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US on pace for deadliest driving year in decade

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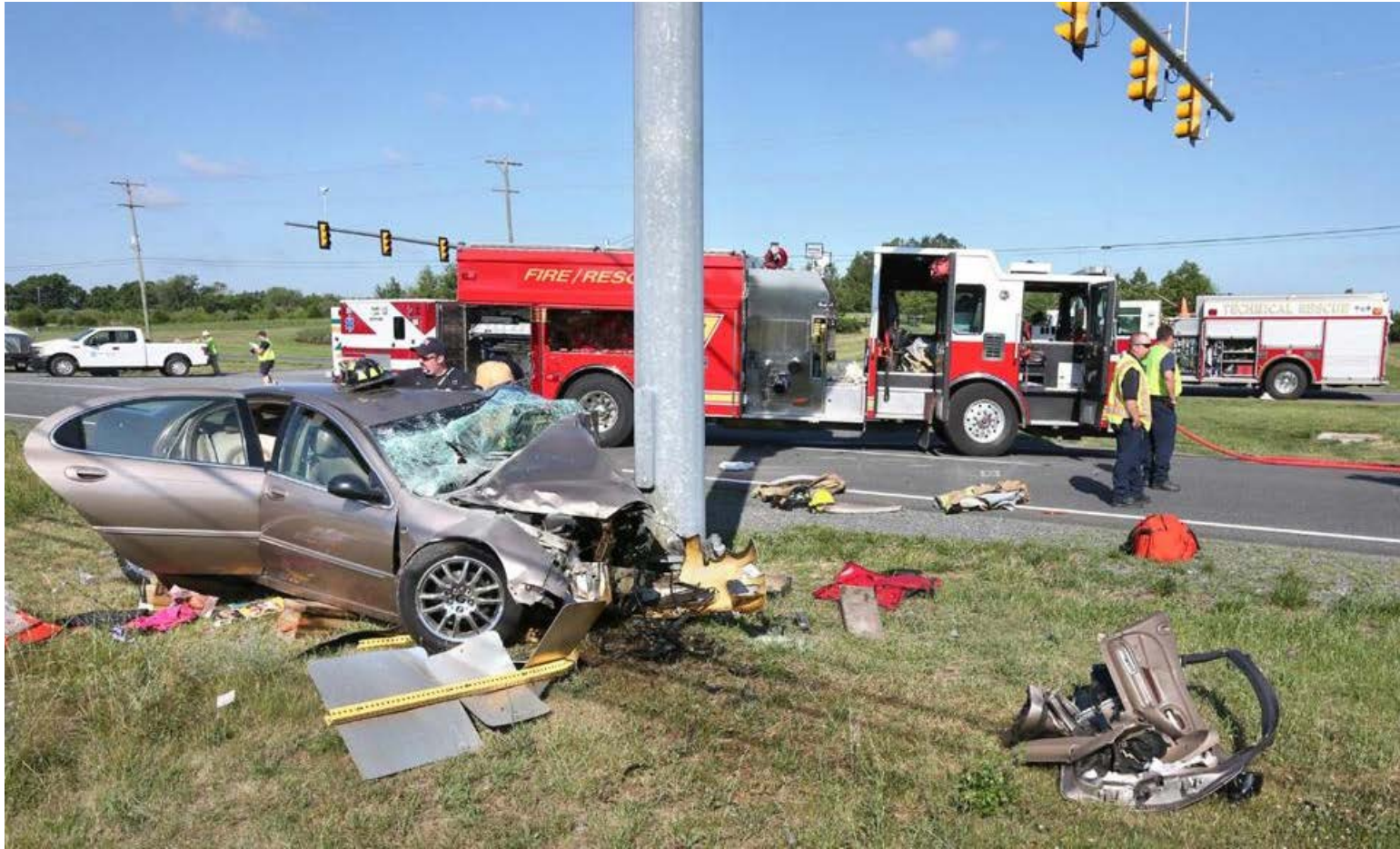
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Motor vehicle crashes killed about 19,100 people nationwide during the first six months of this year.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE STAFF AUGUST 24, 2016

Motor vehicle crashes killed about 19,100 people nationwide during the first six months of this year, continuing an alarming surge in roadway fatalities and putting America on pace for its deadliest

driving year in nearly a decade, according to preliminary estimates from a new study.

The death tally was 9 percent higher than it was during the first six months of 2015 and 18 percent greater than the first six months of 2014, when the upward trend began, according to the [National Safety Council](#), a nonprofit created by Congress to promote safety.

Massachusetts was no exception to the disturbing trend.

