

Bicyclist deaths rise in U.S., men are likely victims

August 24 2017



(HealthDay)—Bicyclist deaths on U.S. roadways are up significantly,

and men—not kids—are commonly the victims, a new report finds.

Biking deaths rose 12 percent in 2015, the latest year for which figures are available, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. This jump was the largest among any group that uses roadways.

Historically, most fatal bicycle crashes involved children and teens. Now, 85 percent of bicyclists killed on the road are men, the [report](#) said.

And of the 818 bicyclists killed in 2015, the average age was 45.

"We need to ensure that bicyclists and motorists can share roads safely," said Chris Mullen, director of technology research at State Farm, which funded the report.

"Unfortunately, bicyclists are vulnerable and much more susceptible to serious injury or death when on the roads with vehicles," Mullen said in an association news release.

Mullen said it's "critical that we examine the factors surrounding these crashes and leverage a variety of proven tools to improve [bicyclist](#) safety nationwide."

The report shed light on where and why [fatal crashes](#) between bicyclists and cars occur.

Often, drivers don't see bikers who expect to have the right of way and can't stop in time to avoid a collision, the report said.

Also, intersections aren't the usual problem. Most bike-car fatalities (72 percent) occur at non-crossroad locations. And more than half take place between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., the researchers found.

Alcohol—consumed by either the bicyclist or driver—was a factor in 37 percent of the fatalities, the report found.

The researchers noted that data on many of these accidents remains limited and advised states to enhance local [crash](#) reports.

They made 29 additional recommendations to help state and local officials improve bicyclist safety in their communities. These include more training for police, ramping up driver and cyclist [safety](#) signs, infrastructure improvements, and public education.

"While engineering solutions are vital, states and communities cannot solely build their way out of the problem," said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of the highway association. "These changes should be accompanied by education and enforcement to be most effective."

More information: The U.S. Department of Transportation has more on [biking safety](#).

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Citation: Bicyclist deaths rise in U.S., men are likely victims (2017, August 24) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-08-bicyclist-deaths-men-victims.html>

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