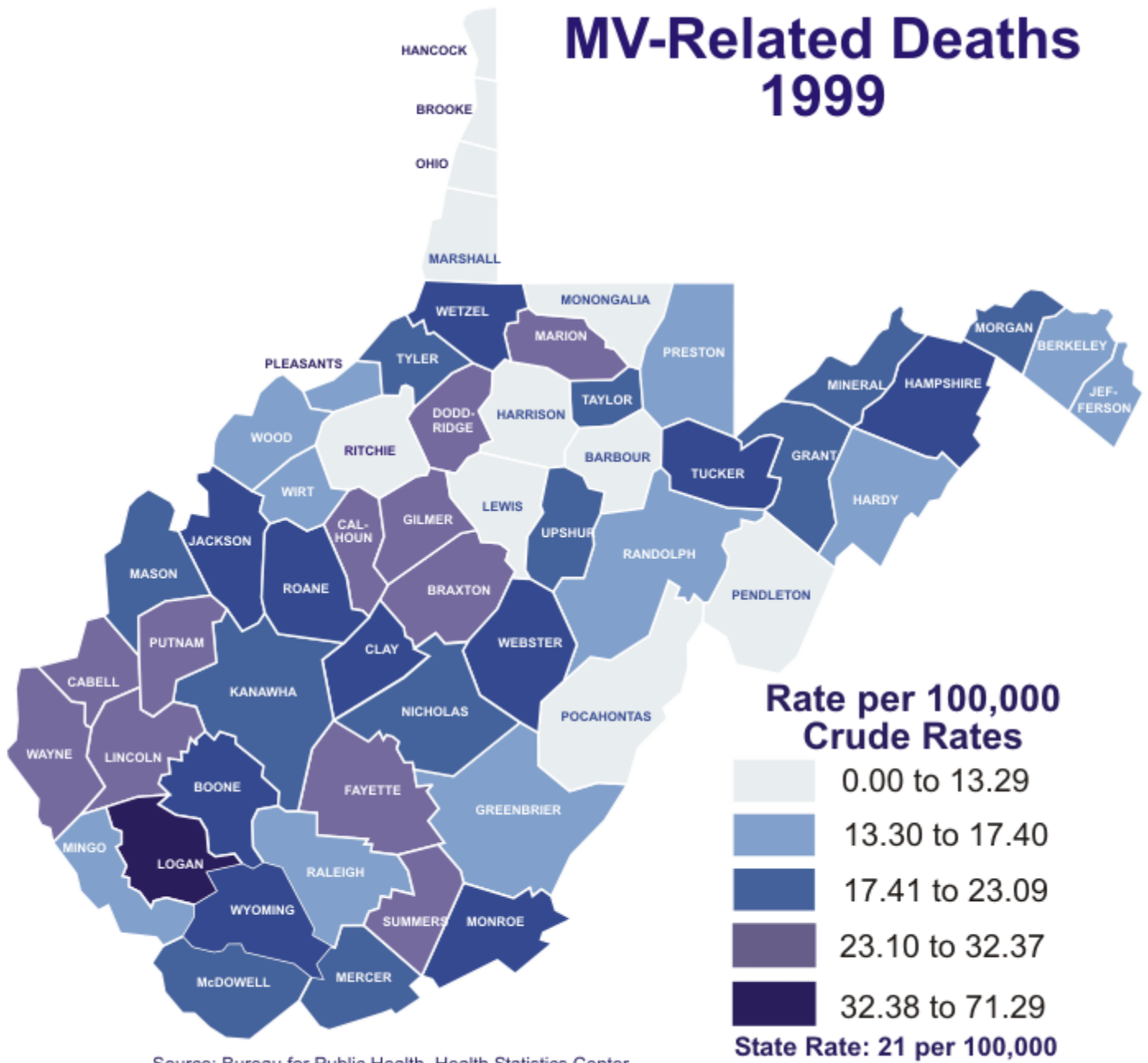


Motor Vehicle-related Deaths

Seat belt usage rate in West Virginia was 50% in 1999 compared to 71% nationally.

