

HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS?

2018 annual data report on the impact of drunk driving on road safety in the metropolitan Washington region

December 2019



HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS? ANNUAL DATA REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF DRUNK DRIVING ON ROAD SAFETY IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION

Prepared for the Washington Regional Alcohol Program by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

December 2019

ABOUT WRAP

The Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs, and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C. metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.

ABOUT COG

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

CREDITS

Cover photo caption: "This St. Patrick's Day, plan a sober ride home when you go out. Designate a sober driver or take advantage of SoberRide," said Metropolitan Police (DC) Chief Peter Newsham on March 15, 2019 in helping launch WRAP's 2019 St. Patrick's Day SoberRide® campaign in Washington, D.C. (WRAP)

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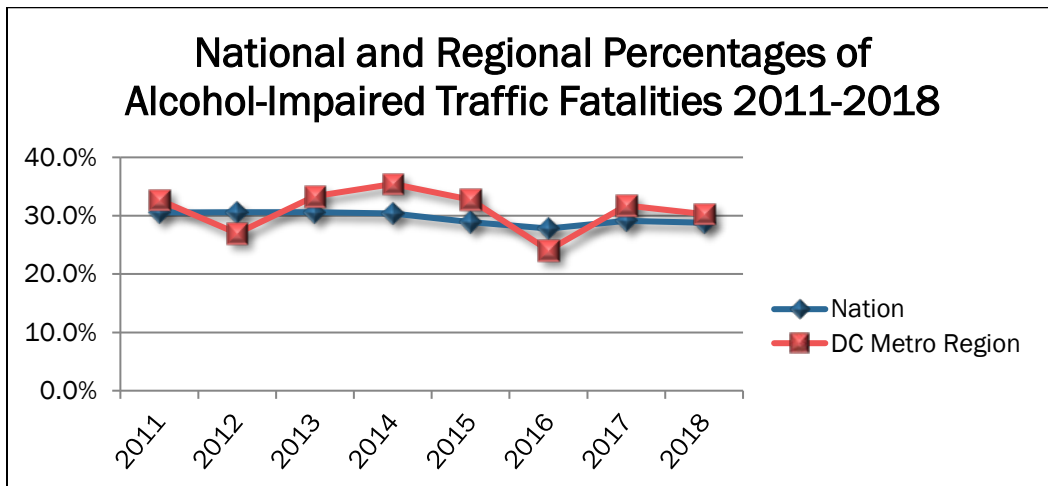
A LOOK AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FIGURES

The metropolitan Washington region has experienced a decrease in alcohol and/or drug-related fatalities and injuries, and an increase in alcohol and/or drug-impaired crashes and arrests.

Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities have decreased 1.16% of total crash fatalities in the region in 2018 from 2017, compared with an increase of 45.76% in 2017 from 2016. Nationally, alcohol-impaired fatality rates decreased slightly in 2018 to 28.75% (compared to 29.12% in 2017¹).

Jurisdictions differ in collection and categorization methods for alcohol-impaired driving, therefore, some of the data in this report may include both alcohol and alcohol/drug-impaired driving numbers. These regional totals include U.S. National Park Service data. Where applicable, notes are included throughout this report for jurisdictions that changed their collection and reporting data methodology therefore changing figures from previous years.

Figure 1. National & Regional Percentages of Alcohol-Impaired Traffic Fatalities, 2011-2018



¹ National data for total traffic fatalities and alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities were updated for 2017. For additional information, see [NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts, 2018 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes Overview](#).

Figure 2. Regional Totals of Alcohol-Related Injuries, Crashes, & Arrests, 2011-2018

