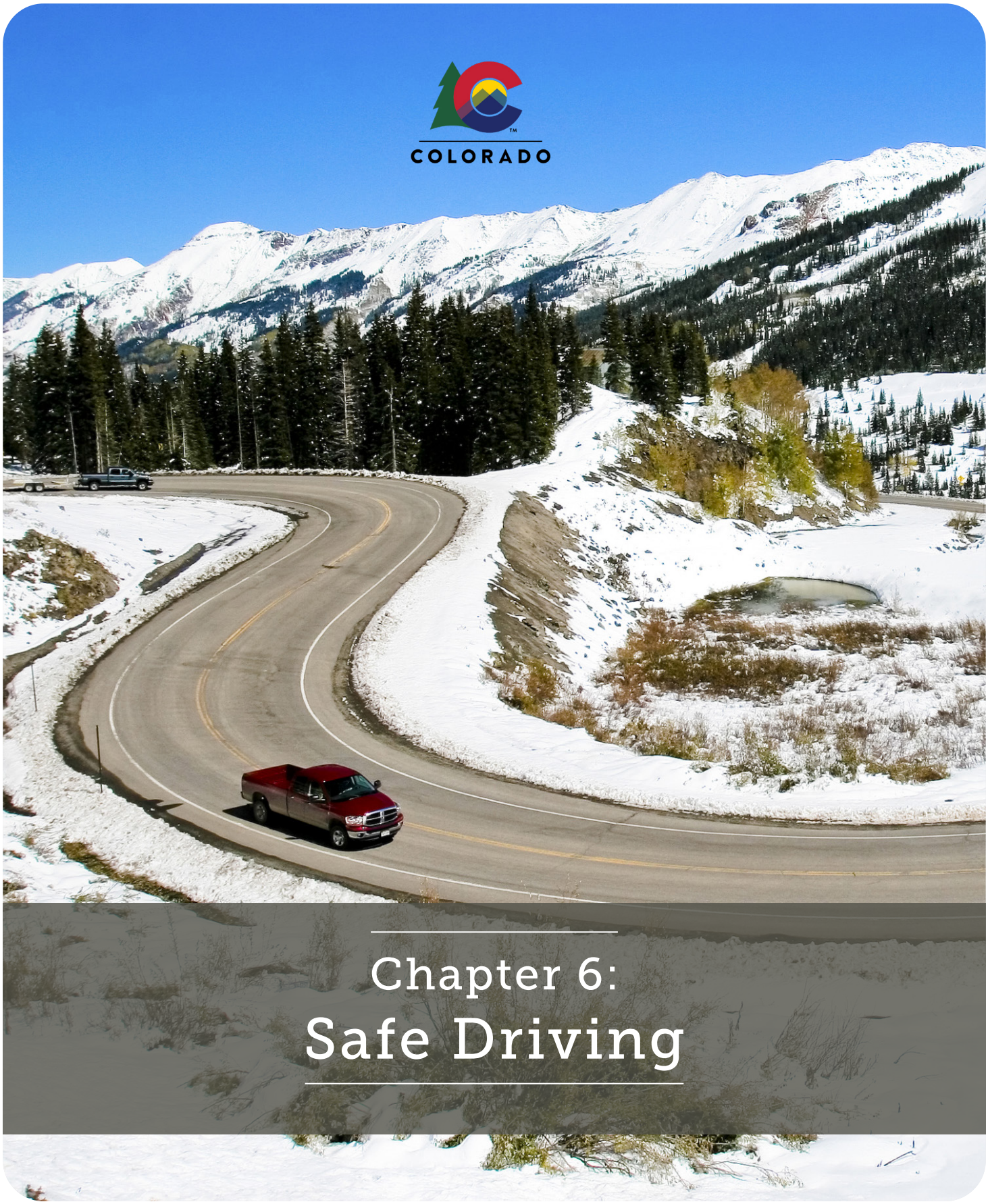


Chapter 6:
Safe Driving

Introduction

The Safe Driving Emphasis Area recognizes that driving behaviors are a key contributing factor in a significant proportion of fatalities and serious injuries that occur on Colorado's roadways. Safe Driving targets high-risk driving behaviors, including distraction, aggression, impairment, occupant protection (seat belts and/or helmets), and speeding.

The Safe Driving Emphasis Area is a critical component of the Safe System Approach (SSA), highlighting that humans make mistakes that can lead or contribute to crashes. High-risk driving behaviors, such as unrestrained and speeding, significantly contribute to the crash severity outcome. The Safe Driving Emphasis Area focuses on encouraging safe, responsible driving behaviors.

The primary objective of the Safe Driving Emphasis Area within this plan is to bring focus on better understanding and influencing human behaviors and actions by all road users. This effort seeks to promote actions that encourage safe driving behaviors, reducing contributing factors to a large proportion of fatal and serious injury crashes on the roadway.

Focus Areas

The Safe Driving Emphasis Area identifies five Focus Areas:

Emphasis Area:

Safe Driving

Focus Areas:

Occupant Protection

Impairment

Aggression

Speeding

Distraction

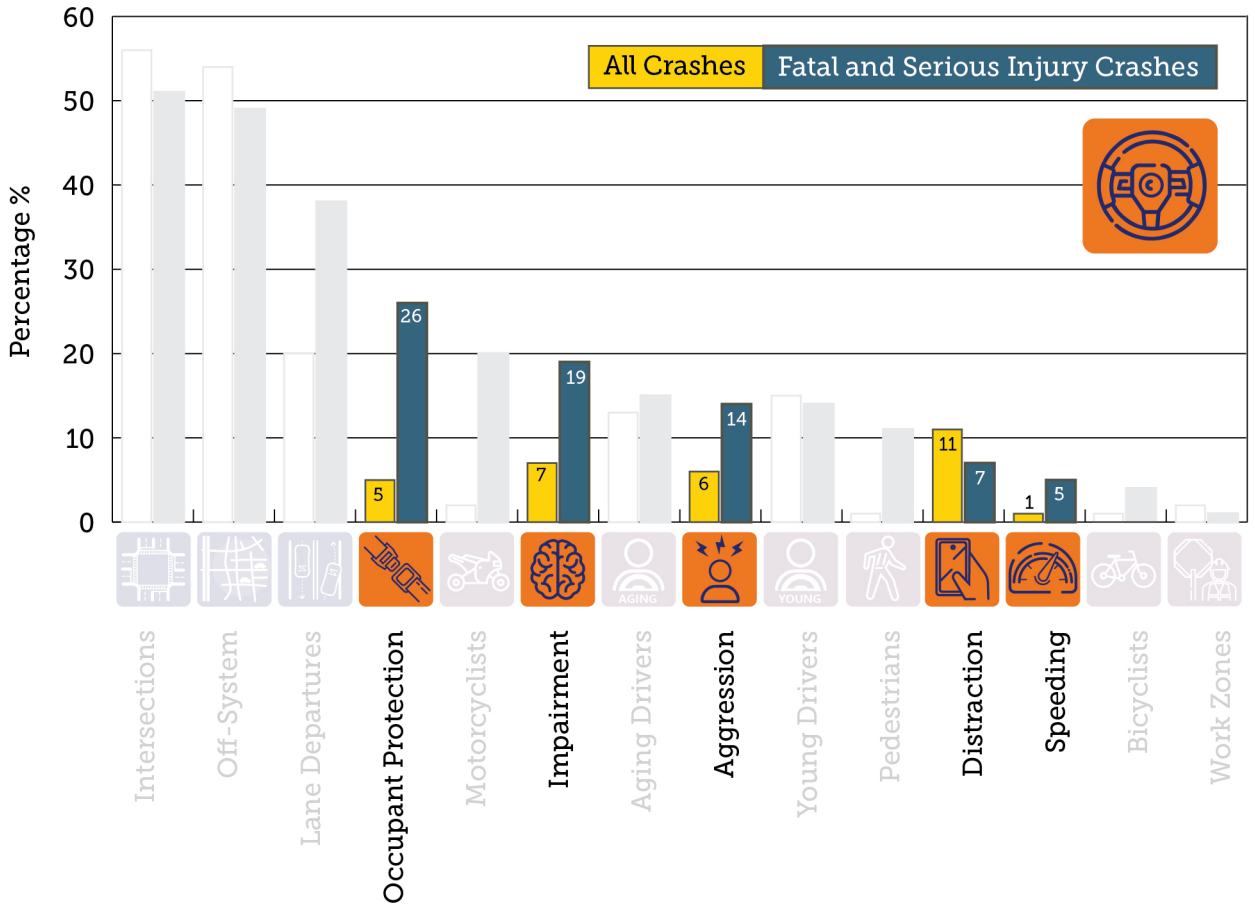


Figure 6-1: Percentage of Total & Fatal/Serious Injury Crashes Involving Focus Areas

The Safe Driving Emphasis Area focuses on different driver behaviors that result in severe crashes. The Focus Areas within this Emphasis Area have high potential for reducing or eliminating future severe crashes and include occupant protection, impairment, aggression, speeding, and distraction.