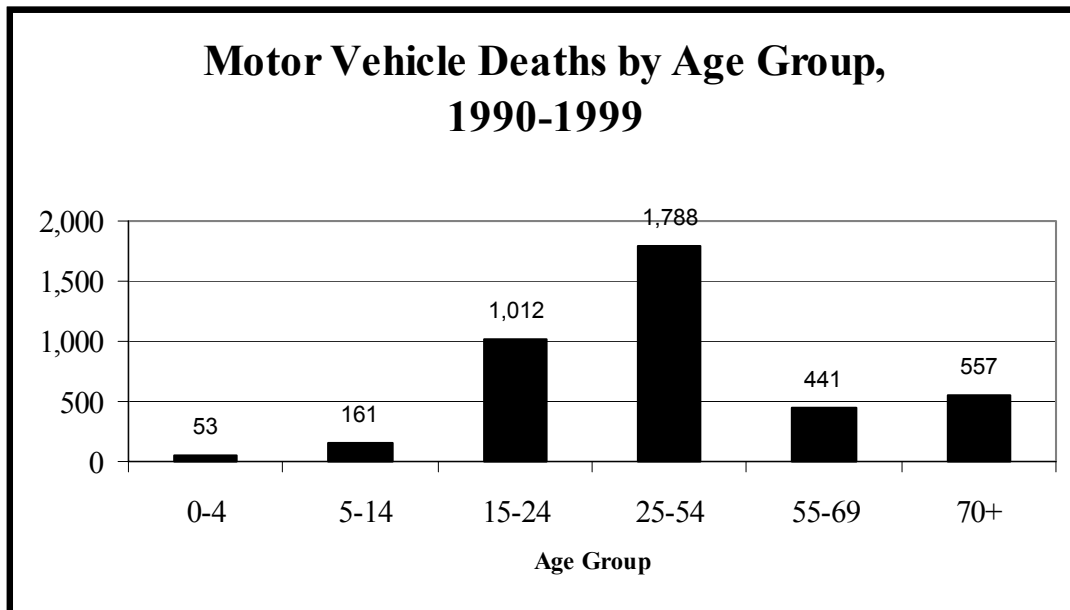
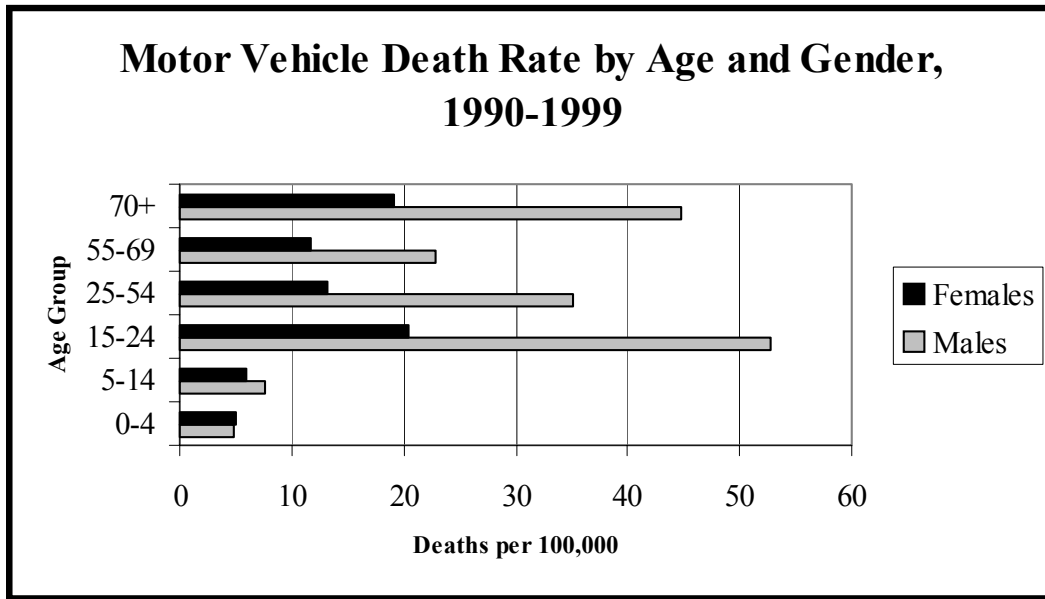