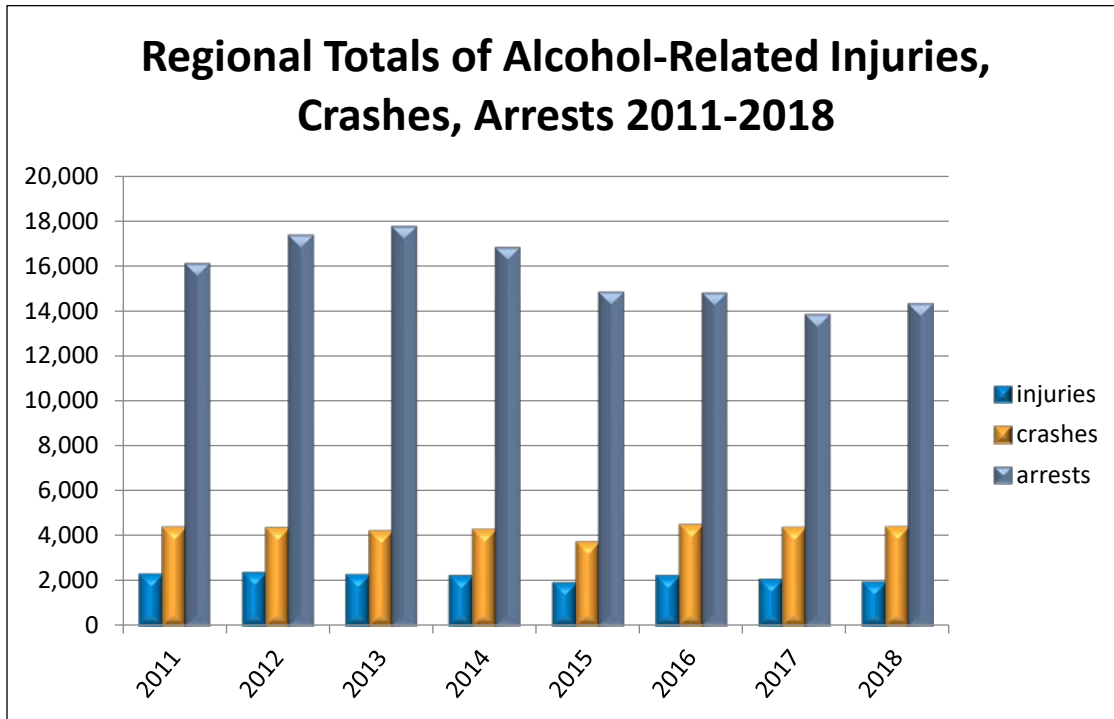
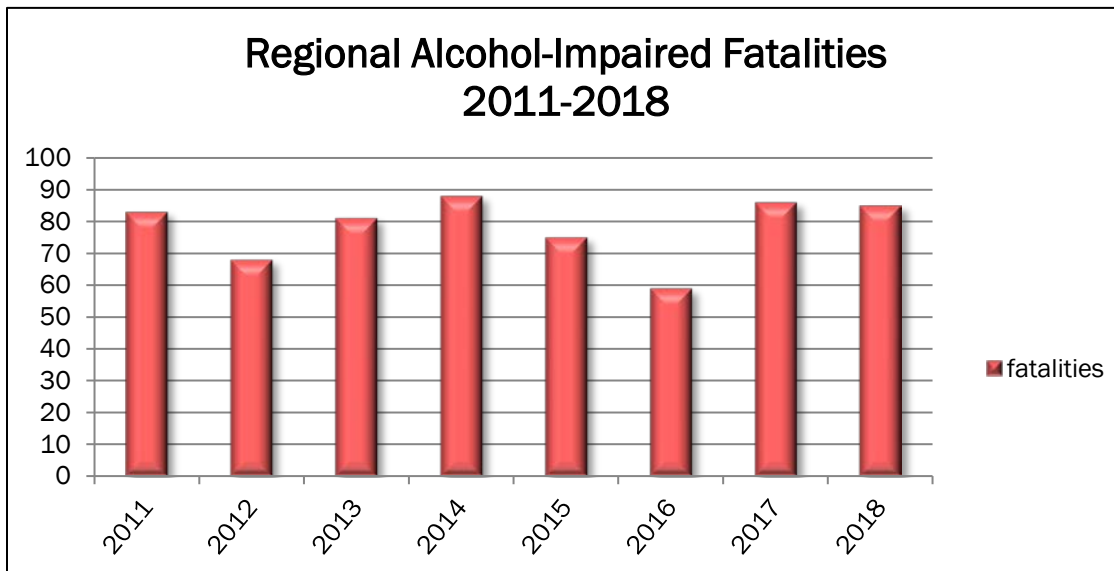


Figure 3. Regional Alcohol-Impaired Fatalities, 2011-2018



HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS? 2019 REPORT

OVERVIEW

Findings in the 2019 report (2018 data) include:

FATALITIES: Local alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities **decreased** by 1.16% between 2017 and 2018 (from 86 to 85 such fatalities).

- The average number of regional total (DC Metro Region and National Parks) alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities over the last five years (2014-2018) is 78.6.
- Three of the last five years has had more alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities than the average.
- 2015 and 2016 were below the average for alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities.

CRASHES: Area traffic crashes attributed to alcohol and/or drugs **increased** 0.56% between 2017 and 2018 (from 4,311 to 4,335 such crashes²).

- The average number of DC Metro Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related traffic crashes over the last five years (2014-2018) is 4,163.
- Four of the last five years has had more alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic crashes than the average.
- 2015 was below the average of alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic crashes.