Occupant Protection

Focus Area Definition: Crashes where safety restraints or helmets were not properly used by motor vehicle occupants.

Focus Area Goal: Reduce the number of severe crashes that involve improper restraint use or improper helmet use by five percent from the previous year through 2029.

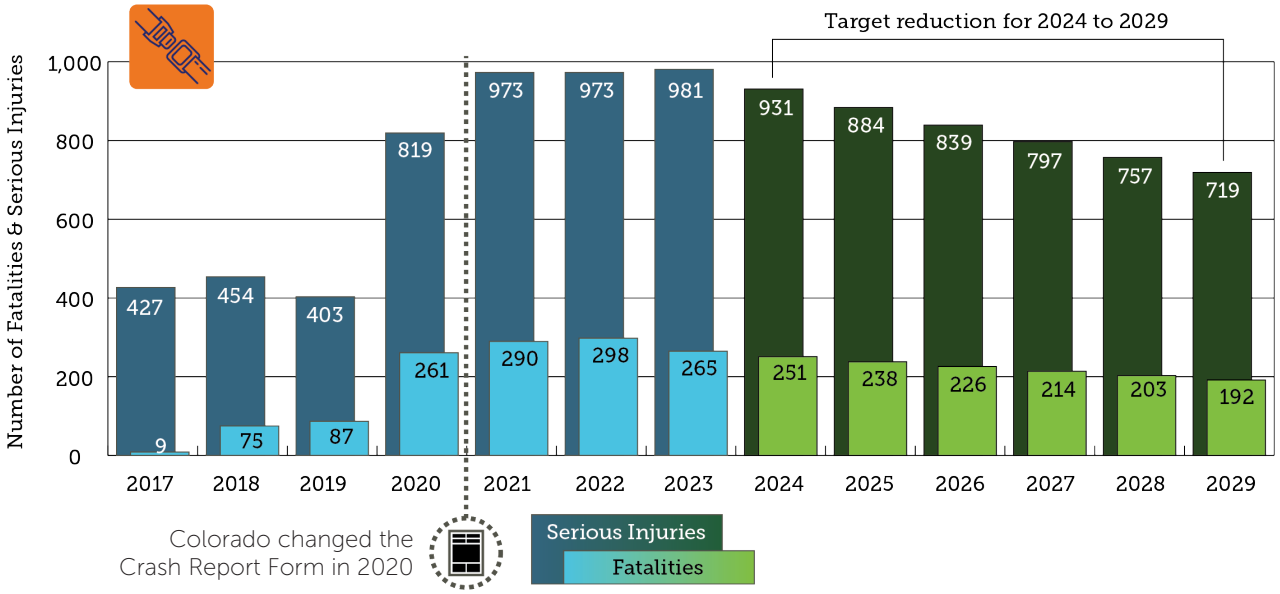


Figure 6-2: Occupant Protection-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Year (2017 to 2023)

Occupants not wearing or improperly using safety equipment (seat belts, helmets, etc.) were involved in five percent of the total crashes from 2019-2023, yet represent 26% of fatal and serious injury crashes, underpinning the severity of these crashes. The fatalities and serious injuries remain even between 2021 and 2023. Unrestrained fatalities and serious injuries occur more in rural settings (32%) compared to urban (23%), and 30% of the urban fatal and serious occupant protection-related crashes involved a motorcycle.

Restraint use reflects safety culture and starts with the driver. Detailed analysis into The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) national database found that driver restraint use is correlated with a reduction in unrestrained child deaths. Specifically, in crashes where a driver was unrestrained, 61% of children killed were also unrestrained. In crashes where a driver was restrained, 30% of children killed were unrestrained.[3] On a related positive note, CDOT's most recent Colorado Seat Belt Study (2024) observed an 88% seat belt usage rate, up 7% over the last decade.[4]

3 FARS, https://cdan.dot.gov/DataVisualization/DataVisualization.htm
4 CDOT releases seat belt study showing 7% usage increase since 2014 — Colorado Department of Transportation

Proven legislative countermeasures cited by NHTSA include primary enforcement seat belt use laws, increased fines, and strong child passenger safety laws. Effective high-visibility seat belt enforcement, specifically at nighttime, is another countermeasure that works to increase safety restraint use. Law enforcement is permitted to stop drivers under the age of 18 in the Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) program or stop a driver if they see a child under the age of 18 improperly restrained in the vehicle. Colorado does not have a primary seat belt law, meaning law enforcement cannot stop a driver over the age of 18 for not wearing a safety restraint. A citation may be given as a secondary offense.[5]

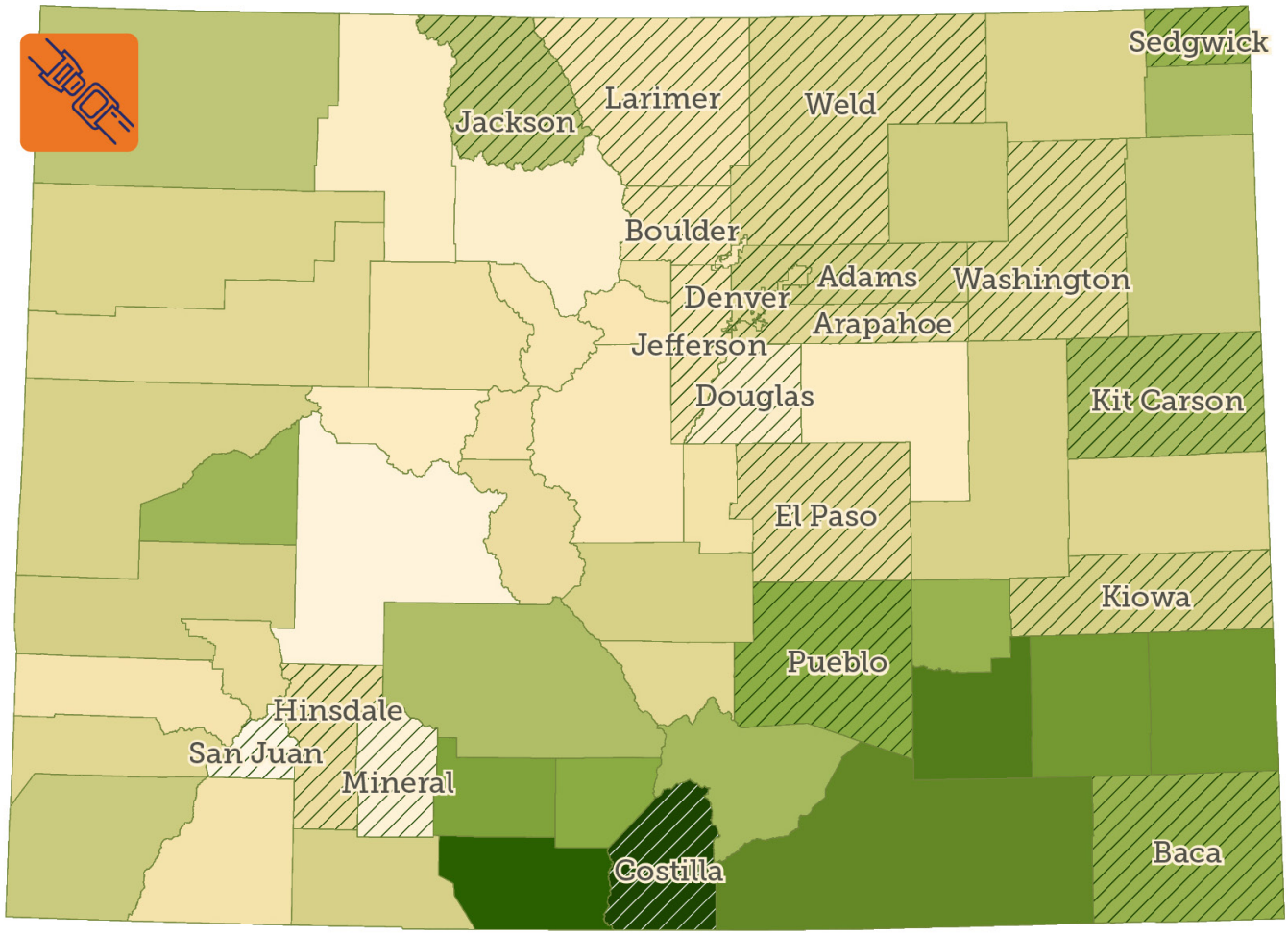
Increasing consistent and proper use of safety restraints presents an opportunity to have a significant positive impact on the fatalities and serious injuries in Colorado. The strategies identified in this Focus Area reflect proven effective actions implemented in other states. The goal is to promote awareness of the benefits of a primary seat belt law and increase support from citizens and legislatures to promote changes. Continued data-driven education, for occupants of all ages, will highlight the safety benefits of safety restraint use and shift the culture and acceptance.

