

Speed-Related Crashes in Wisconsin



Did you know...

In Wisconsin, one person was killed or injured in a speed-related crash every 1.3 hours in 2024.

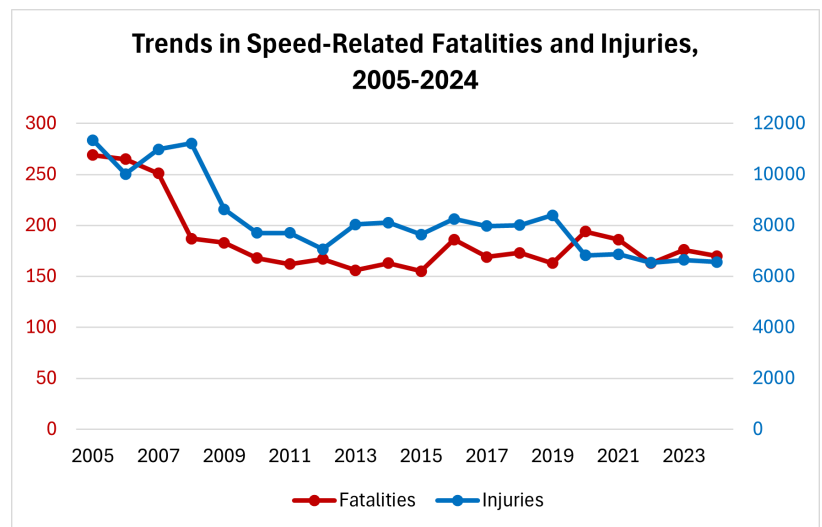
- 16,572 speed-related crashes occurred in Wisconsin in 2024.
- In these crashes, 170 people were killed and 6,567 were injured.
- Speed was listed as a contributing cause in 13% of all crashes and in 30% of all fatalities in 2024.



Scope of the Problem

Over the years, Wisconsin has experienced a general decline in speed-related fatalities and injuries. A major drop in speed-related fatalities and injuries occurred between 2008 and 2009 when the economy worsened and seat belt laws were strengthened.

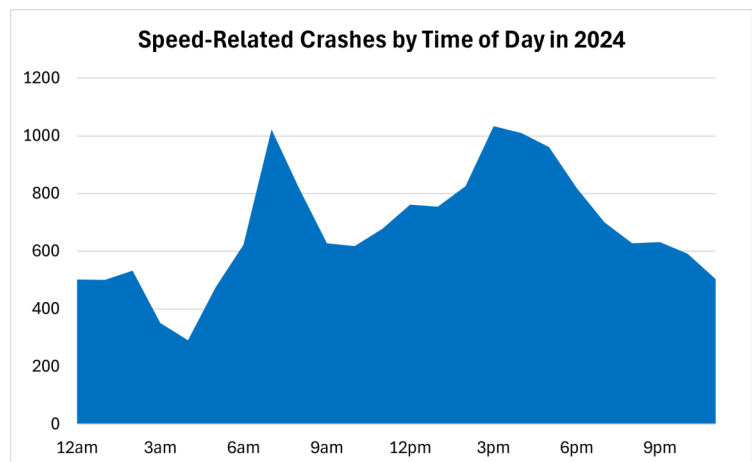
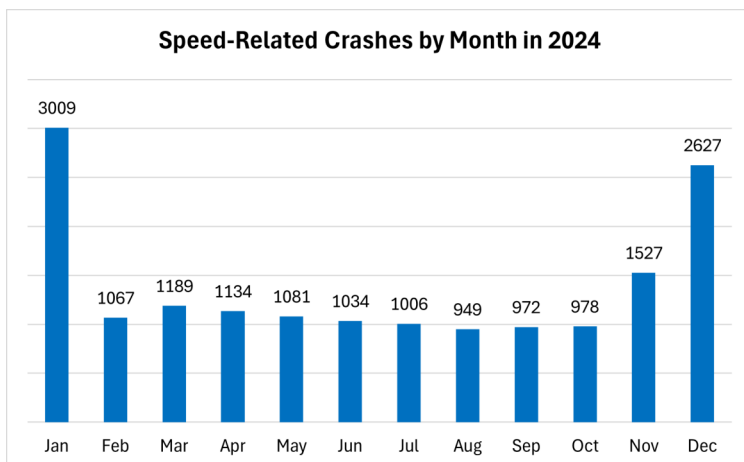
This slow decline is likely due to rising seat belt use over the past several decades, the introduction of graduated driver's licenses, and much safer automobiles. In 2024, we saw a slight decrease in speed-related fatalities and injuries compared to 2023.



When do Speed-Related Crashes Occur?

