

State Crash Statistics and Backseat Passengers (2016-2021)

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Issue

This report answers several questions on motor vehicle crashes in Connecticut, including deaths and injuries to backseat passengers, that cover the last five years and involve the following vehicle types: passenger cars, sport utility vehicles, passenger vans, pickups, and motor homes.

Summary

The answers below are based on data from the [Connecticut Crash Data Repository](#) (CTCDR) maintained by the [Connecticut Transportation Safety Research Center](#) (CTSRC). The data was obtained on June 25, 2021, and covers the period from June 17, 2016, to June 17, 2021. Please be aware that some of statistics for this period are incomplete (e.g., certain crash detail fields are marked unknown or left blank) or subject to change due to a lag in data processing (see Background).

The CTCDR data comes from police crash reports collected by the [Connecticut Department of Transportation](#) (DOT). The state's [uniform police crash report](#) conforms to the national [Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria](#) guidelines and uses terms as defined in DOT's [Crash Report Investigator's Manual](#).

How many crashes have been reported in Connecticut during the last five years?

There were 501,320 crash records reported for this period as of June 25, 2021.

How many of those crashes resulted in death or other injuries?

Out of the 501,320 total crashes for this period, 121,708 resulted in at least one possible, suspected minor, suspected serious, or fatal injury. Table 1 shows the most severe injury that resulted from each crash.

Table 1: Most Severe Injury Resulting From Each Crash

Possible Injury	Suspected Minor Injury	Suspected Serious Injury	Fatal Injury	Unknown*	TOTAL
67,739	47,597	5,141	1,120	111	121,708

Source: OLR analysis of CTCDR data

DOT's investigator's manual classifies a "possible injury" as any injury reported or claimed that is not fatal, serious, or minor. A "suspected minor injury," is any injury evident at the crash scene other than a fatal or serious injury (e.g., abrasions, bruises, or minor lacerations). A "suspected serious injury," is one or more of the following non-fatal injuries: severe laceration, broken or distorted limb, crush injury, skull or chest injury, second- or third-degree burns, unconsciousness, or paralysis. Lastly, a death is classified as a "fatal injury" and counts it as such if a person dies within 30 days after being injured from a motor vehicle crash.

*The "Unknown" category was created for the purposes of this report and represents the instances where the reporting on a crash was incomplete or contained conflicting information (e.g., one part of the crash entry states a possible injury but another states fatal injury).

How many of the deaths and injuries during this period were to backseat passengers?

According to the data OLR obtained, there were 10,011 possible injuries, 4,761 suspected minor injuries, 369 suspected serious injuries, and 72 fatal injuries to passengers for this period who were explicitly reported as sitting in the second, third, or fourth rows of the above vehicle types.

Of those deaths and injuries to backseat passengers, how many had a restraint on? How many didn't?

Table 2 shows, by injury type, the instances when a backseat passenger (1) used some form of restraint system (e.g., shoulder belt or booster seat), (2) did not use a restraint when one was available, and (3) did not use a restraint because one was not available. The table also shows the instances when the restraint circumstances of a backseat passenger are unknown.

Table 2: Restraint Statistics by Injury Type

Injury Type	Restraint Used	Restraint Not Used When Available	Restraint Not Used, Not Available	Unknown	TOTAL
Possible Injury	8,513	430	62	1,006	10,011
Suspected Minor Injury	3,772	430	100	459	4,761
Suspected Serious Injury	136	119	42	72	369
Fatal Injury	18	31	5	18	72
TOTAL	12,439	1,010	209	1,555	15,213

Source: OLR analysis of CTCDR data

Background

CTCDR

[Developed in 2011](#), CTCDR provides public access to crash data that the state collects. The CTCDR data includes as many as 110 different details for each crash, including the date, time, and location of the crash; the make, model, year, and registration of the motor vehicle; and the people involved, such as pedestrians. However, personal identifying information, such as names or addresses, is not included.

According to CTSRC, the center adds data on a daily basis, but the timing of when information from a particular incident is added varies depending on how long it takes for a police agency to complete its investigation and send its crash reports to DOT and then for DOT to forward that information to CTSRC. State law requires police to submit their crash reports to DOT within five days after completing their investigations ([CGS § 14-108a](#)). DOT requests that police submit at least a preliminary report within 60 days of a fatal crash and advises that failure to do so may affect an agency's eligibility to qualify for federal highway safety grants (see [DOT FARS Reporting Guidelines](#)). CTSRC notes it may not receive information on a fatal crash until three to six months or more after the event.

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