The Colorado Occupant Protection Task Force advocates for best practices in occupant protection safety. Established to increase awareness of seat belt use and child passenger safety throughout the state, the task force works to develop collaborative relationships and partnerships towards the goals of increasing occupant protection restraint usage and educating about the importance of strengthening existing occupant protection laws.

Figure 6-3 shows a map identifying the counties with the highest transportation disadvantage, as well as the counties with the highest occupant protection-involved fatalities and serious injuries and the highest rates per capita. Counties with the highest number of occupant protection-involved fatalities and serious injuries are the counties along the Front Range. Top counties per capita tend to be rural counties to the north, east and southwest.

5 Seat Belts — Colorado Department of Transportation

Figure 6-3: Top Counties of Occupant Protection-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries



Rank	Top Counties Overall	Top Counties per Capita
1	Denver	Mineral
2	Adams	Jackson
3	Arapahoe	San Juan
4	Jefferson	Costilla
5	Weld	Baca
6	El Paso	Kiowa
7	Larimer	Washington
8	Pueblo	Kit Carson
9	Boulder	Hinsdale
10	Douglas	Sedgwick

Map Legend

Weighted TDI Score

Low — High

Diagonal Striping = Top 10 overall and/or per capita counties

This map shows the Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) and labels the top 10 counties for total fatalities and serious injuries, along with the top 10 counties with the highest per-capita impact among relevant demographics. The table provides rankings for both categories.

Occupant Protection Strategies

SD1: Promote proper use through media campaigns

Continue to develop traffic safety media campaigns to support proper use of seat belts, child seats, and helmets.

State agencies develop and promote educational videos, stories, and data stories on the importance of proper restraint use. This strategy focuses on partnering with additional stakeholders for more widespread dissemination for drivers and motor vehicle occupants.

SD2: Educate on primary seat belt law

Support educational efforts related to the importance of a primary seat belt law.

This strategy promotes national research supporting the effectiveness of a primary seat belt law to educate legislators and safety partners. Collaboration with the Colorado Occupant Protection Task Force and similar safety partners is essential to advancing this strategy.

Impairment

Focus Area Definition: Crashes where the driver is under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs and is suspected, observed, or tested for impairment in the field by law enforcement.

Focus Area Goal: Reduce the number of severe crashes that involve impairment by five percent from the previous year through 2029.

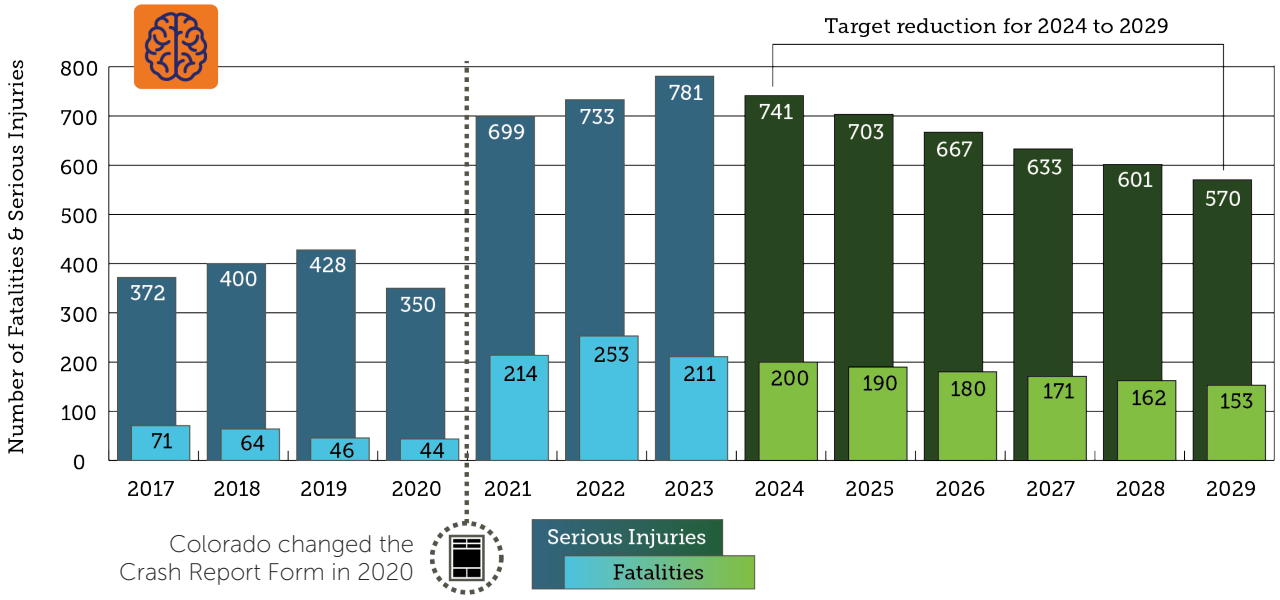


Figure 6-4: Impairment-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Year (2017 to 2023)

Impairment-involved fatalities and serious injuries increased 9% between 2021 and 2023, with the fatalities peaking in 2022 (Figure 6-4). Impairment was involved in 7% of all crashes but was involved in 19% of fatal and serious injury crashes, underscoring the severity of this Focus Area. Younger drivers, between the ages of 20 and 34, represent a higher proportion of the fatalities and serious injuries. Male drivers and motorcyclists are also overrepresented in the crash data. Motorcyclists make up 2.5% of all impairment-related crashes but 13.0% of the fatal and serious injury impairment-related crashes.

Although 68% of impairment-involved crashes occur in urban areas compared to 32% in rural areas, rural crashes are disproportionately severe—45% of all fatal and serious injury impairment-involved crashes take place in rural areas. In these impairment-involved crashes in rural areas, 76% of the fatalities and serious injuries are associated with lane departure crashes, and 47% occur on dark, unlighted roads. Impaired crashes most commonly occur on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 1:59 a.m.

Driver impairment is reported based on the responding officer's judgment and, therefore, may be underreported in Colorado crash data. Fatal crashes are the exception, as toxicology is run on all fatal crashes in the state. Alcohol continues to be the primary cause of impairment, yet polydrug use (the combination of two or more drugs including medications) is a growing concern related to impairment in the state. The Colorado Department of Public Safety noted that polydrug detection among all driving under the influence (DUI) cases more than doubled from 2016 to 2020—rising from 8% to 18%.[6]

Legislative and licensing countermeasures such as lower Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, minimum drinking age laws, and administrative license revocation or suspension can be employed to discourage impaired-driving behaviors. Law enforcement agencies are important participants in preventing impairment-involved crashes, with high-visibility saturation patrols, alcohol measurement devices, and sobriety checkpoints noted as proven strategies to reduce impairment-related crashes.[7] Community groups, such as Regional Impaired Driving Task Forces, can help to change the local safety culture regarding impaired driving, particularly in rural areas and resort locations.

Several safety stakeholders are currently working to address impaired driving challenges. The Colorado State Patrol uses historical crash data to identify dates and locations for high-visibility enforcement strategies to efficiently and effectively prevent impaired-involved crashes. Additionally, the Colorado Task Force on Drunk & Impaired Driving continues to monitor the emerging challenges associated with impaired driving. The strategies in the SHSP complement these partner efforts and promote continued education and enforcement.

The mission of the Colorado Task Force on Drunk and Impaired Driving is to support the prevention, awareness, enforcement, and treatment of drunk and impaired driving in Colorado through strong partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations. Members of the task force are designated by statute and represent various state agencies, the law enforcement and legal community, safety advocates, private businesses, and citizens.