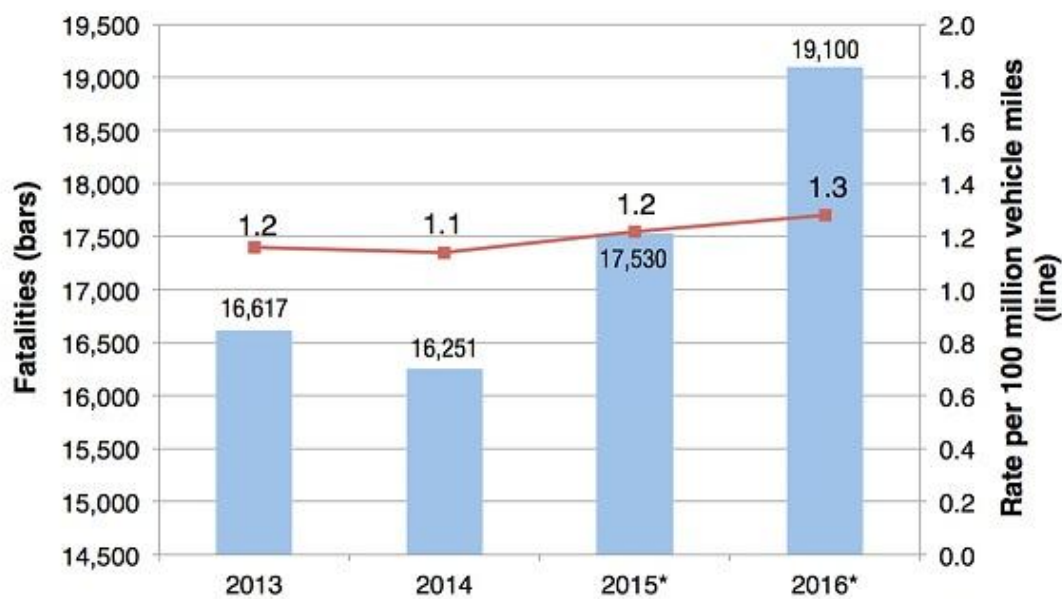
An estimated 179 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes statewide in the first half of this year, 20 percent more than each of the previous two years. There were 149 motor vehicle deaths in the same period last year and 146 the previous year, the council said.

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First Six Month Fatality Trends



* NSC preliminary estimate

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“Our complacency is killing us,” Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and chief executive of the council, said in a statement. “One hundred deaths every day should outrage us. Americans should demand change to prioritize safety actions and protect ourselves from one of the leading causes of preventable death.”

Nationwide, 2.2 million people were injured in motor vehicle crashes in the first six months of this year.

The council said that an improving economy, shrinking unemployment rates, and lower gas prices are believed to be fueling the increase in deaths. That's because those elements all typically lead to more traffic, as more people commute to work and can afford to drive farther and take vacations.

But even when compared with how much more people are driving, traffic fatalities are up.

During the first half of 2014, there were 1.1 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled nationwide. The rate was 1.3 during the first six months of this year.

The states with the largest percentage increases in motor vehicle deaths in the first half of the year were all in New England

Motor vehicle deaths totaled 31 in the first half of the year in Vermont, an increase of 63 percent from the same period a year before; New Hampshire had 61 deaths, up by 61 percent; and Connecticut saw 138, an increase of 45 percent.

Elsewhere in the region, Rhode Island had 23 deaths, up by 10 percent, and Maine had 63, up by 2 percent.

Eight states, and Washington, D.C., had a decline in motor vehicle deaths in the first half of this year compared with the same span in 2015. One state, South Dakota, saw no change.

Driving deaths by state

All figures are considered to be preliminary estimates.

State	2016 deaths	2015	2014	Change 2015 to 2016	2014 to 2016
TOTAL U.S.	19,100	17,530	16,251	9%	18%
Alabama	479	381	412	26%	16%

Alaska	34	27	32	26%	6%
Arizona	473	451	382	5%	24%
Arkansas	263	237	207	11%	27%
California	1,702	1,566	1,302	9%	31%
Colorado	254	236	200	8%	27%
Connecticut	138	95	119	45%	16%
Delaware	60	47	65	28%	-8%
Dist. of Columbia	9	10	13	-10%	-31%
Florida	1,590	1,441	1,114	10%	43%
Georgia	701	657	522	7%	34%
Hawaii	48	52	54	-8%	-11%
Idaho	115	84	79	37%	46%
Illinois	494	442	399	12%	24%
Indiana	383	356	289	8%	33%
Iowa	182	134	133	36%	37%
Kansas	195	149	184	31%	6%
Kentucky	373	326	300	14%	24%
Louisiana	314	330	275	-5%	14%
Maine	63	62	60	2%	5%
Maryland	231	224	188	3%	23%
Massachusetts	179	149	146	20%	23%
Michigan	462	409	407	13%	14%
Minnesota	173	187	149	-7%	16%
Mississippi	326	288	286	13%	14%
Missouri	410	383	348	7%	18%
Montana	77	72	79	7%	-3%
Nebraska	100	109	108	-8%	-7%
Nevada	141	147	134	-4%	5%
New Hampshire	61	38	38	61%	61%
New Jersey	272	245	267	11%	2%
New Mexico	187	131	169	43%	11%
New York	411	-	-	-	-
North Carolina	668	634	531	5%	26%
North Dakota	45	61	50	-26%	-10%

Ohio	505	499	425	1%	19%
Oklahoma	322	303	319	6%	1%
Oregon	217	204	128	6%	70%
Pennsylvania	569	552	518	3%	10%
Rhode Island	23	21	23	10%	0%
South Carolina	458	445	367	3%	25%
South Dakota	44	44	67	0%	-34%
Tennessee	502	437	453	15%	11%
Texas	1,824	1,643	1,668	11%	9%
Utah	133	129	108	3%	23%
Vermont	31	19	17	63%	82%
Virginia	348	344	308	1%	13%
Washington	253	235	225	8%	12%
West Virginia	109	119	107	-8%	2%
Wisconsin	277	254	214	9%	29%
Wyoming	42	66	65	-36%	-35%

SOURCE: National Safety Council

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