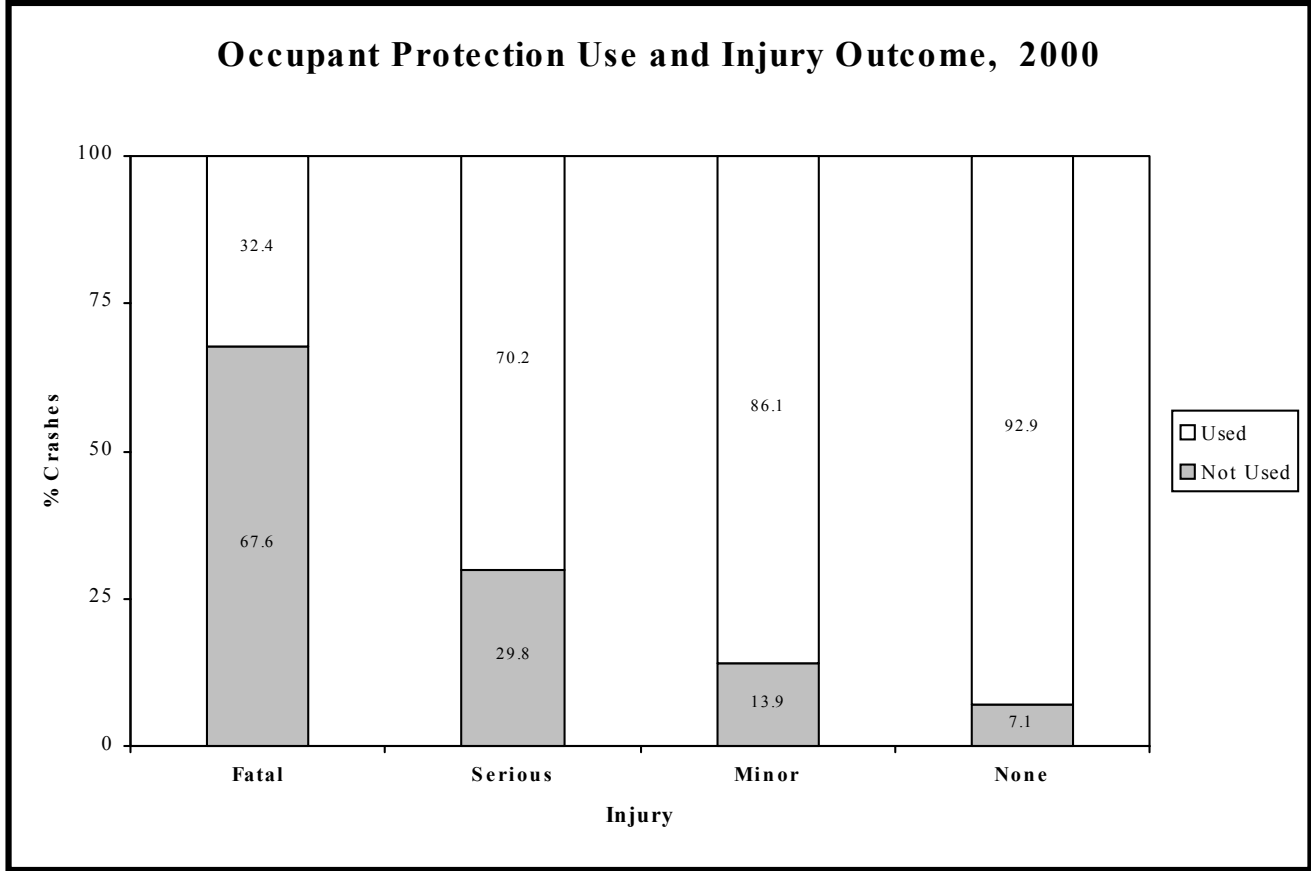
Motor vehicle crashes can also be seen as potential fatal injury events. Like many other fatal injuries, those resulting from MV crashes are not distributed equally across the state, as shown below.



