



The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine

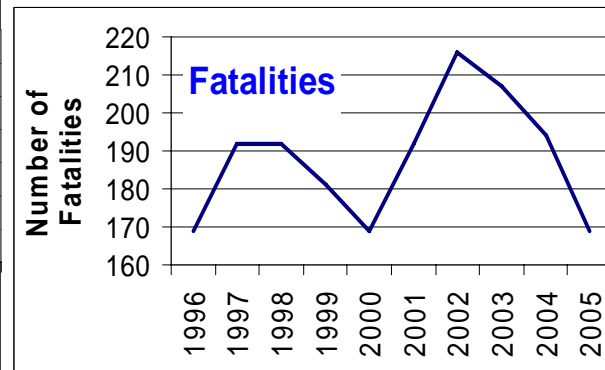
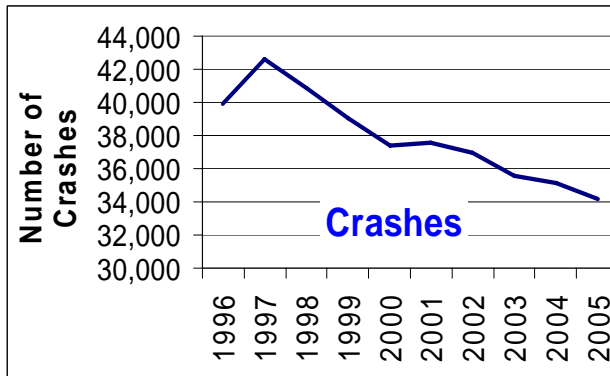
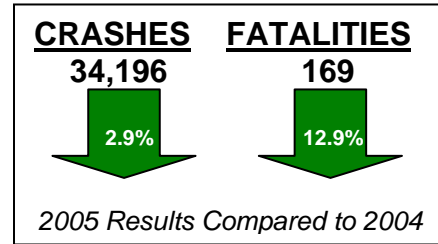
2005 Crash Results in Key Areas

The Maine Transportation Safety Coalition reports annually on the state's crash activity in four priority crash topics:

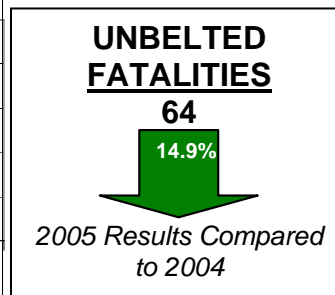
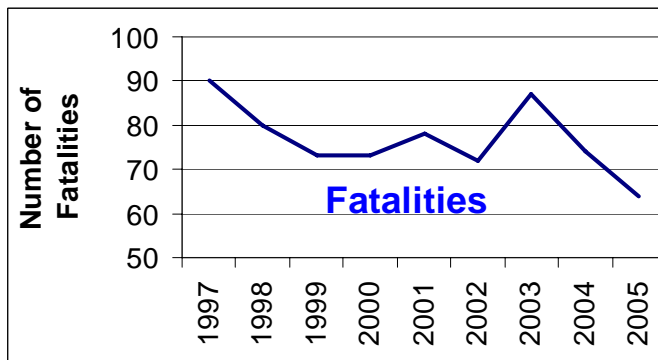
Seat Belts/ Passenger Restraints; Lane Departure Crashes; Younger and Older Drivers; and Aggressive Driving plus the other noteworthy areas of **Alcohol/Drugs** and **Motorcycles**.

Overall 2005 CRASH Results

- There were 34,196 crashes in 2005, the lowest in the past 10 years.
- Crash Rate continues to decrease but still is slightly above the national average. The crash rate is 229 Crashes/ Hundred Million Vehicle Miles (HMVM). Latest national rate is 211 (2004)¹.
- There were 169 fatalities on Maine roads, a third year in a row for improvement, and lowest in past decade.
- Fatality Rate of 1.13 Fatalities/HMVM is a decrease from 2004's rate of 1.31 (NHTSA reported data).
- Maine's Fatality Rate is below the 2005 national rate of 1.46.



SEAT BELT usage improves, but 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 seat belt usage rate in 2005 was 75.8% compared to the national average usage rate of 82%.

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

² Note: An ongoing media and enforcement campaign aimed at increasing seat belt usage has increased usage rate from the 59% level in 2002. People tend to slip back into their old habits after such campaigns are over, however.