INJURIES: Regional alcohol and/or drug-related traffic injuries **decreased** 6.19% between 2017 and 2018 (from 1,986 to 1,863 such injuries³).

- The average number of DC Metro Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related traffic injuries over the last five years (2014-2018) is 1,978.
- Two of the last five years has had more alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic injuries than the average.
- 2015, 2017, and 2018 were below the average for alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic injuries.

ARRESTS: Local arrests for either driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while impaired (DWI) **increased** 3.51% between 2017 and 2018 (from 13,808 to 14,293 such arrests).

² 2015, 2016, and 2017 data were edited for alcohol-related crashes in the District of Columbia. 2015 figures changed from 647 to 260, 2016 figures changed from 746 to 740, and 2017 figures changed from 723 to 710.

³ 2015, 2016, and 2017 data were edited for alcohol-related injuries in the District of Columbia. 2015 figures changed from 180 to 59, 2016 figures changed from 149 to 228 and 2017 figures changed from 116 to 176.

- The average number of DC Metro Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related arrests over the last five years (2014-2018) is 14,536.
- Two of the last five years has had more alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic arrests than the average.
- 2016, 2017, and 2018 were below the average for alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic arrests.

Of the metropolitan Washington area's 281 total traffic fatalities for 2018, **85 (or 30%)** of these roadway deaths were due to drivers who were alcohol and/or drug-impaired (Blood

Alcohol Concentration [BAC] = .08+). National statistics (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA) show that 29% of total U.S. vehicular fatalities in 2018 were reported as alcohol impaired (BAC = .08+).

Background

Data compiled in this report comes from national, state, and local sources including the U.S. Census Bureau, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), U.S. National Park Service (NPS), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (VA DMV), Maryland National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems (MD NSC), and local police departments of each jurisdiction.

Jurisdictional data in this report does not always include State Police data. The State Police in Maryland and Virginia are charged with enforcing traffic laws on state highways and interstate expressways; inclusion of this data would likely increase the number of incidents in all categories. It is possible that some jurisdictional data may include State Police figures because local police often respond to highway incidents when State Police are unavailable. In some jurisdictions, the data reported were provided by the state, and most likely include state police data.

SUB-REGIONAL TRENDS

Figure 4. Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: Northern Virginia

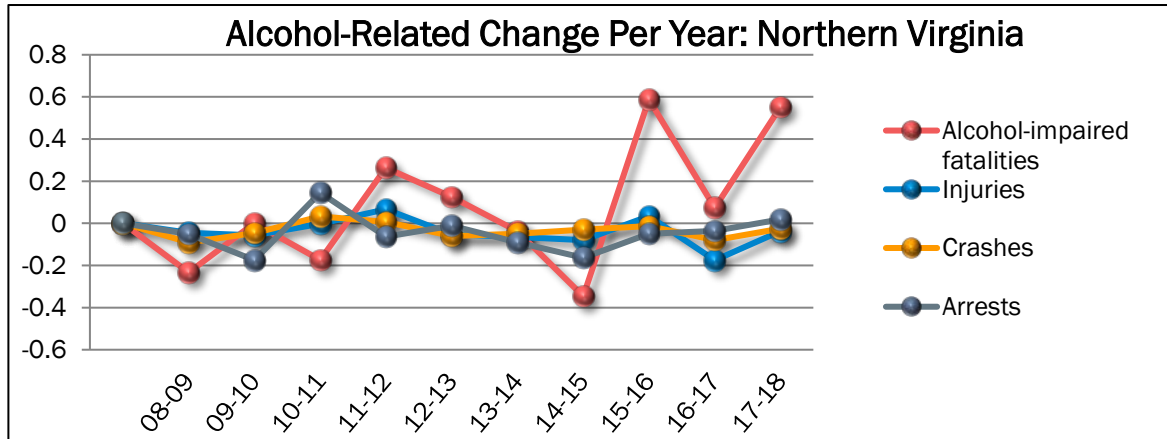


Figure 5: Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: Suburban Maryland

