

Minnesota Impaired Driving Fact Sheet, 2018

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety

In 2018, Minnesota recorded 96 impaired-related traffic deaths, 14% more than in 2017. These accounted for 25 percent of all traffic deaths.

Impaired-related crashes, injuries and fatalities continue to be a serious problem in Minnesota. Overall, males and young adults are overrepresented in impaired-related crashes and account for a disproportionate share of fatalities. More than 600,000 Minnesotans with driver license records have a DWI.

- The legal alcohol limit for drivers in Minnesota is 0.08. It is always illegal to drive with an alcohol-concentration level of 0.08 or above. Motorists can be arrested under 0.08 if they demonstrate impaired driving behavior. If a motorist's alcohol-concentration is at 0.08 percent or higher, it is a criminal offense with penalties ranging from misdemeanor to felony. It is also a violation of civil law that triggers automatic driver license revocation for up to a year.
- During 2014–2018 in Minnesota there were 1,903 traffic deaths and 468 (25 percent) were impaired-related.
- Over the same five years, there were 126,101 DWI arrests. In 2018, 26,414 DWI arrests were made.
- In 2017, the Twin Cities' metro area had 50.8 percent of the impaired driving arrests and the 80-county non-metro area 49.2 percent.
- In 2017, males accounted for 65 percent of impaired driving arrests for which the gender of the violator was reported. However, from 2006 to 2017, female DWI offenses increased from 23 percent to 26 percent.
- Young persons - especially people in their 20s - account for a disproportionate share of all arrests. In 2017, people in their 20s represented 40 percent of DWI arrests.
- Of all Minnesota residents, more than one-half million - 645,000 - have a DWI on record. Thus, one in seven persons in Minnesota (including those with licenses revoked, cancelled, etc.) has a DWI; 144,935 (one in 16) have two or more arrests; 125,954 (one in 33) have three or more.
- Most impaired driving offenders are first-time offenders. In 2017, 14,717 (59 percent of all violators) were issued their first DWI. Still, many offenses are committed by persons with prior DWIs on their record. In 2017, 10,145 (41 percent) of violators had prior DWIs on record.