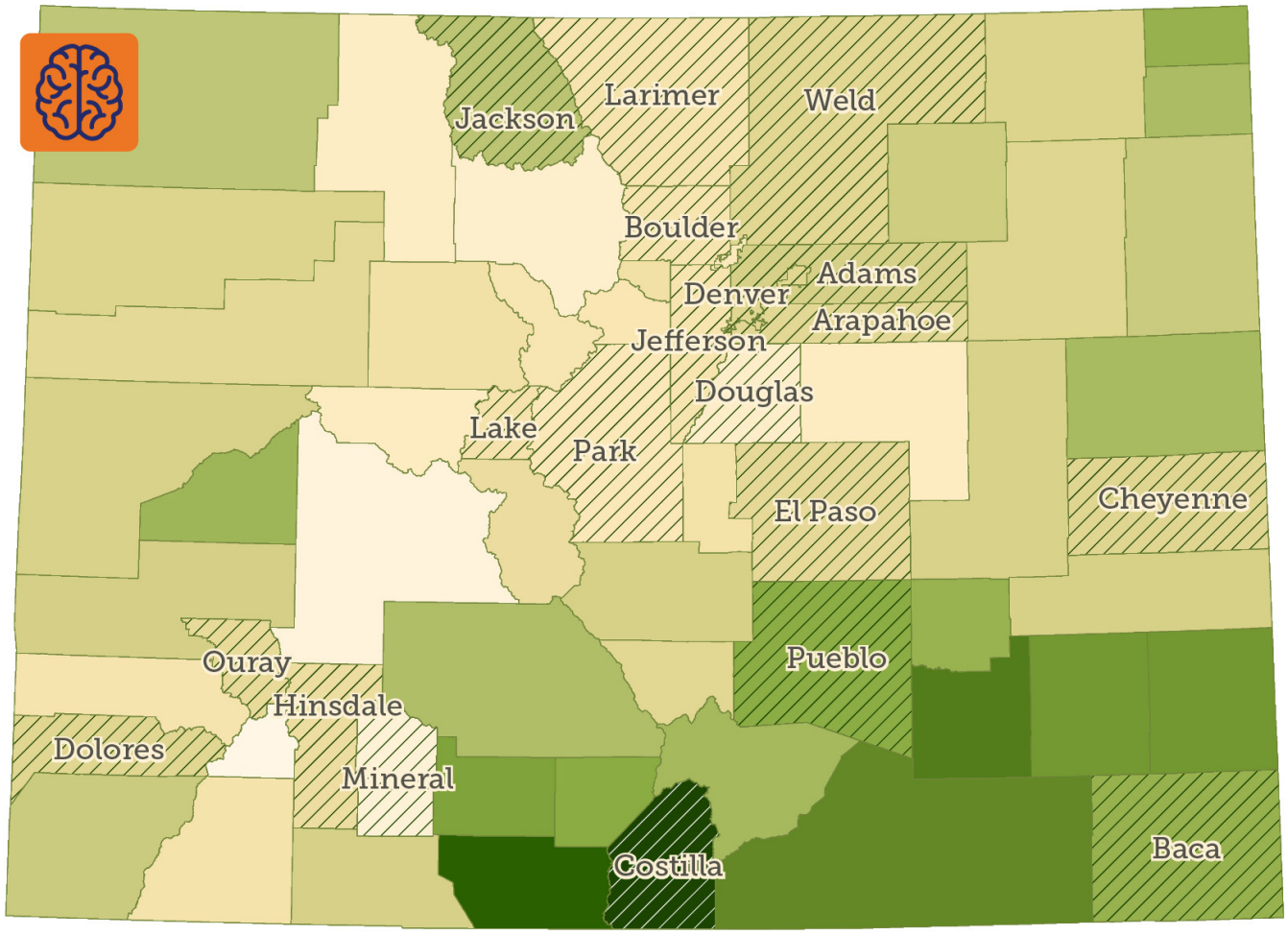
Figure 6-5 shows a map identifying the counties with the highest transportation disadvantage, as well as the counties with the highest impairment-involved fatalities and serious injuries and the highest rates per capita. Counties with the highest number of impairment-involved fatalities and serious injuries are counties along the Front Range. Top counties per capita tend to be rural counties in Eastern Colorado and Southwestern Colorado.

As with many of the Safe Driving Focus Areas, counties along the Front Range have the highest numbers of impairment-related fatalities and serious injuries while the more rural counties have higher rates per capita.

6 Rosenthal, A. (2023). "Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol. A Report Pursuant to C.R.S. 24-33.5-520." Office of Research and Statistics, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.

7 Kirley, B. B., Robison, K. L., Goodwin, A. H., Harmon, K. J. O'Brien, N. P., West, A., Harrell, S. S., Thomas, L., & Brookshire, K. (2023, November). Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices, 11th edition, 2023 (Report No. DOT HS 813 490). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Figure 6-5: Top Counties of Impairment-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries



Rank	Top Counties Overall	Top Counties per Capita
1	Denver	Mineral
2	El Paso	Jackson
3	Adams	Cheyenne
4	Arapahoe	Baca
5	Jefferson	Costilla
6	Weld	Lake
7	Larimer	Ouray
8	Boulder	Hinsdale
9	Pueblo	Dolores
10	Douglas	Park

Map Legend

Weighted TDI Score

Low — High

Diagonal Striping = Top 10 overall and/or per capita counties

This map shows the Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) and labels the top 10 counties for total fatalities and serious injuries, along with the top 10 counties with the highest per-capita impact among relevant demographics. The table provides rankings for both categories.

Impairment Strategies

SD3: Provide polydrug impairment education

Educate the public on the impacts of polydrug use.

This strategy is focused on gathering more data linking polydrug use to driver ability to operate a vehicle and sharing these findings through public communication campaigns. Enhanced data will be useful to educate the public on the impacts of multiple drugs, including both prescription and recreational drugs, on the impacts of driving.

SD4: Prioritize high-risk impaired driving corridors

Identify high-risk corridors overrepresented in the crash data to make data-driven decisions to combat impaired driving.

The purpose of this strategy is to geolocate impairment-involved crashes to continue to assist law enforcement agencies with enforcement efforts. The data mapping can also support additional partners to collaborate on area-specific educational campaigns.

SD5: Continue high-visibility enforcement

Continue to deploy data-driven high visibility impaired driving enforcement activities to deter impaired driving-related crashes.

This is a proven effective strategy that state and local law enforcement agencies deploy across the state. High-visibility enforcement increases the perception of getting caught and arrested, and deters impaired driving. Employing this strategy requires continued emphasis on collaboration between state and local agencies.

Aggression

Focus Area Definition: Crashes where the driver engaged in aggressive driving behaviors, such as tailgating, cutting off other drivers, weaving behaviors, and other careless driving actions like disobeying traffic laws.

Focus Area Goal: Reduce the number of severe crashes that involve aggression by five percent from the previous year through 2029.