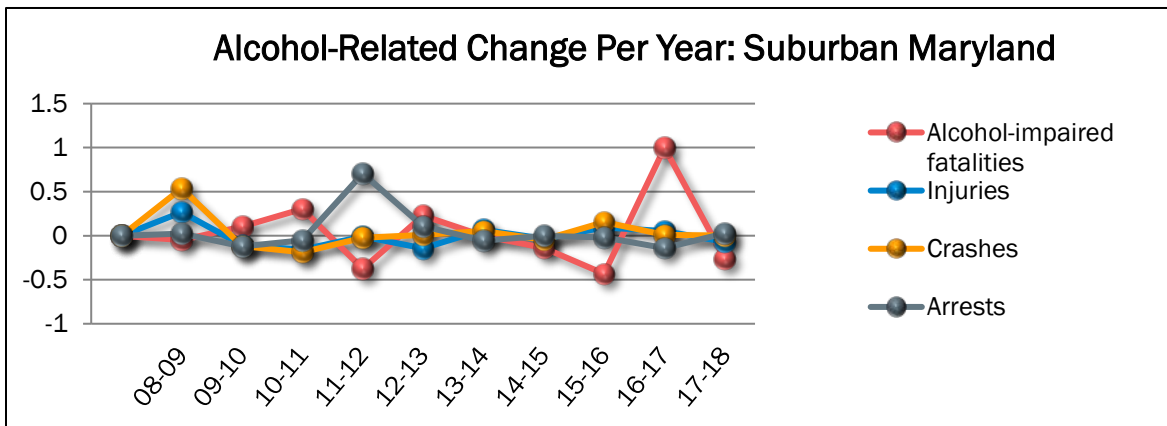
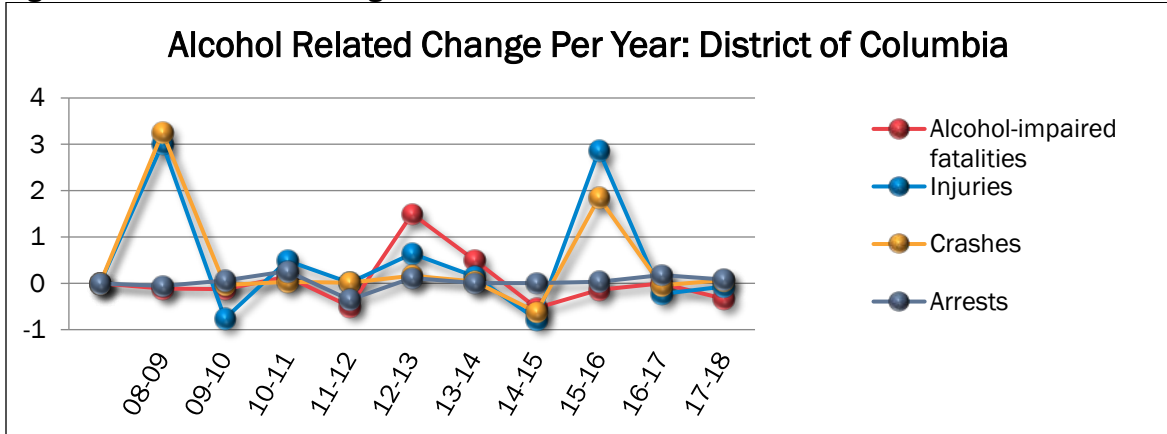


Figure 6. Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: District of Columbia



TOTAL TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Total Traffic Fatalities 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	27	15	29	26	26	28	33	36	9.09%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	40	37	41	40	47	42	33	34	3.03%
Prince George's County	105	83	87	98	95	78	99	103	4.04%
MD Regional Total	145	120	128	138	142	120	132	137	3.79%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	6	4	6	5	5	1	5	2	-60.00%
Fairfax County	45	46	40	32	30	36	35	47	34.29%
Loudoun County	11	17	13	12	11	12	22	11	-50.00%
Prince William County	15	19	19	23	11	30	22	24	9.09%
City of Alexandria	3	4	3	0	4	4	4	5	25.00%
City of Fairfax	1	5	2	0	0	4	0	2	100.00%
City of Falls Church	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.00%
City of Manassas	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	100.00%
City of Manassas Park	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Northern Virginia Total	82	96	83	73	61	87	90	95	5.56%
DC Metro Regional Total	254	231	240	237	229	235	255	268	5.12%
National Parks in Region	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	17	10	16	13	-18.75%
Regional Total Adjusted	N/A	N/A	243	N/A	246	245	271	281	3.69%
National ⁴	32,479	33,782	32,893	32,744	35,484	37,806	37,473	36,560	-2.44%