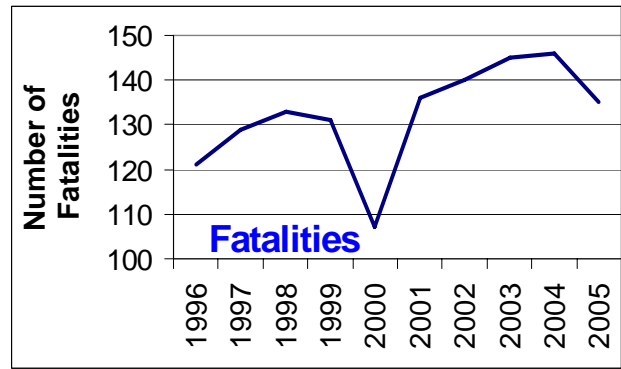
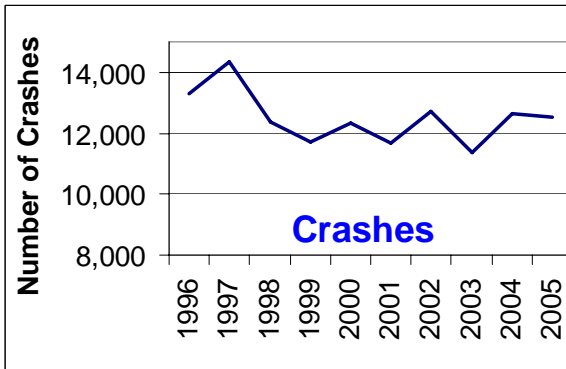
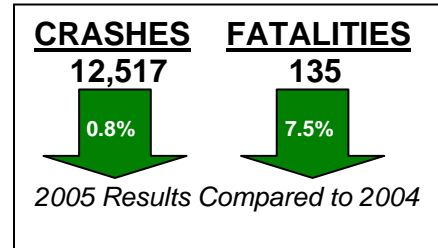
Data Notes: 1. Total **Fatality** counts are from Maine Fatal Accident Report System (FARS) and **Crash** data is from MaineDOT systems.

2. Crashes can be caused by a combination of factors, so one crash may have relationships to several of the categories listed in

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

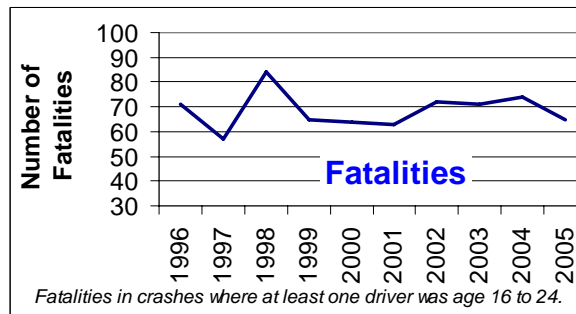
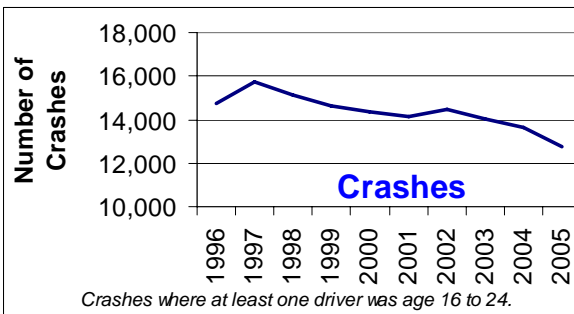
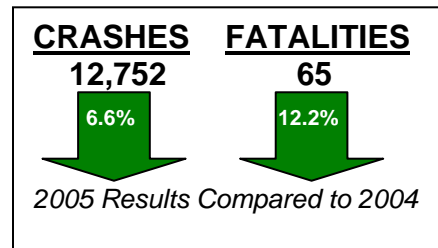
- Lane Departure crashes are 36% of Maine's crash total.
- 135 fatalities resulted from Lane Departure crashes (39 were Head On, 96 were Run Off Road). This is 80% of Maine's total crash fatalities.
- 58% of these fatalities were speed related.
- Weather plays a role in Lane Departure crashes – 5,700 occurred on wintry road surfaces, 1,700 on wet roads.