Speed-related crashes most often occur in the winter months. This does not necessarily mean that there is more speeding in those months, merely that speeding is more likely to cause a crash in such weather. In 2024, road conditions such as snow, sleet, and freezing rain accounted for 18% of speed-related crashes.

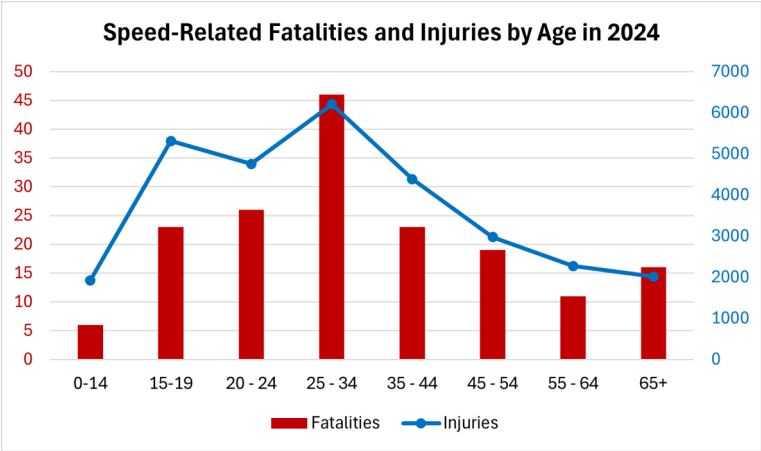
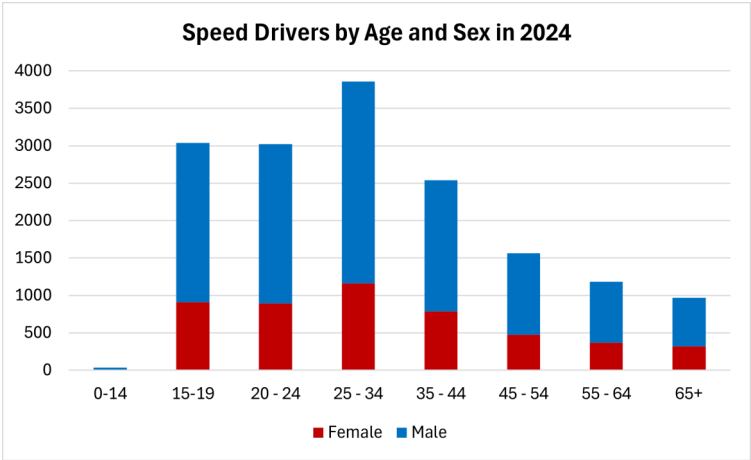
Throughout the day, speed-related crashes peak from 7-8 am and 3-4 pm. These peaks are likely caused by drivers rushing to and from work.



Who is at Risk for Speed-Related Crashes?

Male drivers account for nearly 68% of all speeding drivers. Moreover, 42% of all speeding drivers were young male drivers (ages 15-34). Inexperience and the likelihood to engage in risky behavior may be factors for drivers in these cohorts.

Speed-related fatalities and injuries generally follow the same pattern: fatalities and injuries rise steadily among young people until they dramatically decline for people in their mid-30's



Counties in Wisconsin are largely proportional in their percentage of speed-related crashes to their percentage of the state population. Some counties see a larger percentage of speed-related crashes proportional to their population estimates. For example, Milwaukee County accounted for 17.2% of speed crashes in 2024 while representing 15.7% of the state population. Conversely, some counties see a smaller percentage of speed-related crashes proportional to their population estimates. Dane County accounted for 7.4% of speed crashes in 2024 while representing 10% of the state population.

Current Speed Laws

Speed laws are defined in Wis. Stats 346.57 (2) and (3) and (4).

Drivers are required to drive at a speed that does not exceed the posted limit and is reasonable given conditions of the road. The speed of the vehicle must be in control to avoid colliding with any object, person or vehicle.

Locations that may require reduced speeds include: intersection approaches, railway crossings, curves, hillcrests, narrow and winding roads, and school-adjacent streets.

Drivers may not drive in excess of the following fixed and posted limits: 15 mph in school zones during school hours; 15 mph in safety zones when pedestrians are present; 15 mph in an alley; 25 mph on highways within corporate city limits unless modified and posted; 35 mph in outlying districts of city limits or semi-urban areas outside of city limits; 45 mph on designated rustic roads; 55 mph in the absence of any other fixed or posted limits; and 65 mph on freeways and expressways.

What Can You Do?

- Obey speed limits, and drive cautiously in inclement weather and in the previously mentioned high-risk locations.
- Be alert when driving in work zones, school zones, and railway grade crossings. Speeding fines are usually doubled in such locations.
- Wear a safety belt to reduce the risk of being injured or killed in a speed-related crash.
- Remember, speeding is not worth a ticket...or your life!