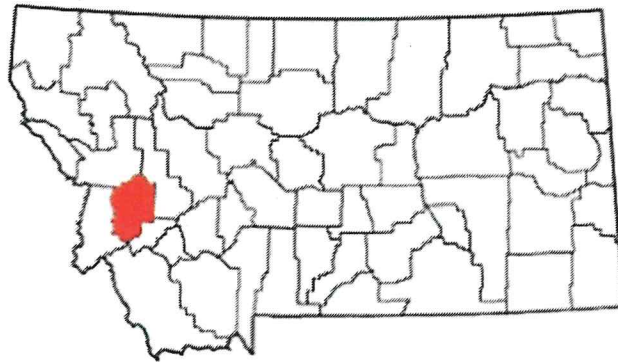
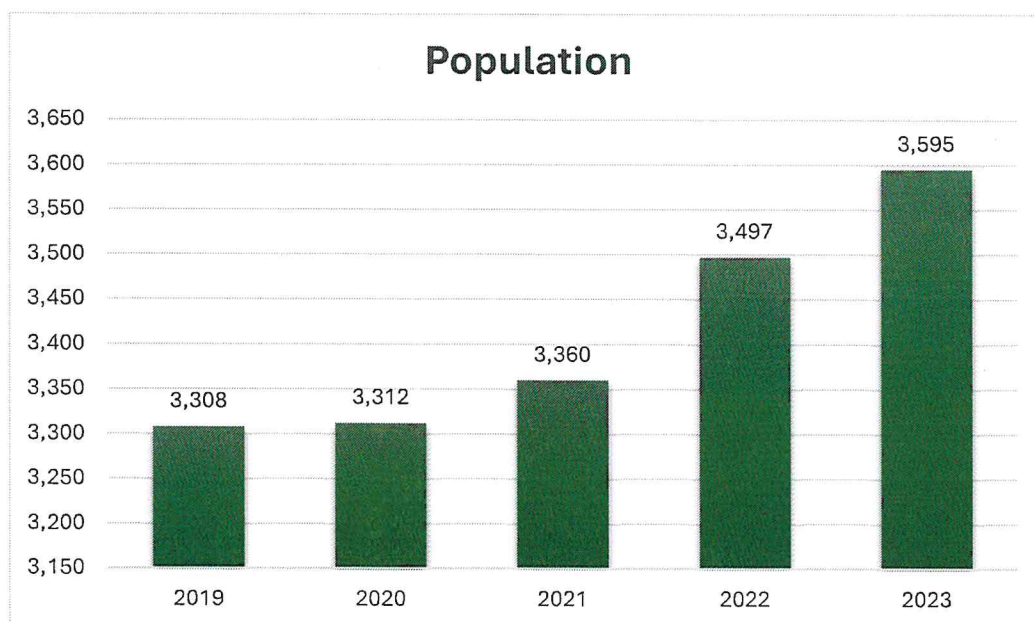


Problem Statement



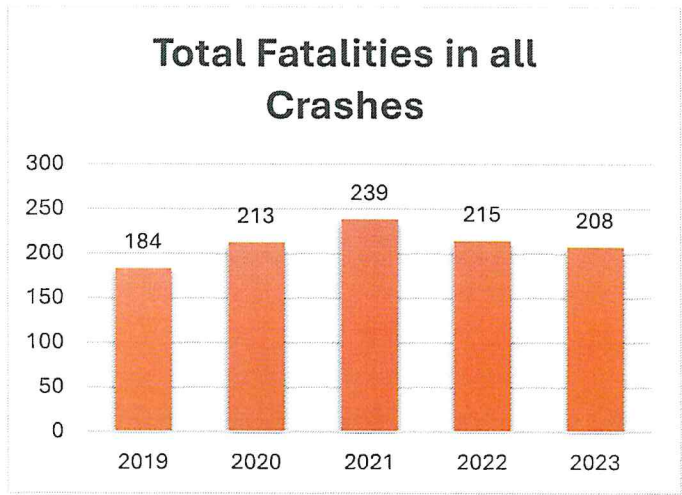
Montana encompasses 147,042 square miles making it the fourth largest state in the United States. Throughout the state's 56 counties there are 73,670 miles of roads open to the public for travel. Over the past five years from 2019 to 2023 the population in the state has grown by 57,317 residents with a population of 1,132,812 in 2023. With an increasing population and considerable amount of roadway miles brings a substantial number of vehicles to the state with the MT DMV reporting that in 2023 there were a combined 2,301,352 light vehicles, motorcycles, and heavy trucks registered. Along with the residents of Montana driving on the roads the University of Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research reported that the state received 12,568,000 nonresident visitors in 2023. The extension miles of road combined with the residence of the state and the significant number of visitors utilizing the road network brings unique issues.