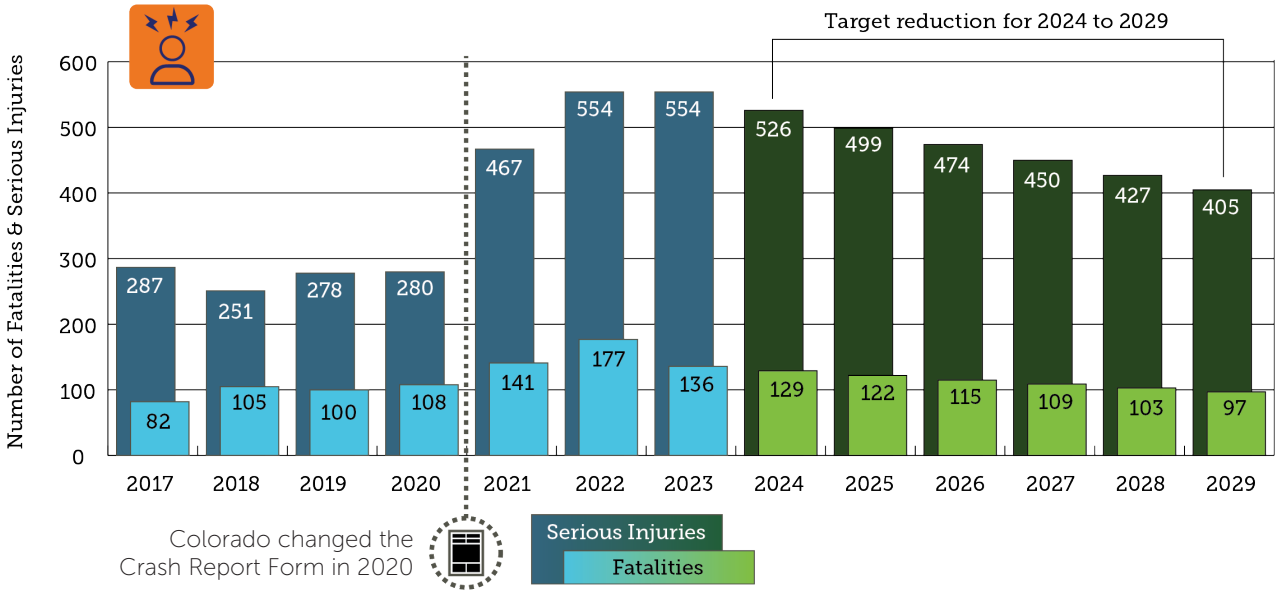
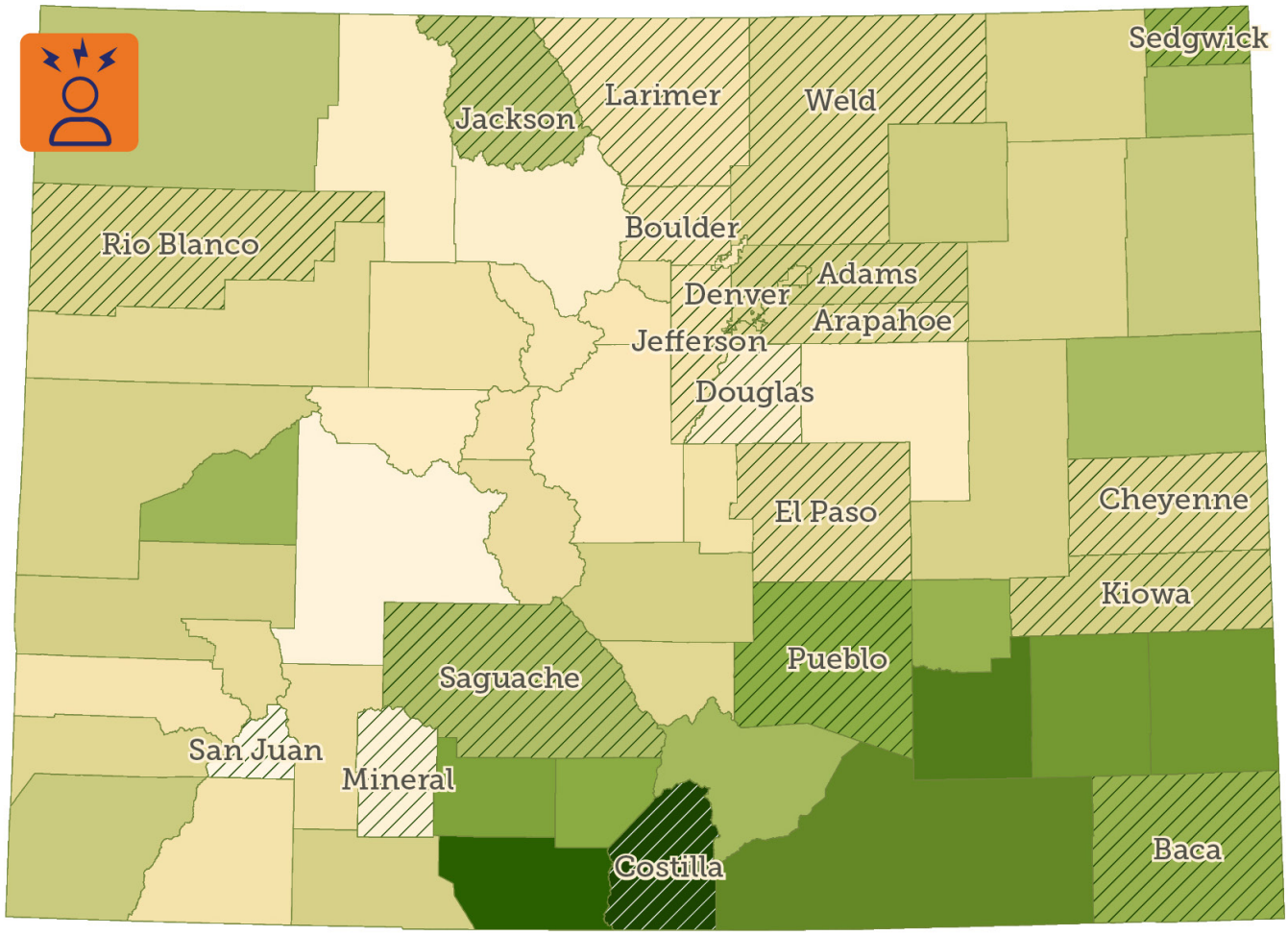


Figure 6-6: Aggressive Driving-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Year (2017 to 2023)

Aggressive driving accounts for 6% of all crashes but 14% of fatal and serious injury crashes. Figure 6-1 illustrates the seriousness of driver aggression, with aggression-involved fatalities and serious injuries increasing 13% between 2021 and 2023. Young drivers (ages 15 to 20) were involved in 19% of all fatal and serious injury crashes related to aggressive driving despite making up only 5% of licensed drivers in Colorado. This means they are nearly four times more likely to be involved in these types of crashes compared to their share of the driving population. Drivers aged 21 to 64 are involved in these crashes at rates proportionate to the share of licensed drivers. Older drivers (65 and up) make up 21% of licensed drivers, but were involved in only 8% of these crashes — meaning they are much less likely to be involved in aggression-related fatal or serious injury crashes.[8] Both aggression-involved crashes and those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries are shown to occur nearly equally in urban and rural settings. Just over 50% of the aggression-related crashes occurred off-system, and 47% occurred at intersections.

8 Federal Highway Administration, Highway Statistics 2023, Table DL-22

Figure 6-7: Top Counties of Aggression-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries



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5	Weld	Baca
6	Jefferson	Sedgwick
7	Larimer	Kiowa
8	Pueblo	Costilla
9	Boulder	Saguache
10	Douglas	Rio Blanco

Map Legend

Weighted TDI Score

Low — High

Diagonal Striping = Top 10 overall and/or per capita counties

This map shows the Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) and labels the top 10 counties for total fatalities and serious injuries, along with the top 10 counties with the highest per-capita impact among relevant demographics. The table provides rankings for both categories.

Figure 6-7 shows a map identifying the counties with the highest transportation disadvantage, as well as the counties with the highest number of aggression-involved fatalities and serious injuries and the highest rates per capita. Counties with the highest number of aggression-involved fatalities and serious injuries are along the Front Range, representing the most urban part of the state. When looking at fatalities and serious injuries per capita, the top counties are rural.

Improper use of occupant protection was involved in 10% of aggression-related crashes but 32% of the fatalities and serious injuries. Impairment was a contributing factor to 8% of all aggression-related crashes but 29% of the fatalities and serious injuries. Of the aggression-related crashes, speeding was involved in 2% of all crashes but 7% of fatal and serious injury crashes. Motorcyclists also represent a higher proportion of aggressive driving fatalities and serious injuries, representing 3% of all aggression-related crashes but 29% of the aggression-related fatalities and serious injuries.

These data points emphasize the confounding impact of other behavior-related contributing factors on the severity outcome of crashes. This Focus Area uses multi-prong strategies that address several behaviors. Countermeasures include enforcement efforts related to traffic laws covering speeds and lane changes as actions to address aggressive driving. Encroaching on other vehicles, disobeying traffic signals and signage, and making unsafe lane changes are other examples of aggressive behaviors that can be cited by law enforcement.

Aggression Strategies

Strategies in this plan seek to highlight the importance of educating the driving public on the seriousness of aggression—both personally as a driver and as drivers in other vehicles avoiding or not engaging with an aggressive driver. Data collection on this type of crash continues to be important to identify specific corridors or regions with higher risk for aggression that can be addressed through enforcement and targeted educational efforts.

SD6: Deploy anti-aggressive driving campaigns

Develop anti-aggressive driving campaigns focused on populations overrepresented in the crash data.

This strategy is intended to target educational and awareness campaigns to groups of drivers who represent higher proportions of aggression-involved fatalities and serious injuries. Drivers under the age of 34 and motorcyclists are overrepresented in crash data. Reducing aggressive driving behaviors in these populations provides the greatest opportunity to reduce the number of aggression-related fatalities and serious injuries throughout Colorado.

SD7: Prioritize high-risk aggressive driving corridors

Identify high-risk corridors overrepresented in the crash data to make data-driven decisions to combat aggressive driving.

