
2. Not Visible (18%)
3. Darting (15%)

* 49% of pedestrians had no contributing factor in the crash.

Driver distraction was a factor in 10% of pedestrian-related crashes
Pedestrians

Pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes occurred most often between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. The rate of pedestrians involved in motor vehicle crashes has decreased in Utah in the last two years.

Motor Vehicle Action Prior to Crash (Utah 2017)
1. Straight Ahead (53%)
2. Turning Left (19%)
3. Turning Right (18%)
4. Backing (3%)
5. Leaving the Traffic Lane

Location of Pedestrians in Crashes (Utah 2017)
1. Marked Crosswalk at Intersection (44%)
2. In Roadway (no crosswalk or intersection) (24%)
3. Sidewalk (8%)
4. Unmarked Crosswalk at Intersection (7%)
5. Midblock Crosswalk (4%)
Bicyclists

- In 2017, 551 crashes involved bicyclists in Utah, resulting in 517 bicyclists injured and 6 bicyclist deaths.

- The number of bicyclists in motor-vehicle crashes in Utah has decreased for the fifth straight year.

**Bicyclists in Motor-Vehicle Crashes (Utah 2017)**

**Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Crashes by Hour (Utah 2017)**

- A combined 50% of bicycle-motor vehicle crashes occurred when vehicles were turning (right or left).

**Leading Contributing Factors of Drivers in Bicycle Crashes (Utah 2017)**

1. Failed to Yield the Right of Way (63%)
2. Hit and Run (6.2%)
3. Improper Turn (5.2%)
4. Failed to Keep in Proper Lane (2.3%)
5. Disregard Traffic Signs (2%)

- Overall, the distribution of bicycle-related crashes by hour of the day followed a distribution similar to that of all crashes.
- Slightly higher proportion of bicycle crashes occurred between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.

**Driver distraction was a factor in 5% of bicycle-related crashes**
Bicyclists

Age of Drivers in Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Crashes (Utah 2017)

- 25% of the drivers in bicycle-related crashes were under 25 years of age. This age group represents 19% of all registered drivers.

Age of Bicyclists in Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Crashes (Utah 2017)

- Over 50% of the bicyclists in crashes were under the age of 30, and 19% were under the age of 15.

Bicyclist Action Prior to Crash (Utah 2017)

1. Entering or Crossing Road (32%)
2. Cycling Along Roadway with Traffic (28%)
3. Cycling on Sidewalk (24%)
4. Cycling Along Roadway against Traffic (12%)
5. Other in Roadway (2%)

Motor-Vehicle Driver Action Prior to Crash (Utah 2017)

1. Straight Ahead (39%)
2. Turning Right (32%)
3. Turning Left (18%)
4. Entering Traffic Lane (4%)

Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Crashes by Day of Week (Utah 2017)

- The largest proportion of bicycle-related crashes occurred on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Weekends had the lowest proportions of crashes.