Granite County is ranked number 40 based on its size versus the other counties in the state and encompasses 1,732.8 square miles. Over the five-year period 2019 through 2023 the county's population has steadily increased year over year.

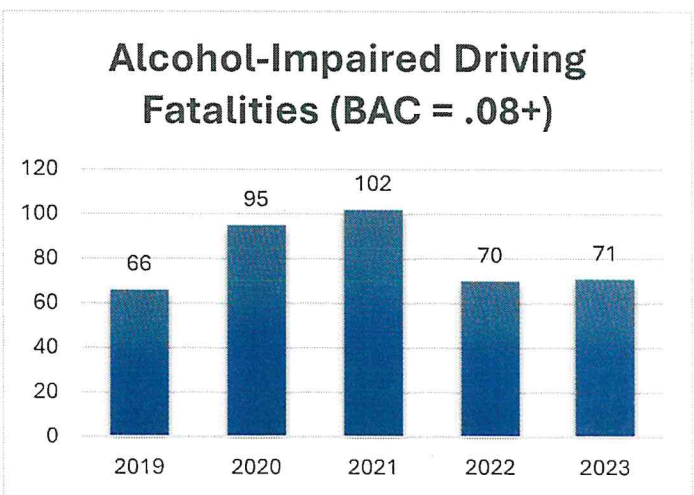


*Montana Department of Commerce

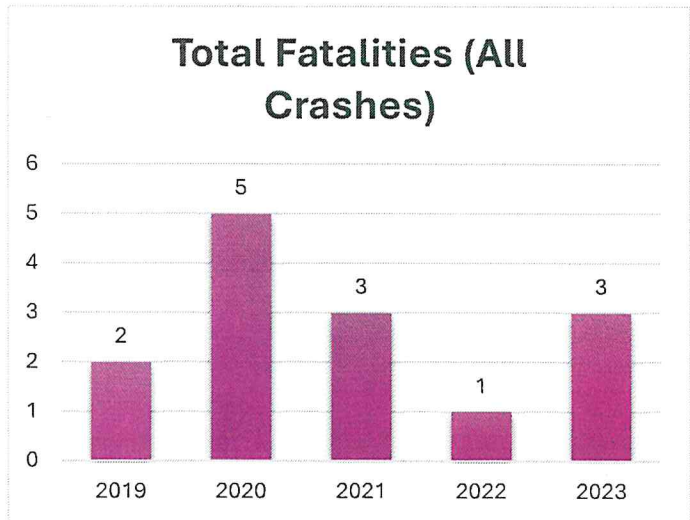
During the five-year period 2019 through 2023, there were a total of 1,059 fatal crashes on Montana roadways of which 404 or 38% included an impaired driving fatality where there was alcohol impairment with a BAC of 0.08+. During the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic the crash fatalities in the state rose, however this trend was consistent throughout the United States. In 2022 and 2023, fatalities began reducing more towards the pre-pandemic range. However, the state maintains a higher than the national average percentage of alcohol impaired fatalities compared to total crash fatalities. During the five-year period Montana's saw a percentage of 38% whereas the national average for alcohol impaired fatalities verses total crash fatalities was 30%.



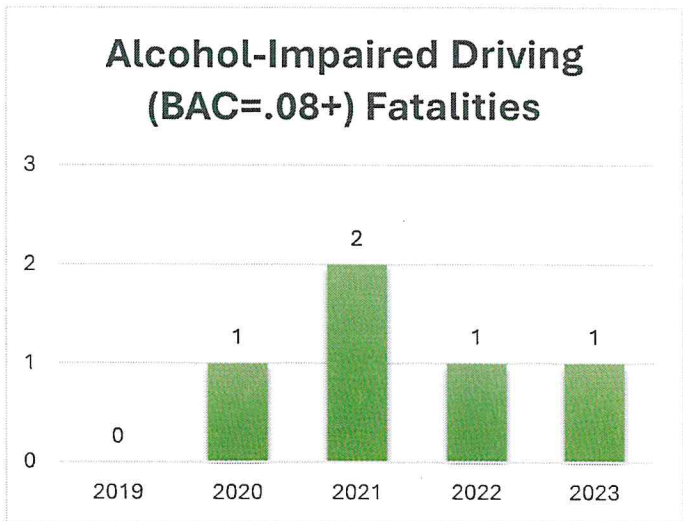
*NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System



