



The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine

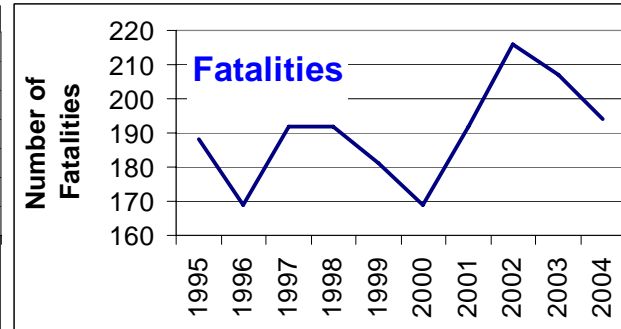
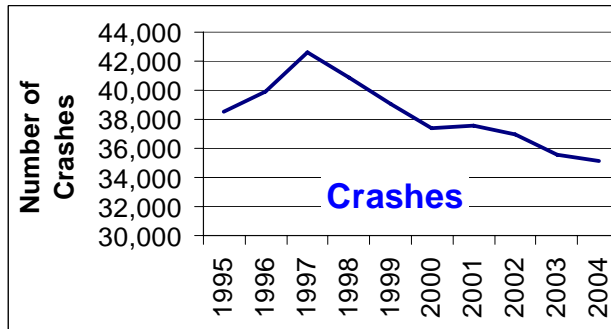
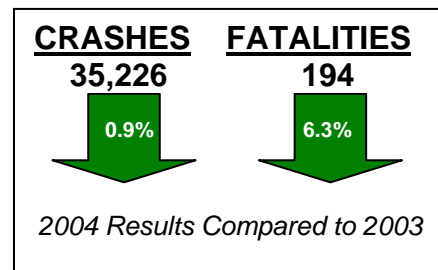
2004 Crash Results in Key Areas

The Maine Transportation Safety Coalition will report annually on the state's crash activity in four priority crash topics (**Seat Belts/ Passenger Restraints; Lane Departure Crashes; Younger and Older Drivers; and Aggressive Driving**) plus any other noteworthy areas. This year the additional areas covered are again *Alcohol/Drugs* and *Motorcycles*.

(Notes: 1. Total Fatality counts are from Maine Fatal Accident Report System (FARS) and Crash data is from MaineDOT systems. 2. Crashes can be caused by a combination of factors, so one crash may have relationships to several of the categories listed below.)

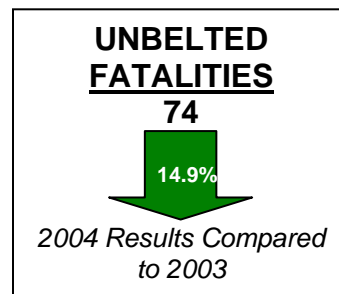
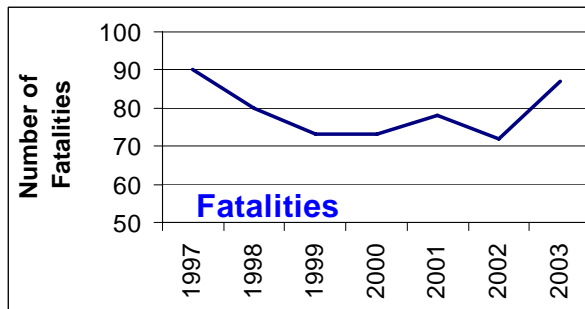
Overall 2004 CRASH Results

- There were 35,226 crashes in 2004, the lowest in the past 10 years.
- Crash Rate continues to decrease but still is slightly above the national average. The crash rate is 237 Crashes/ Hundred Million Vehicle Miles (HMVM). Latest national rate is 220 (2003)¹.
- There were 194 fatalities on Maine roads, significantly higher than the state's recent low of 169 in 2000, but the second year in a row for improvement.
- Fatality Rate of 1.31 Fatalities/HMVM is a decrease from 2003's rate of 1.38 (NHTSA reported data).
- Maine's Fatality Rate is below the national rate of 1.48



SEAT BELT non-usage continues to be a concern. Seat belts are not worn by occupants in a high percentage of traffic fatalities. The number of unbelted fatalities in

passenger vehicles is shown in the chart below.