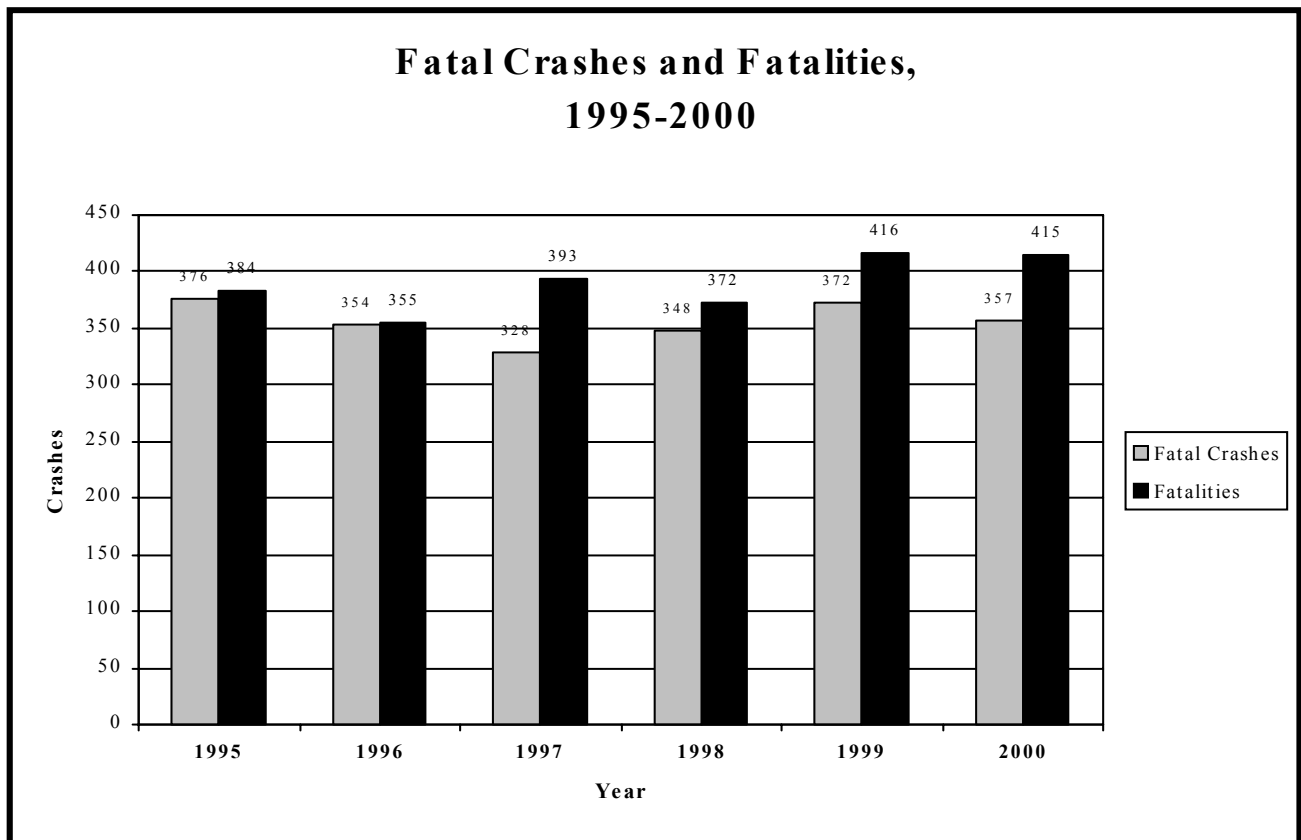


- WV death rates due to injuries received in MV crashes were very high among the 15 to 24 year old age group, accounting for over 50 deaths per 100,000. Rates were nearly as high among the elderly.
- Males had rates significantly exceeding those of females in all age groups 15 to 24 and older.





Source: WV Department of Transportation Division of Highways



Source: WV Department of Transportation Division of Highways

*Crash Report Unavailable for 1994 and 1997



- Estimated economic loss resulting from 415 fatalities in 2000 was \$1.1 billion.
- Two-thirds of the 2000 fatalities were males, 11% were under age 18, 17% were age 60 or older, and 37% involved alcohol.
- WV safety belt usage rate in 1999 was the second lowest in the country. Less than half (49.5%) of WV motorists wear a safety belt.
- West Virginia's 1999 traffic fatality rate was 11th in the country — about 40% above the national average; 21.9 deaths per 100,000 vs. 15.3.
- Lower seat belt usage results in higher fatality rates.