This strategy directs agencies to collect and analyze data to prioritize corridors where a higher percentage of aggression-involved crashes are occurring. Law enforcement agencies can use the data as appropriate to develop enforcement campaigns and employ other strategies in these high-risk corridors. Additionally, this could provide valuable information to identify root causes of behavior on why aggression may be occurring on certain roadways.

Speeding

Focus Area Definition: Crashes where a motor vehicle was traveling over the posted speed limit or at speeds unsafe for conditions.

Focus Area Goal: Reduce the number of severe crashes that involve speeding by five percent from the previous year through 2029.

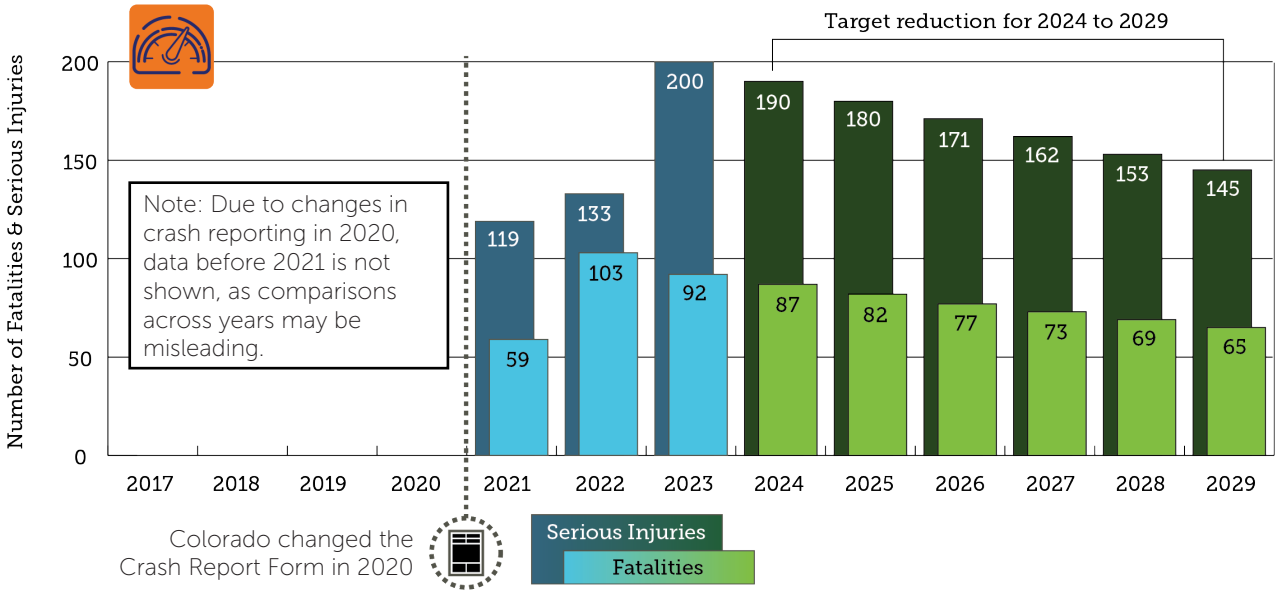


Figure 6-8: Speed-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Year (2021 to 2023)

Speeding is a topic that can be discussed through various lenses, including the choice to speed and how an environment encourages speeding behavior. The Safe Driving Emphasis Area focuses on the driving behavior, and the Speeding Focus Area emphasizes the driver's responsibility in selecting safe and appropriate speeds. The Safe Roads Emphasis Area (Chapter 8) discusses strategies related to speed management, infrastructure, and roadway environments to address speeding.

Between 2021 and 2023, speeding-involved crashes increased 60%, and fatalities and serious injuries increased 64% (Figure 6-8). These numbers represent one percent of total crashes and five percent of total fatalities and serious injuries in Colorado (refer to Figure 6-1 at the beginning of the chapter). It is important to note the significant data quality issues related to speeding-involved crashes. Crash data is limited to what is visible or known after a crash occurs, but it is thought that speeding is a significant contributor to many of the Emphasis Areas in this plan.

Speeding-involved crashes occur slightly more frequently in rural settings compared to urban, and drivers under the age of 34 are overrepresented in the crash data. Nearly half of the speeding-involved fatal and serious injury crashes occurred in rural areas, which is higher than the percentage of total speeding-involved fatal and serious crashes statewide (37.7%). Of the speeding-involved fatalities and serious injuries, 53% involved lane departure, 53% occurred off-system, 41% occurred at an intersection, and 22% involved young drivers from 15 to 20 years of age.

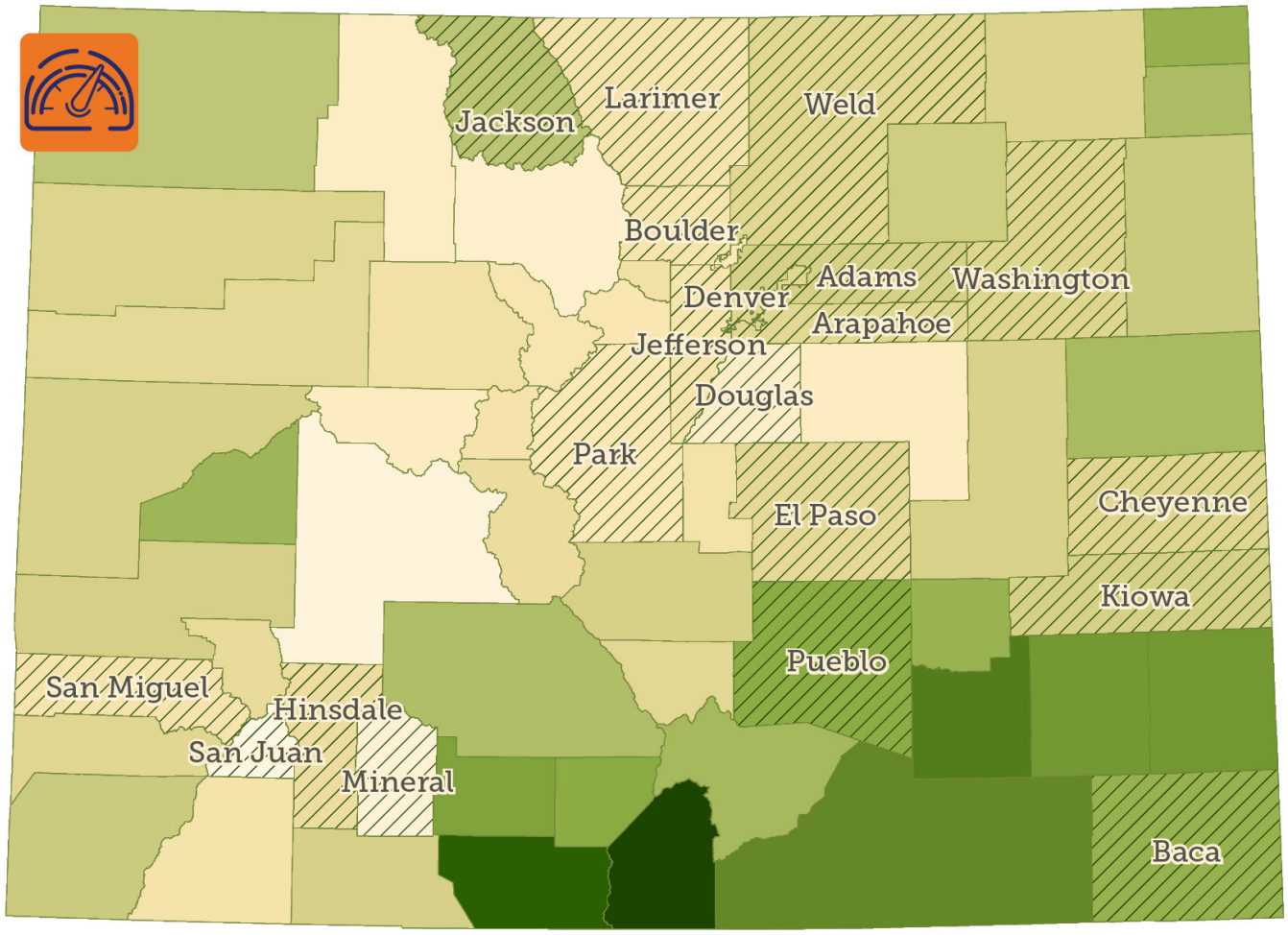
According to the 2024 Colorado Driver Behavior Survey, 69% of Colorado drivers said they drive over the speed limit on main highways, 48% speed on main city or town roads, and 26% speed on neighborhood roads. Of the drivers surveyed, 58% believed they would be stopped by law enforcement on local roads with speed limits of 30 mph, whereas 41% believed they would be stopped on roads with speed limits of 65 mph. This emphasizes that speeding on highways is perceived to be more acceptable. However, highlighting the SSA principle that humans are vulnerable; kinetic energy (which is significantly impacted by speed) is the top contributing factor to crash survivability. As the speed of a vehicle involved in a crash increases, so does the kinetic energy released and the likelihood of the crash resulting in a fatality or serious injury.

