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# Pedestrian Fatalities Spike During Pandemic

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UPDATE

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Pedestrians walk through the downtown shopping district in Winter Park, Florida, in September. Pedestrian fatalities have risen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phelan M. Ebenhack/The Associated Press

Pedestrian fatalities grew in 27 states in the first half of 2020, despite a large drop in traffic volume during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new report has found.

An analysis of federal crash data by the Governors Highway Safety Association, a nonprofit that represents state highway safety offices, estimates that overall, the [pedestrian death rate rose 20%](#) during that period, alongside jumps in [speeding](#), [distracted and impaired driving](#).

Nearly 3,000 pedestrians were killed, even though there was a 16.5% decrease in traffic.

“Walking should not be a life and death undertaking, yet many factors have combined to put pedestrians at historical levels of risk,” Jonathan Adkins, the group’s executive director, said in a news release.

Seven states—Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, New York, North Carolina and Texas—accounted for 54% of all pedestrian deaths.

The report also examined federal data from 2019 and found that pedestrians accounted for 17% of traffic deaths that year, compared with 13% in 2010. Three out of every four pedestrian fatalities occurred in the dark.

In nearly half the crashes in 2019 that killed a pedestrian, the driver or the pedestrian was impaired by alcohol, the report also found. Nearly 2,000 pedestrians killed that year had blood alcohol levels of 0.08% or higher. The legal limit in almost every state is 0.08%.

Being drunk can [affect a person’s judgment](#) and reaction time and result in poor decision-making and risky behavior, such as crossing an intersection against the light or cutting across a road mid-block, safety experts say.

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