Healthy People 2010 Objectives:

- 15.5 Reduce overall motor vehicle crash deaths to no more than 17.7 per 100,000 population.
- 15.5a Reduce motor vehicle crash deaths of children aged 10-14 to no more than 4.8 per 100,000 population.
- 15.5b Reduce the motor vehicle crash deaths of young adults aged 15-24 to no more than 27.7 per 100,000 population.
- 15.5c Reduce the motor vehicle crash deaths of adults aged 25-44 to no more than 20.0 per 100,000 population.
- 15.5d Reduce the motor vehicle crash deaths of adults aged 45 or older to no more than 18.0 per 100,000 population.
- 15.6 Reduce the number of overall motor vehicle crashes to no more than 2.0 per 1,000,000 vehicle miles traveled.
- 15.11 Increase the use of safety belts among adults and children older than 8 to at least 74% of motor vehicle occupants.
- 15.12 Increase the use of child restraints in motor vehicles to at least 98%.

Prevention Strategies

A number of viable strategies have been developed over the past two decades addressing various aspects of preventing motor vehicle-related injuries. These generally fall into four broad categories; occupant protection, use of alcohol, licensing, and environmental and technical concerns.

Occupant Protection

- ▲ Ensure infants ride in a rear-facing child restraint/safety seat until they weigh 20 pounds and are approximately 1 year old.
- ▲ Ensure infants riding in rear-facing child safety seats are never placed in the front seat of a car or truck with a passenger-side air bag.
- ▲ Children older than 1 year and between 20 and 40 pounds should ride in a forward-facing child safety seat as long as the child fits (i.e., ears should be below the top of the back of the seat and shoulders below



the seat strap slots).

- ▲ Provide low-income child safety seat programs.
- ▲ Conduct training programs for proper safety seat installation.
- ▲ Encourage children to ride in the vehicle's rear seat. If the vehicle does not have a rear seat, children riding in the front seat should be positioned as far back as possible from the dashboard.
- ▲ Older children and adults should be properly restrained in lap and shoulder belts.
- ▲ Enforce seat belt laws and promote primary laws that allow police to stop vehicles solely for an observed seat belt law violation.
- ▲ Ensure that laws requiring motorcycle operators and passengers wear helmets are maintained.

Use of Alcohol

- ▲ Enact laws making the consumption of alcohol illegal under age 18.
- ▲ Strictly enforce the zero-alcohol tolerance laws for drivers under age 21.
- ▲ Reduce allowable blood alcohol levels in adult drivers .08 percent and a lower blood alcohol content for younger or inexperienced drivers.
- ▲ Promote administrative license revocation that authorizes police to confiscate licenses of drivers who either fail or refuse to take a chemical test for alcohol.
- ▲ Enact laws making servers of alcohol share liability.
- ▲ Increase sobriety checkpoints particularly on weekends, holidays and on special occasions such as school proms.
- ▲ Evaluate strategies to limit access by teenagers.
- ▲ Encourage the use of designated drivers.

Licensing

- ▲ Evaluate the separate components (e.g., learner's permit, intermediate, unrestricted) of graduated licensing systems to determine which are most effective.

Environmental and Technical Concerns

- ▲ Continue to employ technology in all aspects of motor vehicle design.
- ▲ Identify and mark or eliminate hazardous road conditions.
- ▲ Properly mark all paved roads (particularly those in unlit or poorly lit rural areas) with appropriate symbols and painted lines.
- ▲ Provide trained and available EMS coverage in rural areas.
- ▲ Promote public awareness campaigns that emphasize that when you are sleepy, get off the road and nap or let someone else drive.

Many of these strategies might involve collaborative efforts on many levels including: building public and private **partnerships**; enacting strong **legislation**; maintaining active and highly visible law **enforcement**; and conducting active public **education**.

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