NHTSA-promoted countermeasures include a combination of legislation, enforcement, and the use of technologies to address behavior change. The strategies in this plan are intended to help Colorado gain deeper insights into the contributing behavioral factors to speeding-involved crashes and utilize innovative methods for reducing speeding behaviors.

Strategies include geolocating crashes and combining datasets then disseminating data analysis results to safety partners, such as law enforcement, to use for their education and enforcement activities. Additionally, new technologies continue to emerge to assist with data collection and enforcement. This plan promotes using information gleaned from the CDOT's Automated Speed Enforcement Program to expand this Emphasis Area's future activities.

In 2023, the Governor signed into law SB23-200: Automated Vehicle Identification Systems. This act expands the methods by which the state, a county, a city and county, or a municipality (jurisdiction) may deliver a notice of violation when a traffic violation is detected through the use of an automated vehicle identification system. The "speed camera" bill offers an important tool for communities to encourage safe driving behavior. This was updated with SB24-195 which changed Colorado Revised Statute 42-4-110.5, adding additional clarification regarding the protection of Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs).

Figure 6-9: Top Counties of Speeding-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries



Rank	Top Counties Overall	Top Counties per Capita
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3	Adams	San Juan
4	Denver	Jackson
5	Douglas	Hinsdale
6	Arapahoe	Kiowa
7	Larimer	Washington
8	Boulder	Cheyenne
9	Weld	San Miguel
10	Pueblo	Park

Map Legend

Weighted TDI Score

Low — High

Diagonal Striping = Top 10 overall and/or per capita counties

This map shows the Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) and labels the top 10 counties for total fatalities and serious injuries, along with the top 10 counties with the highest per-capita impact among relevant demographics. The table provides rankings for both categories.

Figure 6-9 shows a map identifying the counties with the highest transportation disadvantage, as well as the counties with the highest speeding-involved fatalities and serious injuries and the highest rates per capita. Counties with the highest number of speeding-involved fatalities and serious injuries are the counties along the Front Range. Top counties per capita tend to be rural counties along the Eastern Plains and Southwestern Colorado.

Speeding Strategies

SD8: Prioritize high-risk speeding locations

Identify high-speeding-risk corridors overrepresented in the crash data and evaluate overlap between speeding and other high-risk driving behaviors.

This strategy is intended to increase collection and analysis of speeding-related data and improve understanding of the linkages to other Focus Areas and identify locations where speeding occurs more frequently. Data collected under this strategy can also assist with illustrating connections between speeding and other high-risk driving behaviors within identified corridors.

SD9: Deploy speed safety camera systems

Use the results of a speed safety camera pilot program to make data-driven decisions on future installations.

Under Colorado Revised Statute 42-4-110.5, Automated Vehicle Identification Systems (AVIS) are permitted for detecting traffic violations. CDOT's Automated Speed Enforcement Program will establish a pilot program to reduce speeding and increase safety in specified corridors. Pilot locations include work zones with two or more lanes of traffic in one direction. This strategy will examine the results of the pilot locations to understand the scope of potential applications related to speeding-involved crashes.

Distraction

Focus Area Definition: Crashes where the driver was distracted by factors either inside or outside the vehicle.

Focus Area Goal: Reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes that involve distraction by five percent from the previous year through 2029.

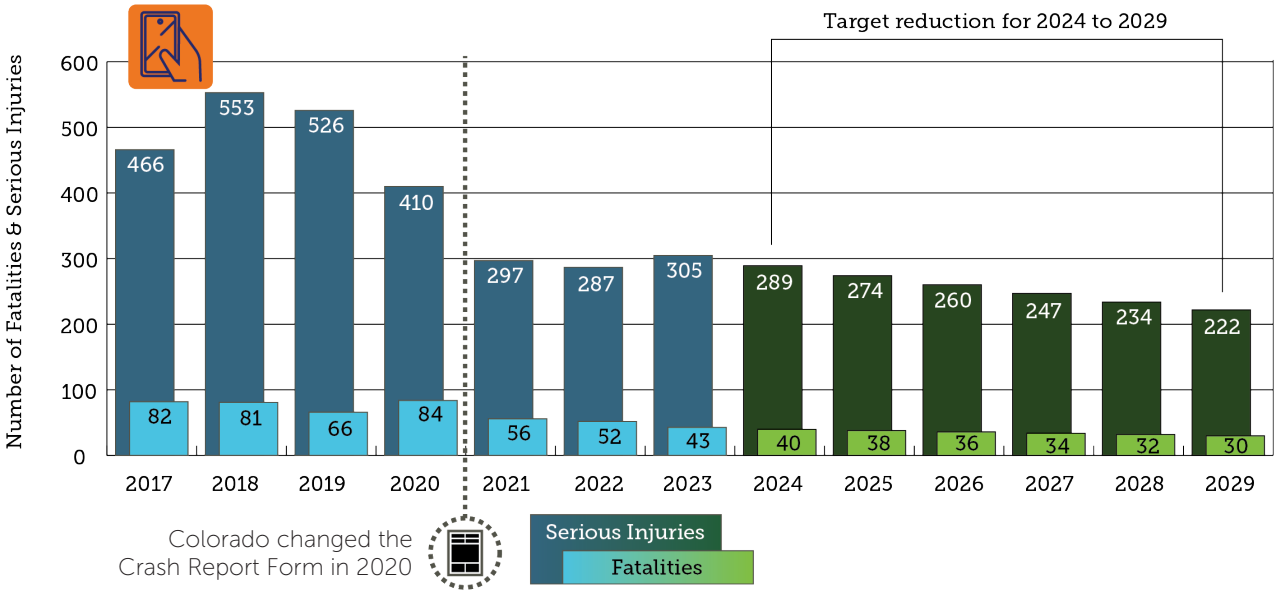
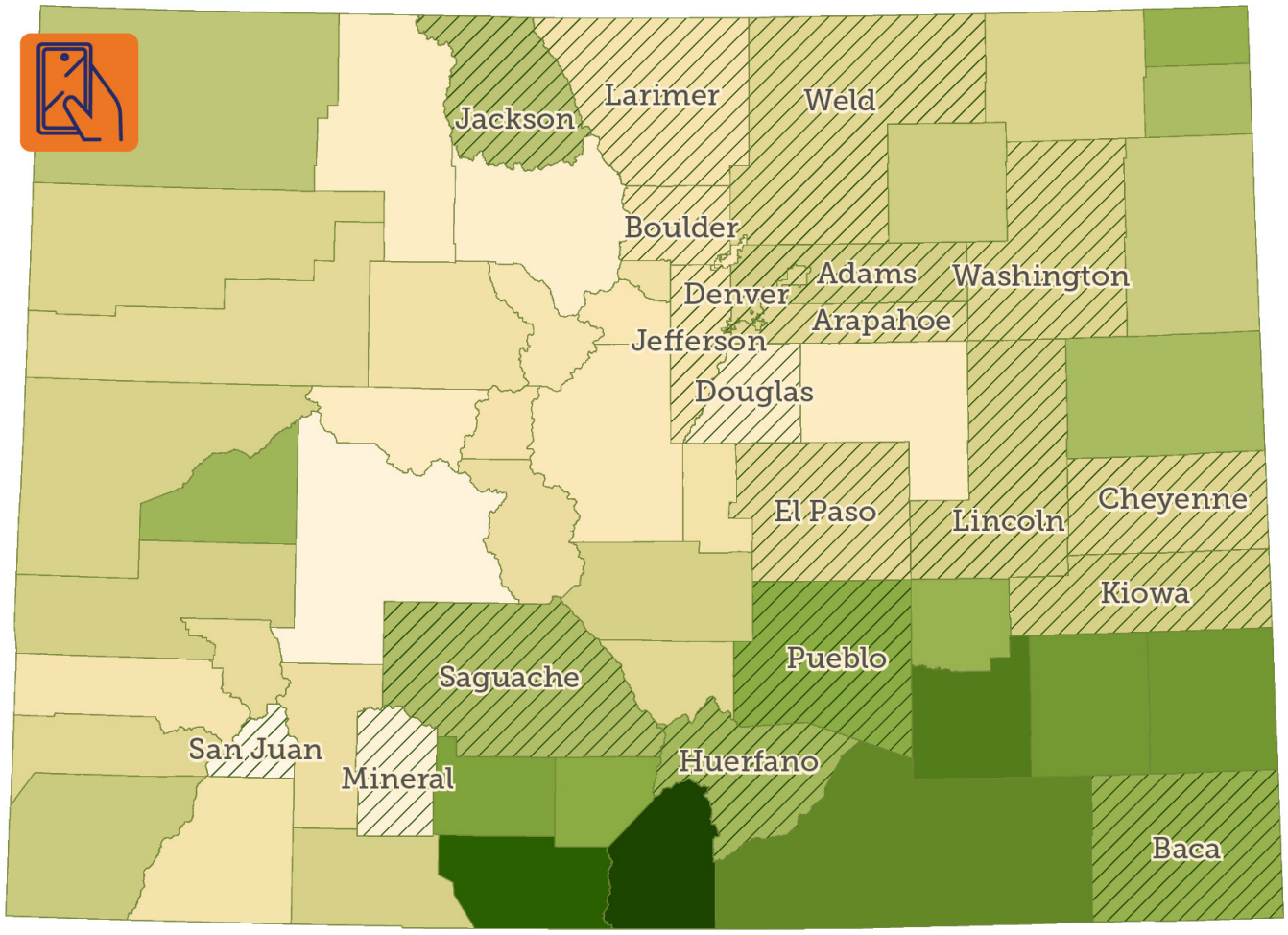