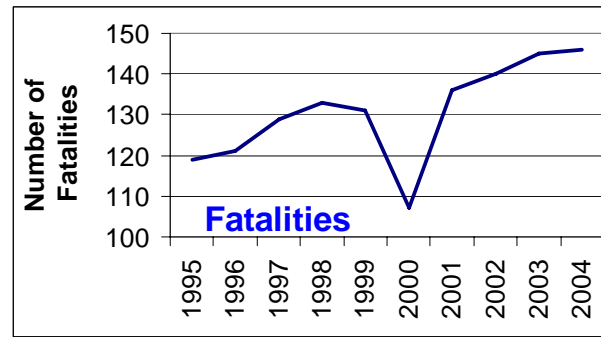
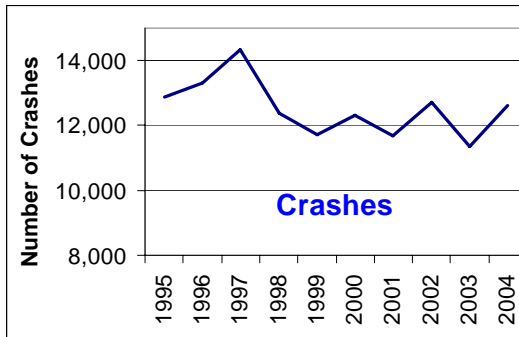
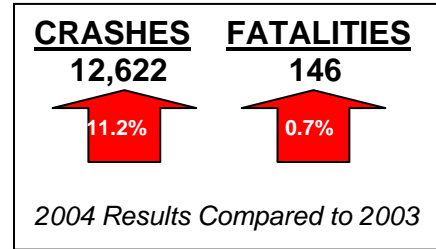
Maine's 59% seat belt usage rate in 2002 was the third lowest usage rate in the nation.²

¹ National crash and fatality rates are from USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics

² Note: A media and enforcement campaign aimed at increasing seat belt usage was conducted in May-June 2004 and again in 2005. A seat belt use survey taken immediately after the 2004 campaign showed an increase in usage to 72%. Numbers for after the 2005 campaign are not yet available. People tend to slip back into their old habits after such campaigns are over, however.

LANE DEPARTURE crashes continue as Maine's most fatal crash type.

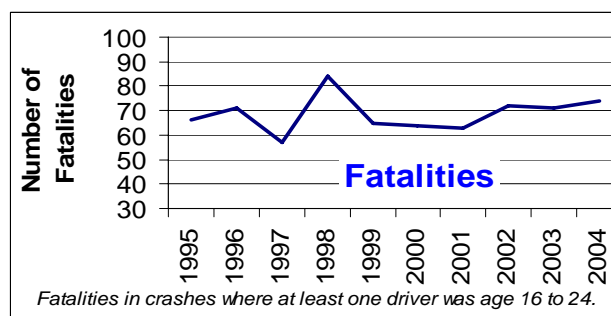
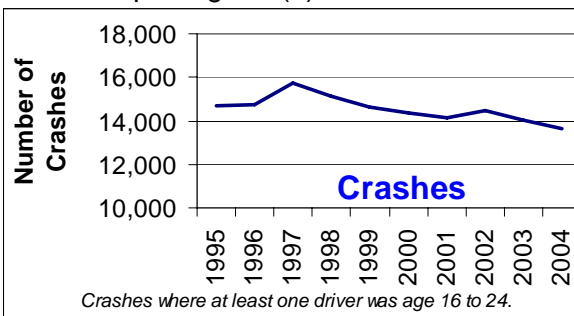
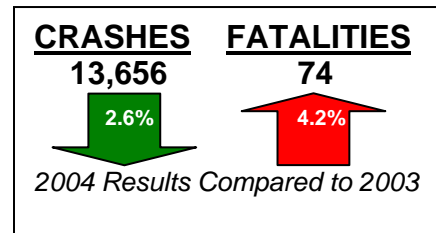
- There were 12,622 Lane Departure crashes-36% of Maine's crash total.
- 146 fatalities resulted from Lane Departure crashes, the most in the past 10 years. This is 76% of Maine's total crash fatalities.
- 50% of the fatalities were speed related



YOUNGER DRIVERS. Sixty-eight drivers aged 16 to 24 were involved in fatal crashes resulting in a total of 74 deaths. Thirty-four young drivers were killed plus 15 of their passengers. Fifty-one of these fatal crashes were Lane Departure. There were 258 alcohol or drug-related crashes involving drivers aged 16-20 - an increasing trend.