⁴ National data for total traffic fatalities were updated for 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Alcohol-Impaired Traffic Fatalities by Jurisdiction with BAC=.08+ 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	8	4	10	15	7	6	6	4	-33.33%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	20	10	12	11	10	4	8	7	-12.50%
Prince George's County	36	25	31	32	27	17	34	24	-29.41%
MD Regional Total	56	35	43	43	37	21	42	31	-26.19%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	1	-50.00%
Fairfax County	9	8	18	12	9	12	12	18	50.00%
Loudoun County	4	5	4	6	2	4	7	7	0.00%
Prince William County	3	10	4	5	2	9	6	14	133.33%
City of Alexandria	1	2	0	0	2	1	1	3	200.00%
City of Fairfax	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.00%
City of Falls Church	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.00%
City of Manassas	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	100.00%
City of Manassas Park	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Northern Virginia Total	19	27	27	26	17	27	29	45	55.17%
DC Metro Region Total	83	66	80	84	61	54	77	80	3.90%
National Parks in Region	0	3	1	4	14	5	9	5	-44.44%
Regional Total Adjusted	83	69	81	88	75	59	86	85	-1.16%
National ⁵	9,878	10,336	10,076	9,967	10,320	10,497	10,908	10,511	-3.64%

⁵ National data for alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities were updated for 2015 and 2017.

TOTAL TRAFFIC INJURIES

Total Traffic Injuries by Jurisdiction 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington ⁶	5,812	6,515	6,929	7,474	8,638	3,878	3,612	3,437	-4.84%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	6,095	6,051	5,417	6,196	6,365	7,045	7,000	6,753	-3.53%
Prince George's County	6,422	6,411	6,532	6,549	6,746	7,715	7,787	7,351	-5.60%
MD Regional Total	12,517	12,462	11,949	12,745	13,111	14,760	14,787	14,104	-4.62%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	1,005	1,252	1,090	1,094	978	1,048	1,036	998	-3.67%
Fairfax County	7,767	8,185	7,608	7,649	7,677	7,564	6,418	6,000	-6.51%
Loudoun County	1,869	1,837	1,917	2,123	2,143	2,289	2,081	2,299	10.48%
Prince William County	2,826	2,763	3,030	2,915	2,747	2,785	2,652	2,811	6.00%
City of Alexandria	601	609	681	757	731	721	576	699	21.35%
City of Fairfax	205	243	227	440	338	294	242	147	-39.26%
City of Falls Church	183	232	132	241	160	133	177	154	-12.99%
City of Manassas	447	612	560	646	626	773	711	756	6.33%
City of Manassas Park	24	24	41	29	48	60	26	63	142.31%
Northern Virginia Total	14,927	15,757	15,286	15,894	15,448	15,667	13,919	13,927	0.06%
DC Metro Region Total	33,256	34,734	34,164	36,113	37,197	34,305	32,318	31,468	-2.63%
National Parks in Region	555	541	570	N/A	603	532	492	496	0.81%
Regional Total Adjusted	33,811	35,275	34,734	N/A	37,800	34,837	32,810	31,964	-2.58%

⁶ District of Columbia data for total traffic injuries were changed for 2015, 2016, and 2017.

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC INJURIES

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries by Jurisdiction with BAC=.01+ 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington ⁷	137	139	228	263	59	228	176	163	-7.39%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	379	393	316	343	366	401	492	423	-14.02%
Prince George's County	551	530	474	501	451	492	448	451	0.67%
MD Regional Total	930	923	790	844	817	893	940	874	-7.02%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	71	117	117	78	84	91	94	79	-15.96%
Fairfax County	573	594	524	476	442	459	331	290	-12.39%
Loudoun County	149	133	115	150	128	144	117	133	13.68%
Prince William County	216	203	223	204	182	182	163	181	11.04%
City of Alexandria	50	66	71	60	52	53	53	48	-9.43%
City of Fairfax	15	14	17	26	25	12	17	7	-58.82%
City of Falls Church	6	16	6	4	10	11	11	7	-36.36%
City of Manassas	29	43	49	47	41	38	33	35	6.06%
City of Manassas Park	3	0	1	5	2	9	5	13	160.00%
Northern Virginia Total	1,112	1,186	1,123	1,050	966	999	824	793	-3.76%
DC Metro Region Total	2,179	2,248	2,141	2,157	1,842	2,120	1,940	1,830	-5.67%
National Parks in Region	41	51	51	N/A	N/A	33	46	33	-28.26%
Regional Total Adjusted	2,220	2,299	2,192	N/A	N/A	2,153	1,986	1,863	-6.19%

⁷ District of Columbia data for alcohol-related total traffic injuries were changed for 2015, 2016, and 2017.