Figure 6-10: Distracted Driving-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Year (2017 to 2023)

Because distraction has to be observed by a responding officer for it to be reported on the crash form, distraction-involved crashes are likely underreported, particularly for crashes resulting in a fatality or serious injury. Figure 6-10 illustrates that crashes involving distraction resulting in a fatality have trended down over the past three years, while serious injuries have remained relatively stable. In 2023, 348 people were killed or seriously injured in distraction-involved crashes.

Figure 6-11 shows a map identifying the counties with the highest transportation disadvantage, as well as the counties with the highest distraction-involved fatalities and serious injuries and the highest rates per capita. Counties with the highest number of distraction-involved fatalities and serious injuries are along the Front Range, representing the most urban part of the state. When looking at fatalities and serious injuries per capita, rural Eastern Plains and Southwest Colorado counties are represented.

Figure 6-11: Top Counties of Distraction-Involved Fatalities and Serious Injuries



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4	Adams	Washington
5	Weld	Jackson
6	Jefferson	Lincoln
7	Boulder	Huerfano
8	Larimer	San Juan
9	Douglas	Saguache
10	Pueblo	Baca

Map Legend

Weighted TDI Score

Low — High

Diagonal Striping = Top 10 overall and/or per capita counties

This map shows the Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) and labels the top 10 counties for total fatalities and serious injuries, along with the top 10 counties with the highest per-capita impact among relevant demographics. The table provides rankings for both categories.

While distraction-involved crashes overall are more common in urban areas (75%), the most severe outcomes—fatal and serious injury crashes—occur disproportionately in rural areas. Nearly half (48%) of distraction-involved fatal and serious injury crashes occur in rural settings, even though rural areas account for only 25% of all distraction-involved crashes and 38% of all fatal and serious injury crashes. This indicates that distraction-related crashes are more likely to result in severe outcomes when they occur in rural areas. Figure 6-12 visualizes this disparity by comparing the urban and rural distribution of all crashes, fatal and serious injury crashes, distraction-involved crashes, and distraction-involved severe crashes. The top five distraction-related fatal and serious injury crashes are with a fixed object, rear-end, broadside, rollover or overturn, and with a VRU. These crashes also frequently overlap with other Focus Areas—53% occurring at intersections, 50% occur off-system, 18% involve a younger driver, and 17% involve lane departure.

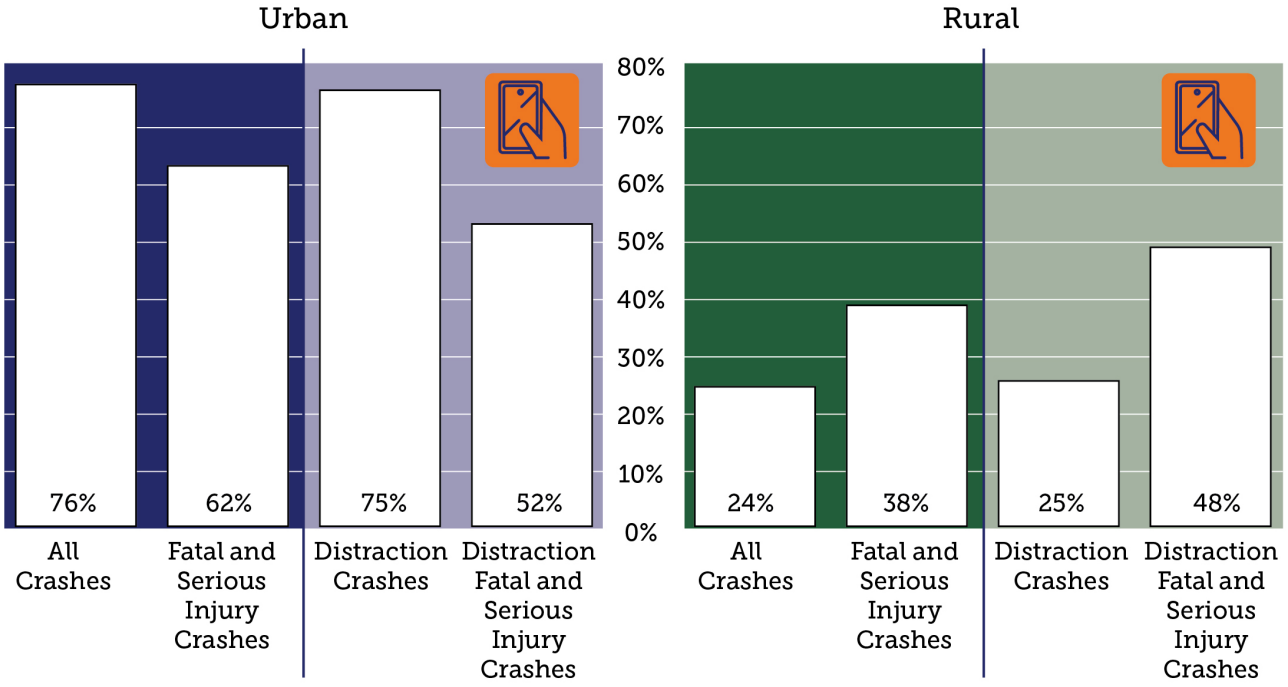

Figure 6-12: Urban and Rural Distribution of Distraction-Related Crashes (2017-2023)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Countermeasures That Work highlights enforcement, legislation, and licensing as countermeasures that are proven to address distraction-involved crashes. Colorado has taken great strides in this direction by passing a state law that prohibits drivers from using mobile electronic devices while driving (hands-free technologies are permitted). The law went into effect on January 1, 2025, and therefore, strategies within this Focus Area will seek to monitor the impact of the law over the next five years.

While the strategies in this plan focus on education related to legislation and promoting safe driver choices around use of mobile phones while driving, there are many other influences that may impact a person's attentiveness to the driving task. For example, in the 2024 Colorado Driver Behavior Survey when drivers were asked what distractions were present in the last 7 days, 73% of respondents admitted to eating food or drinking a beverage while driving. Other influences, like visitors distracted by Colorado's beautiful vistas or distractions within the vehicle such as other passengers, are difficult to anticipate and prevent. Collecting more information to better understand the scope

of the problem is also important to this plan, as information gleaned from data will enhance future initiatives to address driver distraction.

Distraction Strategies

SD10: Provide education on hands-free law

Continue to educate the public on the hands-free law effective January 1, 2025.

This strategy aims to promote information regarding the new hands-free law to partner agencies and drivers. Ongoing education for new drivers and licensed drivers alike are important in the first years of the law and beyond to maintain awareness and shift driver behavior.

SD11: Enhance data collection

Continue to enhance data collected related to distraction-involved crashes.

Distraction may be an underreported contributing factor to crashes. With the passage of the hands-free law in January 2025, law enforcement agencies will be able to collect more information on citations related to using mobile phones while driving. Enhanced data on the number and locations of citations as well as the number and locations of both primary and secondary crashes related to distraction will support identifying next steps for reducing distraction-related crashes. This data collection will also support evaluating the effectiveness of the hands-free law.