



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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Transportation Cabinet, Kentucky State Police Announce Decrease in 2022 Highway Fatality Count

Fatalities down 62 compared with 2021, first decrease since 2018

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 12, 2023) – Highway fatalities in Kentucky decreased last year for the first time since 2018. While the reduction demonstrates a positive step, state officials encourage motorists to practice safe driving behaviors to prevent avoidable deaths.

“The decrease in highway fatalities is an encouraging sign of what I hope will be a downward trend for years to come,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “While we are thankful, one fatality is one too many and we grieve with those who lost loved ones last year on our roadways. To avoid losing more Kentuckians on our highways, we must remain vigilant by practicing safe behaviors, like buckling up and putting the phone down.”

According to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s (KYTC) Office of Highway Safety and Kentucky State Police (KSP). Data indicates there were 744 fatalities in 2022, compared to 806 in 2021 – a 7.6 percent decrease.

“Highway safety is about more than numbers – it’s about people,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “We will continue to work toward our goal of zero traffic deaths on Kentucky roadways through infrastructure improvements and partnerships with state agencies and the public.”

Of the 744 highway fatalities last year in Kentucky, 57 percent were not wearing a seat belt and 15 involved alcohol. Approximately 33 percent involved speeding or aggressive drivers and 20 percent involved driver distraction. Pedestrians and bicyclists accounted for 109 deaths and motorcyclists accounted for 99 deaths.

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#), one of the most effective ways to help reduce highway traffic deaths is to combine public awareness campaigns with high-visibility enforcement efforts.

“The last thing we want to do is notify someone that their loved one has been in a fatal crash, so if we can potentially save a life by writing a ticket, we’ll do it,” said KSP Capt. Paul Blanton. “At the end of the day, we want everyone to make it home safely.”

The KOHS partners with KSP, county and city law enforcement agencies throughout the state in awareness campaigns and enforcement blitzes, such as *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*, *Buckle Up Phone Down, Not So Fast*, *KY speed campaign* and *Click It or Ticket*.

“While we pledge to increase our awareness efforts, we need the public’s help,” said Secretary Gray. “We’re asking motorists and passengers to commit to safe driving behaviors when behind the wheel.”

According to [NHTSA](#), wearing a seat belt gives motorists the best chance of preventing injury or death if involved in a crash. Properly fastened seat belts contact the strongest parts of the body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. A seat belt spreads the force of a crash over a wide area of the body, putting less stress on any one part, and allows the body to slow down with the crash, extending the time when the crash forces are felt by the occupant.

“We encourage motorists to make safe choices on the road because it’s the right thing to do, not just because it is the law,” said Capt. Blanton. “Some may see it as an inconvenience, but traffic laws are in place for a reason – to save lives.”

So far in 2023, preliminary numbers indicate 169 roadway deaths, down 13 compared to the same time last year.

KYTC continues to pursue infrastructure projects to prevent deaths and serious injuries on highways. The Cabinet’s 2023-2024 budget includes additional funding investments for safety improvements. Anticipated dedicated funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and discretionary grant application opportunities will infuse more dollars to invest in communities statewide to implement innovative safety solutions in the coming years.

Historical Kentucky highway fatality statistics:

2016	834
2017	782
2018	724
2019	732
2020	780
2021	806
2022	744

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Editor’s note: See [attachment](#) for county-specific data. Download graphic for [Facebook/Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