TOTAL TRAFFIC CRASHES

Total Traffic Crashes by Jurisdiction 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington ⁸	18,002	18,276	19,482	21,752	2,400	25,850	25,712	25,818	0.41%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	11,093	10,562	10,825	12,279	13,006	14,160	14,239	14,231	-0.06%
Prince George's County	12818	12,049	12,580	13,355	14,758	17,185	18,297	19,562	6.91%
MD Regional Total	23,911	22,611	23,405	25,634	27,764	31,345	32,536	33,793	3.86%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	2,494	2,469	2,463	2,469	2,483	2,711	2,508	2,535	1.08%
Fairfax County	14,580	14,500	13,675	13,680	14,024	13,781	13,631	13,368	-1.93%
Loudoun County	4,066	4,164	4,186	4,281	4,824	4,921	4,875	5,149	5.62%
Prince William County	5,221	5,265	5,671	5,856	5,660	5,564	5,540	5,757	3.92%
City of Alexandria	1,631	1,711	1,695	1,777	1,912	1,736	1,441	1,566	8.67%
City of Fairfax	650	648	615	700	561	565	596	417	-30.03%
City of Falls Church	180	154	83	165	169	144	121	130	7.44%
City of Manassas	594	610	567	568	595	633	573	607	5.93%
City of Manassas Park	73	63	66	71	81	97	55	71	29.09%
Northern Virginia Total	29,489	29,584	29,021	29,567	30,309	30,152	29,340	29,600	0.89%
DC Metro Region Total	53,400	70,471	71,908	76,953	60,473	87,347	87,588	89,211	1.85%
National Parks in Region	2,811	2,644	1,281	4,164	4,621	4,049	3,486	1,600	-54.10%
Regional Total Adjusted	56,211	73,115	73,189	81,117	65,094	91,396	91,074	90,811	-0.29%

⁸ District of Columbia data for total traffic crashes were changed for 2015, 2016, and 2017.

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC CRASHES

Alcohol-related Traffic Crashes by Jurisdiction with a BAC=.01+ 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington ⁹	558	564	657	682	260	740	710	756	6.48%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	749	737	690	807	815	905	954	881	-7.65%
Prince George's County	1,006	980	1,041	1,017	933	1,116	1,085	1,166	7.47%
MD Regional Total	1,755	1,717	1,731	1,824	1,748	2021	2,039	2,047	0.39%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	218	242	232	235	218	199	203	162	-20.20%
Fairfax County	903	910	829	740	708	701	621	580	-6.60%
Loudoun County	230	239	213	236	222	259	227	251	10.57%
Prince William County	344	337	337	319	332	305	296	333	12.50%
City of Alexandria	110	97	111	99	99	94	83	88	6.02%
City of Fairfax	38	27	26	35	29	19	26	10	-61.54%
City of Falls Church	10	12	4	9	8	12	10	4	-60.00%
City of Manassas	36	34	44	35	40	30	33	35	6.06%
City of Manassas Park	12	16	3	3	4	19	9	6	-33.33%
Northern Virginia Total	1,901	1,914	1,799	1,711	1,660	1,638	1,508	1,469	-2.59%
DC Metro Region Total	4,214	4,195	4,095	4,217	3,668	4,399	4,257	4,272	0.35%
National Parks in Region	101	94	51	N/A	N/A	33	54	63	16.67%
Regional Total Adjusted	4,315	4,289	4,146	N/A	N/A	4,432	4,311	4,335	0.56%

⁹ District of Columbia data for alcohol-related traffic crashes were changed for 2015, 2016, and 2017.

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC ARRESTS

Total Alcohol Related Traffic Arrests by Jurisdiction 2011-2018									
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	2,081	1,340	1,498	1,501	1,508	1,561	1,834 ¹⁰	1,978	7.85%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	2,247	3,892	3,983	3,723	3,973	4,101	3,406	3,442	1.06%
Prince George's County	1,609	2,688	3,314	3,153	2,894	2,629	2,379	2,506	5.34%
MD Regional Total	3,856	6,580	7,297	6,876	6,867	6,730	5,785	5,948	2.82%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	789	963	850	874	742	692	494	445	-9.92%
Fairfax County	3,887	3,343	3,628	3,116	2,387	2,457	2,536	2,424	-4.42%
Loudoun County	847	845	828	733	667	671	561	709	26.38%
Prince William County	2,856	2,745	2,493	2,372	1,941	1,651	1,613	1,890	17.17%
City of Alexandria	412	360	378	372	349	324	397	292	-26.45%
City of Fairfax	202	175	155	107	78	62	59	51	-13.56%
City of Falls Church	121	113	110	103	78	55	43	36	-16.28%
City of Manassas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	138	124	125	91	-27.20%
City of Manassas Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	46	71	56	58	3.57%
Northern Virginia Total	9,114	8,544	8,442	7,677	6,426	6,107	5,884	5,996	1.90%
DC Metro Region Total	15,051	16,464	17,237	16,054	14,801	14,398	13,503	13,922	3.10%
National Parks in Region	1,027	877	487	740	N/A	359	305	371	21.64%
Regional Total Adjusted	16,078	17,341	17,724	16,794	N/A	14,757	13,808	14,293	3.51%

¹⁰ District of Columbia data for alcohol-related traffic arrests was changed for 2017.

