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Fact Sheet

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2019 SafeTREC Traffic Safety Facts: Drug-Impaired Driving

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TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

Drug-Impaired Driving

—Katherine L. Chen, Bor-Wen Tsai, Garrett Fortin, and Jill F. Cooper—

INTRODUCTION

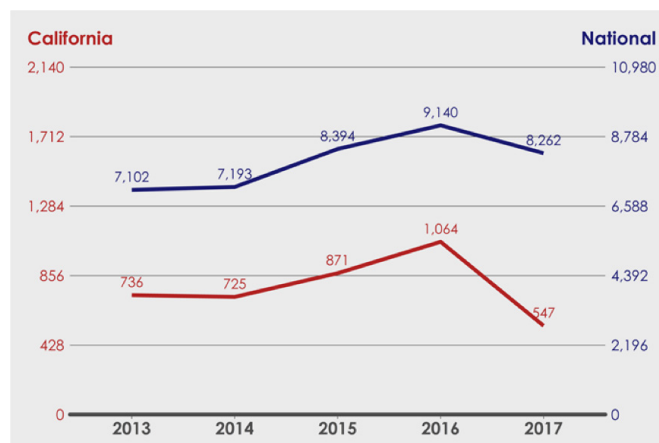
Driving under the influence of drugs is a significant threat to public safety. Various substances can impair cognition, attention, coordination, and other brain functions critical to driving safety. Unlike alcohol, the mechanism for absorption, distribution, and elimination of drugs from the body, as well as cognitive and behavioral effects differ greatly. The use of cannabis, prescription drugs, and other drugs are increasingly prominent on our roadways, where 22.2 percent of the nation’s 37,133 fatalities in 2017 were related to drug-involved driving.

CALIFORNIA FACTS

CALIFORNIA DATA

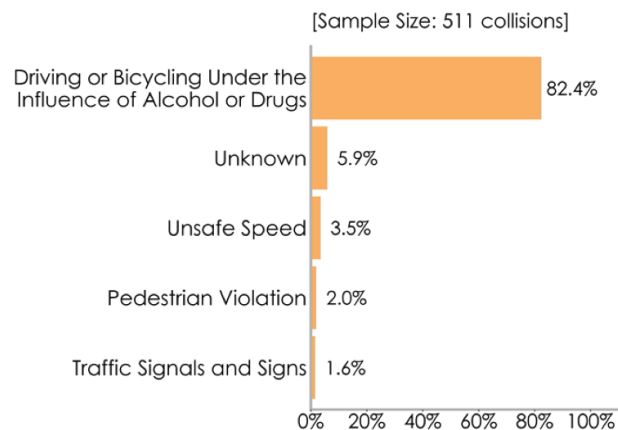
- There were 547 fatalities in drug-involved collisions in 2017, a 48.6 percent decrease from 1,064 in 2016 and a 25.7 percent decrease from 736 in 2013. The 2016 FARS figure increased significantly between the preliminary Annual Report File and the Final Report released, so the 2017 FARS figure may change substantially.
- In 2016, California voters passed a ballot initiative that legalized the sale and use of recreational cannabis. In 2018, the legal sale of cannabis began in some jurisdictions. Based on patterns following similar laws in Colorado and Washington, the number of drug-involved drivers is expected to increase.
- In 2017, a total of 5,045 drivers were involved in fatal collisions in California, but only 24.4 percent or 1,232 drivers were drug tested. Of those tested, drugs were found in 38.9 percent of drivers—detected drugs included narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, cannabinoids, phencyclidine, anabolic steroids, and inhalants among others.
- According to the 2018 California Traffic Safety Survey, almost half (49.3 percent) of respondents said they thought driving under the influence of drugs including marijuana, prescription and illegal drugs was “a very big” problem, while 36.7 percent thought it was somewhat of a problem.

Drug-Involved Driving Fatality Trends, Nationwide and California, 2013-2017



Source: FARS 2013-2016, FARS ARF 2017

Top Five Primary Collision Factors for Drug-Involved Driving Fatal and Serious Injury Collisions

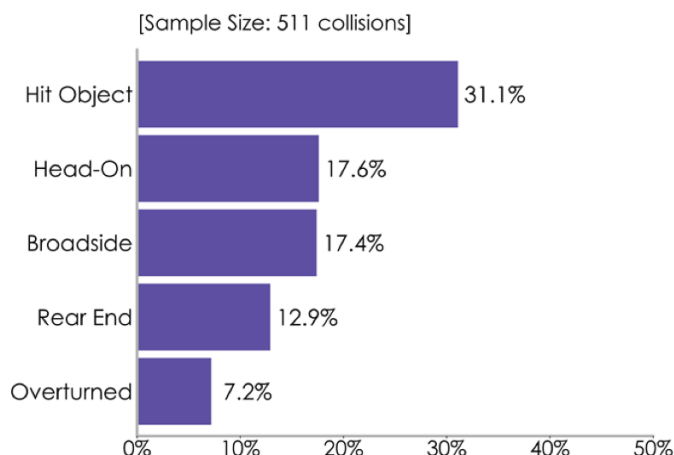


Source: Provisional SWITRS 2017

CALIFORNIA DATA *(continued)*

- The highest numbers of drug-involved road user fatalities and serious injuries were in the counties of Los Angeles and Riverside, followed by Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Kern, Fresno, San Joaquin, and Sacramento.
- Conversely, the rates of drug-involved fatalities and serious injuries per 100,000 population were highest in the more rural northern and central counties of Alpine, Mono, Calaveras, Amador, Glenn, Mendocino, Plumas, Siskiyou and Del Norte.
- Of fatal and serious injuries due to drug-involved driving, 68.7 percent occurred among men and 31.3 percent occurred among women.
- Of the drug-involved driving fatalities and serious injuries in California in 2017, nearly a majority (49.4 percent) occurred in the age range 25-34 (24.9 percent) and 15-24 (24.5 percent).
- Among fatally-injured victims of drug-involved collisions, most were white (70.7 percent). Race was unknown for 14.4 percent of the victims.
- Almost two-thirds (60.1 percent) of the drug-involved fatal injuries occurred on urban roads, with the other 39.9 percent occurring on rural roads.

Top Five Crash Types of Drug-Involved Driving Fatal and Serious Injury Collisions, California, 2017



Source: Provisional SWITRS 2017

Time of Day and Day of Week for Drug-Involved Driving Fatal and Serious Injury Victims, California, 2017

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL
Midnight-3AM	11	13	11	12	24	36	30	137 [14.3%]
3-6AM	17	6	7	4	5	27	27	93 [9.7%]
6-9AM	17	3	11	5	7	9	15	67 [7.0%]
9AM-Noon	10	10	9	12	9	19	13	82 [8.6%]
Noon-3PM	14	17	10	16	19	19	11	106 [11.1%]
3-6PM	12	20	15	13	21	20	23	124 [13.0%]
6-9PM	20	17	21	36	25	34	17	170 [17.8%]
9PM-Midnight	18	23	23	16	40	23	22	165 [17.3%]
Unknown	0	0	2	3	0	4	2	11 [1.2%]
TOTAL	119 [12.5%]	109 [11.4%]	109 [11.4%]	117 [12.3%]	150 [15.7%]	191 [20.0%]	160 [16.8%]	955 [100.0%]

FSI Num+% 0 1-7 8-12 13-17 18-23 24-40

Source: FARS ARF 2017, Provisional SWITRS 2017

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