YOUNGER DRIVERS. The 65 fatalities represent 38% of total Maine traffic deaths. Fifty-one drivers aged 16 to 24 were involved in fatal crashes – Twenty-four were teen drivers. Twenty-five young drivers were killed plus 21 of their young passengers. Thirty-eight of these fatal crashes were Lane Departure, and resulted in 53 fatalities. There were 229 alcohol or drug-related crashes involving drivers aged 16-20.

Leading characteristics of Young Driver **fatal** crashes were:

- Unsafe Speed (31); Teen drivers (18)
- Crossing Center Line or Ran Off Road (20)
- Positive Blood-Alcohol Content (BAC) (15) -14 were 0.08 BAC or higher; Teen Drivers with positive BAC (7)
- Inattention/Distraction (10)
- Inexperience (7)

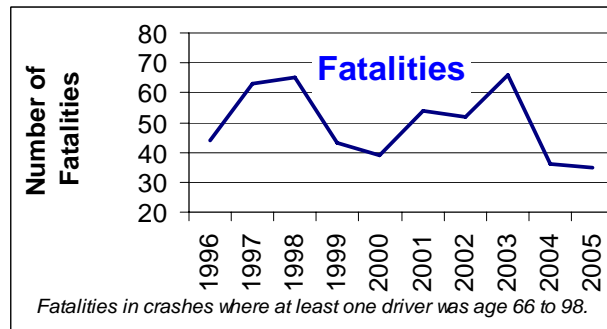
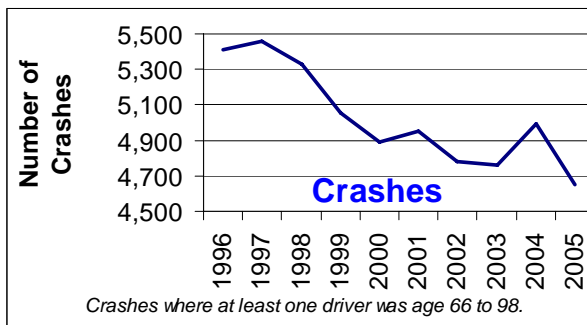
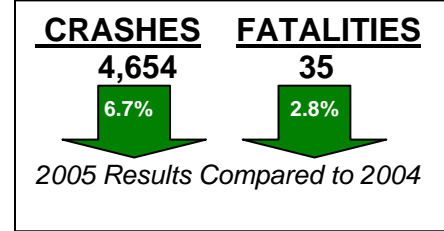


Note: See additional background on these topics in MTSC's **The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine.** Lane Departure is a crash where at least one vehicle leaves its proper lane of travel – Run Off Road and Head On crashes.

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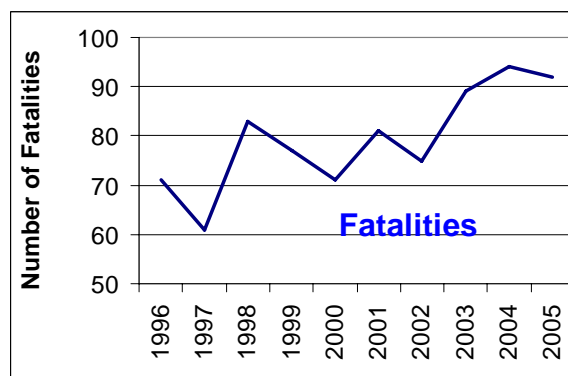
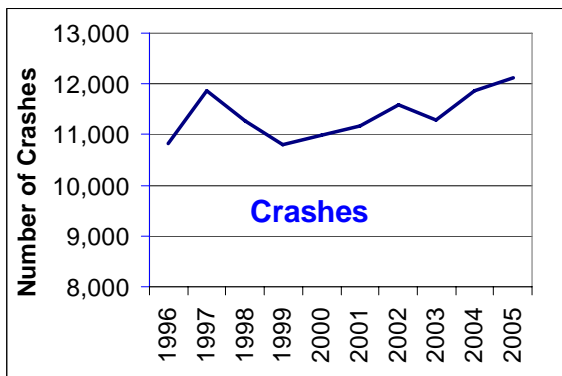
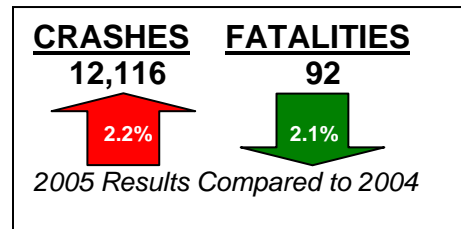
OLDER DRIVERS. Thirty drivers over 65 years of age were involved in fatal crashes, and 19 drivers over the age of 65 died in crashes. Nineteen fatal crashes were Lane Departure. Leading crash characteristics are different than those for younger drivers. They were:

- Crossed the Center Line or Ran Off Road (11)
- Inattention (6)
- Medical Condition (5)
- Failure to Yield the Right of Way (5)
- Drowsy/Sleepy (3)
- Not wearing a seat belt (9)



AGGRESSIVE DRIVING as a proportion of total crashes (especially Speed-related) continues to grow – now at 35.4% (was 33.7%-2004; 31.9%- 2003; 31.4% - 2002) of total crashes and 54% of total fatalities (49%-2004; 48% - 2003; 38.3%-2002).

- Speed is the leading Aggressive Driving concern.
- In 2005, there were 7,116 Speed-related crashes, resulting in 86 fatalities (in comparison, annual fatality average for 2000-2002 was 66).



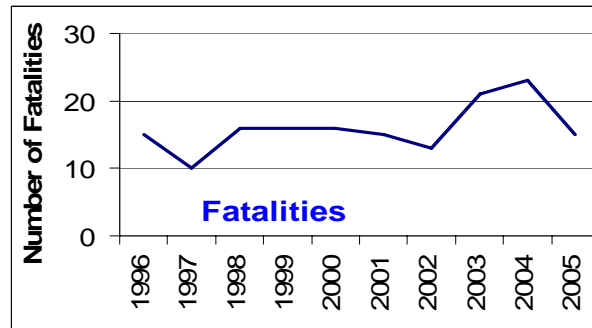
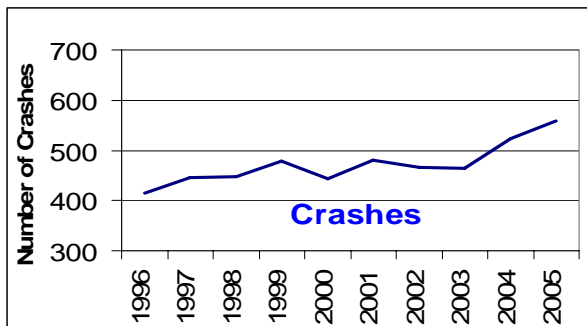
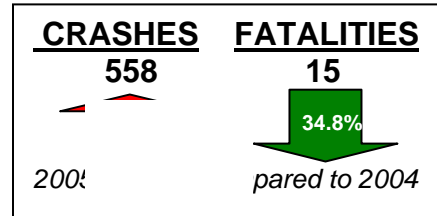
*Note: See additional background on these topics in MTSC's **The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine. Aggressive Driving** is a crash where the driver displays a risky behavior – those considered in this analysis are Disregard of Traffic Control Device; Following Too Close; Illegal or Unsafe Speed;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

The Status of Transportation Safety in Maine-2005

In addition to MTSC's four identified leading crash concern areas, the following two areas continue to be noteworthy for 2005:

MOTORCYCLE crashes resulted in fifteen fatalities.

- Illegal or Unsafe Speed was a factor for the motorcycle operator in 9 fatal crashes.
- Alcohol or Drugs was a factor for the motorcycle operator in 8 fatal crashes, with 7 operators having a BAC over 0.08%.
- Helmets were not worn by 60% of the operators killed.
- Leading age group of motorcycle operator fatalities is in the forties. This reflects a continuing upward shift of driver age related to motorcycle operation and crash involvement, similar to what's being seen nationwide.
- Three of the operators had no permission to operate a motorcycle.
- Six fatal crashes involved motorcycles going off the road or crossing the centerline.



ALCOHOL-related crash fatalities decreased in 2005, but the increased percentage of Maine's alcohol-related fatal crashes in 2005 of 32.5% reflects a continuing problem. Maine's percentage of alcohol-related fatal crashes does continue to be below the national rate of 40%. Fifteen young drivers, age 16 to 24, had positive BAC levels. Seven 16-19 year olds had positive BAC results.