YOUTH DATA

Alcohol-Related Crashes, Injuries, and Arrests for Persons Under 21 Years of Age by Region, 2018												
	Fatalities	Alcohol-Related Fatalities	% of Alcohol-Related Fatalities	Crashes	Alcohol-Related Crashes	% of Alcohol-Related Crashes	Injuries	Alcohol-Related Injuries	% of Alcohol-Related Injuries	Arrests	Alcohol-Related Arrests	% of Alcohol-Related Arrests
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA												
Washington	4	0	0.00%	2,875	68	2.37%	522	9	1.72%	311	17	5.47%
MARYLAND¹¹												
Montgomery County	1	0	0.00%	3,218	136	4.23%	1,099	44	4.00%	4,781	71	1.49%
Prince George's County	11	3	27.27%	4,293	154	3.59%	1,189	45	3.78%	4,942	54	1.09%
MD Regional Total	12	3	25.00%	7,511	290	3.86%	2,288	89	3.89%	9,723	125	1.29%
VIRGINIA												
Arlington County	0	0	0.00%	240	8	3.33%	101	5	4.95%	1,367	12	0.88%
Fairfax County	6	1	16.67%	2,253	47	2.09%	700	20	2.86%	10,879	105	0.97%
Loudoun County	1	1	100.00%	1,078	25	2.32%	371	11	2.96%	3,933	40	1.02%
Prince William County	4	2	50.00%	1,281	46	3.59%	416	19	4.57%	8,708	93	1.07%
City of Alexandria	0	0	0.00%	188	5	2.66%	76	4	5.26%	907	12	1.32%
City of Fairfax	0	0	0.00%	95	2	2.11%	24	1	4.17%	594	1	0.17%
City of Falls Church	0	0	0.00%	20	0	0.00%	17	0	0.00%	167	2	1.20%
City of Manassas	0	0	0.00%	156	5	3.21%	138	3	2.17%	674	9	1.34%
City of Manassas Park	0	0	0.00%	31	3	3.21%	19	2	10.53%	374	1	0.27%
Northern Virginia Total	11	4	36.36%	5,342	141	2.64%	1,862	65	3.49%	27,603	275	1.00%
DC Metro Regional Total	27	7	25.93%	15,728	499	3.17%	4,672	163	3.49%	37,637	417	1.11%
National Parks in Region	2	0	0.00%	208	0	0.00%	55	0	0.00%	6	1	16.67%
Regional Total Adjusted	29	7	24.14%	15,936	499	3.13%	4,727	163	3.45%	37,643	418	1.11%

¹¹ The methodology for collecting Montgomery County and Prince George's County Under 21 Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes data changed in 2019. Data reported for 2018 will be slightly higher than in previous years. This new methodology will be consistent for future reports.

METHODOLOGY

Agencies Providing Local Jurisdictional Data

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)

District Department of Transportation (DDOT)

MARYLAND

MD National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems (MD NSC)

Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)

Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD)

VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (VA DMV)

Arlington County Police Department

Fairfax County Police Department

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Prince William County Police Department

City of Alexandria Police Department

City of Fairfax Police Department

City of Falls Church Police Department

City of Manassas Police Department

City of Manassas Park Police Department

FEDERAL

U.S. National Park Service (NPS)

Definitions of Data-Related Terms

NHTSA Alcohol-Impaired Driving Traffic Fatalities: Any fatality that occurs in motor vehicle traffic crash that involves at least one driver or a motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of .08 grams per deciliter or higher; This threshold does not consider the impairment status of non-occupants involved in fatal crashes, such as pedestrians or pedal cyclist.

WRAP Alcohol-Impaired Driving Traffic Fatalities: Any person who dies as result of a traffic crash involving alcohol with a BAC level .08 or higher.