Leading characteristics of **fatal** crashes were:

- Unsafe Speed (40)
- Crossing Center Line (26)
- Positive Blood-Alcohol Content (BAC) (22) -19 were 0.08 BAC or higher
- Overcorrecting (12)
- Inexperience (10)
- Inattention (9)
- Snowy, Icy or Wet Road Conditions (8)
- Asleep/Fatigued (4)



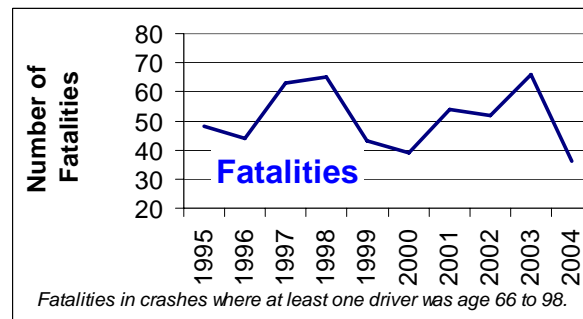
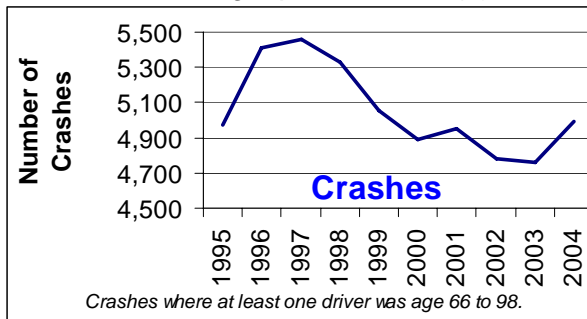
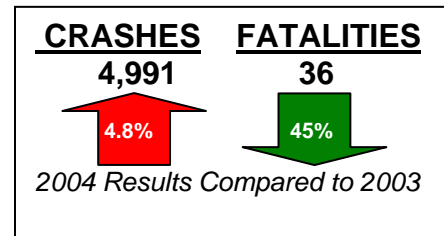
Note: See additional background on these topics in MTSC's **The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine.** Lane Departure is a crash where at least one vehicle leaves its proper lane of travel – Run Off Road and Head On crashes.

The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine-2004

OLDER DRIVERS. Thirty-three drivers over 65 years of age were involved in crash fatalities, and 32 over the age of 65 died in crashes. Twenty fatal crashes were Lane Departure (11 were Run Off the Road, 9 Head On). Leading crash characteristics are different than those for younger drivers.

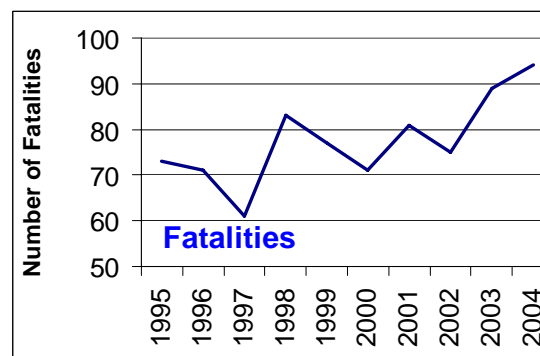
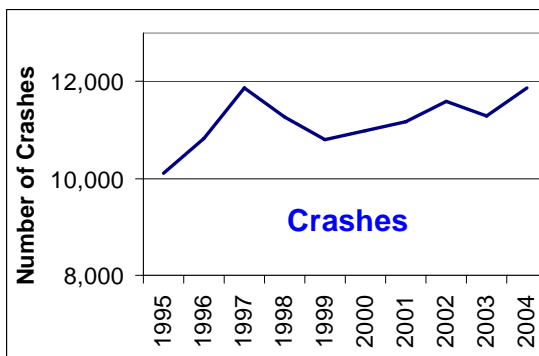
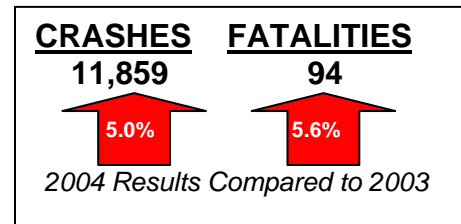
They were:

- Inattention (13)
- Crossing the Center Line (8)
- Medical Condition (8)
- Speeding (5)
- Icy, Snowy, Wet Roads (5)
- Failure to Yield the Right of Way (3)
- Fail to Obey Traffic Control Device (3)
- Asleep or Fatigued (1)
- Drivers having a positive BAC (1)



AGGRESSIVE DRIVING as a proportion of total crashes (especially Speed-related) continues to grow – now at 33.7% (was 31.9%- 2003; 31.4% - 2002) of total crashes and 49% of total fatalities (38.3%-2002; 43.6% - 2003).

- Speed is the leading Aggressive Driving concern.
- In 2004, there were 6,611 Speed-related crashes, resulting in 83 fatalities (annual fatality average for 2000-2002 was 66).



*Note: See additional background on these topics in MTSC's **The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine. Aggressive Driving** is a crash where the driver displays a risky behavior – those considered in this analysis are Disregard of Traffic Control Device; Following Too Close; Illegal or Unsafe Speed; Improper Passing; or Improper, Unsafe Lane Change.*

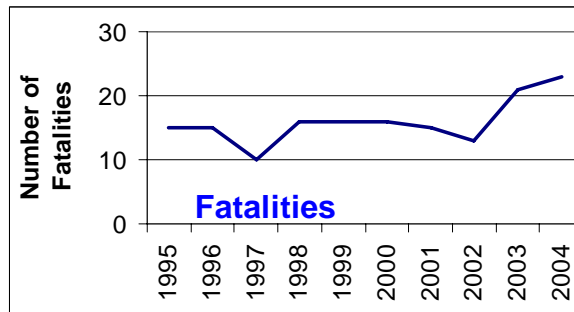
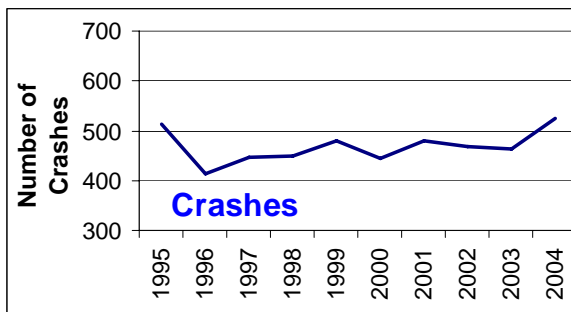
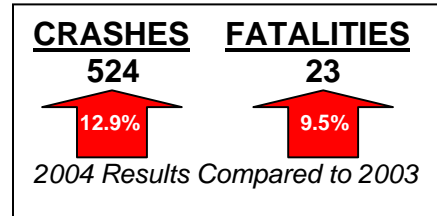
The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine-2004

In addition to MTSC's four identified leading crash concern areas, the following two areas were also noteworthy for 2004:

MOTORCYCLE crashes resulted in an increase in fatalities (22).

There were 22 fatal motorcycle crashes resulting in 22 deaths. Six crashes were Run Off the Road; 3 - Intersection; 3 - Head On; 2 - Moose; and 2- Passing.

- Illegal or Unsafe Speed was a factor for the motorcycle operator in 7 fatal crashes.
- Alcohol or Drugs was a factor for the motorcycle operator in 8 fatal crashes, with 4 operators having a BAC over 0.08%.
- Helmets were not worn by 50% of the operators killed.
- Leading age group of motorcycle fatalities is 45 to 54 year olds, followed closely by 35-44 16-24, and 65+ year olds. This reflects a continuing upward shift of driver age related to motorcycle operation and crash involvement similar to what's being seen nationwide.



ALCOHOL-related crash fatalities increased in 2004.

Maine's alcohol-related fatal crash rate in 2004 of 30.9% on ALL Maine roads does continue to be below the national rate of 40%. Twenty-two young drivers, age 16 to 24, had positive BAC levels (35% of the alcohol related fatalities). Nine 16-19 year olds had positive BAC results.