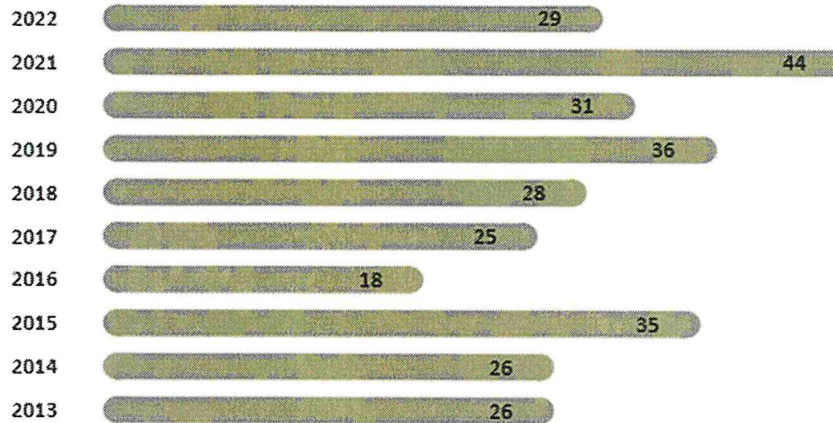
The county has incurred the following roadway fatalities along with the following fatalities due to alcohol impaired driving.



*NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System



Montana
Fatalities Involving Young Drivers, 2013-2022
298



During the ten-year period 2013 through 2022, the state has seen rising and declining periods of fatalities involving drivers aged 15 to 21+ years.



For the years 2013 through 2022, 141 or 47% of fatalities involving a young driver occurred during the daytime whereas 157 occurred at night. During the same period, 103 of the fatalities were female and 195 were male or 65% of fatalities involving a young driver.



The 298 fatalities involving young drivers consisted of 17 younger than 15 years old, 198 between the ages of 15 to 20, and 83 young adults aged 21+.

Alcohol Involvement Among Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes

Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Their BACs*



In 2022, 6 of the young drivers involved in fatal crashes had a BAC of 0.08+.

The Montana Highway Patrol reported the following citations between 2019 and 2023.

Highway Patrol Activity					
Citations Issued	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
D.U.I./Per Se	2,155	2,100	2,552	2,644	2,366
Seat Belt	8,522	7,262	2,017	10,272	8,942
Total Drug	1,588	2,207	1,151	1,470	1,400

In addition to the MHP citations the Montana Crime Lab also reported in 2023, methamphetamine continues to be one of the most prevalent drugs in toxicology's casework. For postmortem cases, it was often seen when fentanyl was present. It was also found in 24% of all drug driving under the influence cases receiving full drug screens.

Case Type	2023 Cases	2022 Cases	2021 Cases	2020 Cases
Postmortem (Blood results only)	311 cases	229 cases	212 cases	191 cases
DUID	382 cases	408 cases	500 cases	408 cases

Fentanyl also continues to become a growing issue within the state. While still prescribed and used in hospital settings, fentanyl has flooded the illicit markets. Fentanyl is a synthetic opiate narcotic analgesic and is 40-50 times more potent than heroin. There was a 13% increase in its detection in postmortem casework. It was detected in 7% of drug driving under the influence cases receiving full drug screens.

Case Type	2023 Cases	2022 Cases	2021 Cases	2020 Cases
Postmortem (Blood results only)	128 cases	118 cases	87 cases	41 cases
DUID	99 cases	95 cases	57 cases	12 cases

In 2023, there were 3,703 blood samples submitted to the Montana State Crime Lab. Of those samples, where alcohol was detected, the average BAC was 0.182. For the year the highest BAC resulted in 0.565. They also found that 69% of the samples were positive for alcohol, of which 59% had a BAC greater than 0.10.

Alcohol and Drug Prevalence in Driver Blood Samples (includes fatal crashes)	
Blood Samples Submitted	3,703
Blood Samples tested for drugs other than alcohol (drug)	1,624
Blood Samples Positive for Alcohol	69%
Blood Samples Positive for Drug(s) other than Alcohol	34%
Alcohol Detected Only	66%
Alcohol + Drug(s)	10%
Drug(s) Detected Only	25%
No Drug(s) or Alcohol Detected	5%
BAC Greater than 0.100%	59%
BAC 0.020% - 0.100%	10%
Average BAC	0.182, Range: 0.010-0.565 g/100mL

In summary, Montana total crash fatalities along with alcohol impaired fatalities peaked in 2021 and have since declined to levels more consistent with where the state was prior to 2021. The increase in fatalities around 2020 and 2021 was also consistent throughout the United States during that same period. While the state's fatalities have declined during 2019 through 2023 Montana's percentage of alcohol impaired compared to total fatalities still exceeds the national average. During this period Montana had a fatality rate of 38% whereas the national average was 30%.

In addition to the continued issue with alcohol impaired fatalities drugs and polyuse (drugs and alcohol) also have contributed to the states crash fatalities. The crime lab continues to find methamphetamine while testing driving under the influence of drug cases and rising cases of fentanyl.

The state also continues to have young drivers involved in fatal crashes. Of the 213 fatalities in 2022, there were 29 fatal crashes involving a young driver. And about 50% of the fatalities involving a young driver include the driver and about 28% of the fatalities are the driver's passengers.