WRAP Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 year who has died as result of an alcohol-related traffic crash involving a driver with a BAC level .01 or higher. This includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries: Where any driver, passenger, bicyclist or pedestrian is listed on the police report to be injured in an alcohol-related crash where the BAC = .01 or higher.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 who receives injuries because of an alcohol-related crash where the BAC = .01 or higher; this includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes: The driver, passenger, bicyclist, or pedestrian is listed on the police report as drinking before the crash with a BAC = .01 or higher. At least one driver in the crash was reported to be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 who was involved in a traffic crash involving a driver with a BAC = .01 or higher. This data includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Drunk Driving Arrests/Citation: A general reference to those criminal cases that are called DUI, DWI, OUI, OWI or other acronyms that generally describe three types of cases:

- The driver is sufficiently impaired by alcohol, drugs or a combination of the two, and cannot drive safely, and has a BAC level of .01 or higher;
- The driver is a “Drunk Driver”, as defined by the driver being above that state’s legal limit of BAC .08;
- A driver under the age of 21 is under the influence of alcohol at a BAC level of .02 or higher

DWI/DUI Arrests: A driver is listed on the police report as arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol with a BAC level of .01 or higher.

DWI/DUI Arrests for persons under 21: Any person/driver under the age of 21 listed on the police report as arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol with a BAC level of .01 or higher.

Data Analysis

The findings in this report are based on data collected from organizations and agencies from across the Washington Metro region. Data tables provide totals within the Washington Metro region as well as individual jurisdictions. Analysis focuses on changes in motor vehicle fatalities, injuries, crashes, and arrests. Results are reported as numbers and percentage of alcohol-related incidents to total numbers across time.

Data Limitations

It is important to note limitations that affected collection and analysis of this data, as they may limit comparability across jurisdictions and influence the level of reasonable analysis. Whenever possible, limitations are noted within the tables and figures.

It should be noted that the researchers constructing this report utilized data from the National Study Center for Trauma and EMS (NSC) at the University of Maryland, for data pertaining to crashes, injuries, and arrests. Regarding the alcohol-related crash and injury data, the variable identifies a driver or pedestrian under the influence of alcohol, drugs, both, or none. Within the NSC data reported, researchers analyzed drivers reported as under the influence of *alcohol or both*, to capture alcohol-related crashes and injuries. That variable is created using several others on the report (such as driver condition, BAC, etc.) so it does not specify only those with BAC 0.01+, and comparisons to previous year's data should be made with caution. In addition, because this report tracks just two jurisdictions in Maryland, regional totals could also be affected.

Additionally, there is no standardization for data definitions, collection, or recording within the Washington Metro region. Each agency has its own system of data collection, coding, and management. In addition, the range and type of data collected may not be consistent across jurisdictions. The data reported and analyzed in this report reflect data as reported by contact agencies. Independent verification of data to ensure accuracy is not within the scope of this report.

Information on data collection and management systems and changes within jurisdictions was not solicited. In addition, changes in laws or judicial priorities may result in increased attention to specific data (e.g. blood alcohol level in driver fatalities related to stricter server laws). In some cases, this may result in missing data or data that appears inconsistent when examined against the same values for previous years. It is beyond the scope of this report to identify data methodology or priority changes for each jurisdiction.

Data on alcohol-related driver involvement in motor vehicle fatalities, injuries, crashes and arrests was requested for alcohol-related (BAC= .01+) only, however, due to differences between jurisdictions in reporting on impaired data, some cases may involve drug use.

The number of incidents, total and related to alcohol impairment, is very small for some jurisdictions. Due to the small numbers, jurisdictional analysis might easily misrepresent the problem. For example, an increase of one alcohol-related fatality would have little impact in a jurisdiction that saw 50 alcohol-related fatalities the previous year, but would appear to represent a significant change in a small jurisdiction with only one or two alcohol-related fatalities the previous year.

Data are reported and analyzed by absolute numbers only. At this time, information that would allow identification of comparable rates is unavailable. It is assumed that people involved in motor vehicle crashes and arrests may live within or outside the Washington Metro region. Collection of data on driver or passenger residence versus jurisdiction of accident is beyond the scope of this report. Calculating rates based on the Washington Metro region's population or number of licensed drivers would not accurately represent the problem since drivers may be from outside the jurisdiction.

Data on people under the age of 21 years is collected in an inconsistent manner among jurisdictions. Caution must be used in evaluation of this data due to varied definitions and missing data.

Each chart displays two regional total numbers. The first, "DC Regional Total" is the total of the District of Columbia, the Maryland Region, and the Northern Virginia Region. The second regional number, "Regional Total Adjusted" includes data from the United States Park Police. Because the Park Police information has only been recently collected, it is shown separately and the two regional totals are shown so that comparisons with previous years can be done.

Credits

How Safe Are Our Roads? Report was prepared for the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG works with WRAP and other partners to compile the data and develop the report.



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