

September 8, 2004

"Drivers had slightly fewer collisions in 2003, but too many people continue to die in crashes on Alberta's roads. Driver behaviors have got to change."

Ed Stelmach
Minister, Alberta Transportation

Alberta's 2003 collision statistics serve as a reminder for motorists to use caution while driving on Alberta's roads

Edmonton...More than one person is killed and over 70 are injured every day in traffic collisions in Alberta. The 2003 collision statistics show the number of collisions, fatalities and injuries on Alberta roads are not changing significantly.

"Traffic safety is a government priority and I am frustrated with the poor driving habits of so many Alberta road users," said Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Transportation. "We all believe we are good drivers but traffic safety is a shared responsibility and drivers need to follow the rules of the road. There are too many people dying on our roads because of the same three driver errors, year after year."

Driver error is a factor in 90 per cent of collisions. Once again, the most common errors involved following too close, running off the road, and making unsafe left turns across oncoming traffic. Male drivers between 16 and 19 have a higher rate of involvement in casualty collisions than any other age group.

2003 collision statistics highlights:

- traffic collisions decreased by over two per cent from 116,308 collisions in 2002 to 113,357 in 2003
- traffic fatalities increased over three per cent from 372 fatalities in 2002 to 385 in 2003
- traffic injuries decreased by over eight per cent from 28,989 injuries in 2002 to 26,426 in 2003
- there are more collisions on Friday than any other day of the week
- 22.3 per cent of all drivers involved in fatal collisions and 4.6 per cent of drivers involved in injury collisions had consumed alcohol prior to a crash.

"Today we begin to change these numbers. Don McDermid's review of traffic safety in Alberta resulted in nine excellent recommendations that the provincial government has accepted and will begin work on immediately," said Stelmach. "I am confident that with the proper plan and resources in place, we will see a reduction in the collision statistics in the coming years and I hope, a change in driver attitudes."

Copies of the 2003 Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics Report are available on Alberta Transportation's website at:

<http://www.trans.gov.ab.ca/Publications/CollisionStats.asp> and Don McDermid's Report on Traffic Safety can be found at:

<http://www.trans.gov.ab.ca/Content/doctype48/production/SavingLives.pdf> or by calling Alberta Transportation, Driver Safety and Research at (780) 427-8901.

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Backgrounder

ALBERTA TRAFFIC COLLISION FACTS 2003

WHAT HAPPENED ON ALBERTA'S ROADWAYS IN 2003?

- During 2003...
- 385 people were killed as a result of traffic collisions.
 - 26,426 people were injured in traffic collisions
 - A total of 113,357 collisions occurred.

Every day in 2003 approximately...

- 1 person was killed.
- 72 people were injured.
- 311 traffic collisions were reported.

ALBERTA TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

1999-2003

Severity of Collision	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Fatal	321	322	341	312	305
Non-Fatal Injury	18447	20152	19000	18246	17398
Property Damage	94589	95834	88050	85905	77543
Total Reportable Collisions	113357	116308	107391	104463	95246
Number Killed	385	372	404	364	347
Number Injured	26426	28989	27583	26464	25451
Total Number of Casualties	26811	29361	27987	26828	25798

WHO WERE THE VICTIMS?

Traffic Fatalities (%)	Traffic Injuries (%)
216 Drivers (56.1)	15858 Drivers (60.0)
99 Passengers (25.7)	7624 Passengers (28.9)
37 Pedestrians (9.6)	1172 Pedestrians (4.4)
3 Bicyclists (0.8)	589 Bicyclists (2.2)
13 Motorcyclists (3.4)	627 Motorcyclists (2.4)
17 Other road user class/unspecified (4.4)	556 Other road user class/unspecified (2.1)

SPECIAL ROAD USER CLASSES

Pedestrians

Based on population, pedestrians between the ages of 15 and 19 were most likely to be involved in a crash. Pedestrian casualty collisions were most likely to occur during the evening rush hour. Of pedestrians involved in injury collisions 14.8% had consumed alcohol, compared to 44.8% of pedestrians in fatal collisions.

Motorcycles

There were 13 people killed in collisions involving motorcycles. Motorcycle drivers under the age of 25 were most likely to be involved in casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, motorcyclists were more likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash. Compared to drivers in total casualty collisions, motorcycle drivers were more likely to run off the road or pass improperly.

Truck Tractors

In 2003, there were 76 people killed and 782 injured in collisions involving truck tractors. Compared to drivers of other vehicles, truck tractor drivers were more likely to run off the road, but less likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash.

Trains

In 2003, three people were killed and 35 people were injured in crashes in which a train was involved.

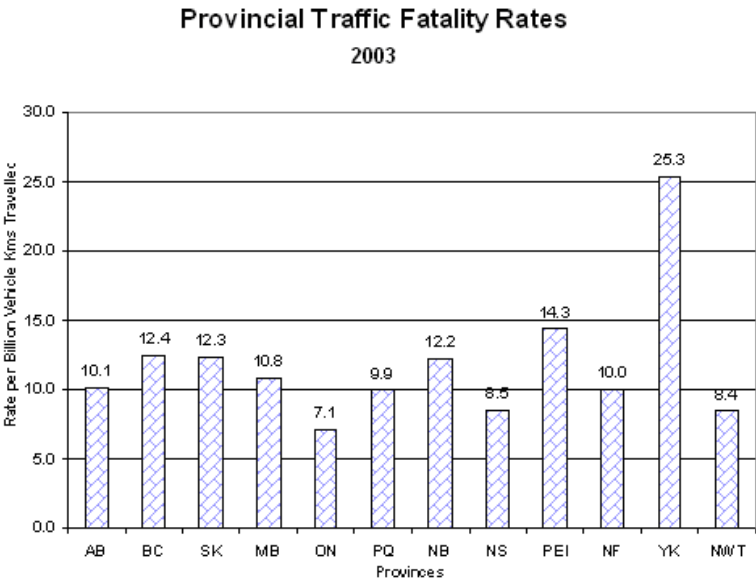
Bicycles

Young bicyclists, 10-14 years of age, were the group most frequently involved in bicycle casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, bicyclists were more likely to fail to yield the right-of-way at an uncontrolled intersection or be left of the centre line.

WHEN DID THE COLLISIONS OCCUR?

July saw more fatal collisions than other months. January recorded the highest number of injury collisions. The highest number of property damage collisions occurred during November. There are more collisions on Friday than any other day of the week. The afternoon rush-hour period accounted for the highest number of crashes.

HOW DOES ALBERTA COMPARE TO OTHER PROVINCES?



Note: The fatality rate for Nunavut for 2002 was N/A. Figures for 2003 are not available at this time.

Sources: Transport Canada Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics TP3322 and Statistics Canada, "Canadian Vehicle Survey", catalogue No. 53-223-XIE.

Looking back...

- Fatality rates are unchanged from the past year.
- Injury rates have decreased over the past year.
- Property damage collision rates have decreased over the past year.

WHERE DID THE COLLISIONS OCCUR?

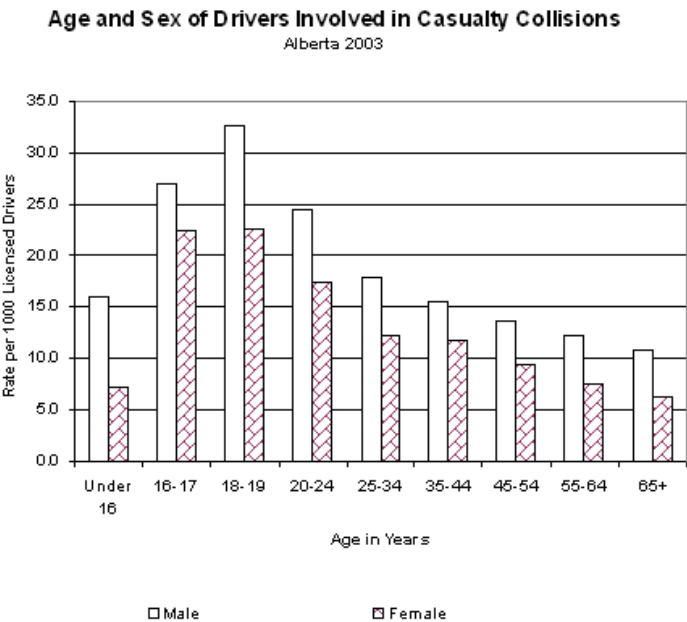
Approximately four-fifths of all collisions occurred in urban areas. Fatal collisions were more frequent in rural areas.

Urban (%)	Rural (%)
0.1 Fatal collisions	1.0 Fatal collisions
16.2 Injury collisions	16.6 Injury collisions
83.7 Property Damage collisions	82.5 Property Damage collisions

WHAT ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING?

Of all drivers involved in fatal collisions, 22.3% had consumed alcohol before the crash. Of all drivers involved in injury collisions 4.6% had consumed alcohol before the crash. The majority of drinking drivers were males between the age of 25 and 44. In terms of involvement per 1,000 licensed drivers, males 18-24 years of age were more likely to have consumed alcohol prior to a casualty collision than any other age group. Alcohol related casualty crashes were most likely to occur in the month of August on the weekends and during the late night/early morning hours.

WHO WERE THE DRIVERS INVOLVED IN CASUALTY COLLISIONS?



WHAT ABOUT SEAT BELTS?

The data shows that occupants who were using restraints at the time of the collision were injured less often (12.7%) than occupants who

were not using restraints (39.5%). Therefore, non-restraint users were three times as likely to be injured as restraint users.

For further information:

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