

*State of Alaska
Epidemiology*



Bulletin

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PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES IN ALASKA, 1980-1984

During 1980-84, Alaska had 94 pedestrian fatalities and 1293 pedestrian injuries. While the overall Alaska rate for automobile-related pedestrian deaths is only slightly higher than the national rate, the statewide rate for Alaska Natives is four times the non-Native rate (Table 2). And, in Anchorage, the pedestrian fatality rate among Alaska Natives is 16 times higher than for non-Natives.

Of striking importance was the association of alcohol use by both pedestrians and drivers in fatal events. (Table 5, Figures 8 and 9). Among pedestrians, 13 (48%) of 27 females and 26 (50%) of 52 males for which data were available were using alcohol at the time of their death. Among those using alcohol, 22 (56%) of 39 were Alaskan Natives. Among individuals for which information was available, a large proportion of adults, including 24 (77%) of 31 pedestrians 20-39 years old, was using alcohol at the time of death.

The number of drivers using alcohol at the time of the fatal crash also was high. Of 64 drivers, 19 (30%) males and 4 of 14 (29%) females were known to have been using alcohol at the time of the crash. Alcohol use by the driver was most frequent in drivers 16-19 and 20-24 years of age

Among the causes the study found for the high number of pedestrian fatalities among Natives in Anchorage were alcohol use by the victim and excessive speed of the vehicle. The heavy volume of traffic in the downtown area and the absence of barriers between vehicular and pedestrian traffic also were contributing causes. The presence of the Alaska Native Medical Center in the heart of downtown Anchorage contributed to the concentration of fatalities in the inner-city area. Pedestrians from the Bush frequently are unfamiliar with traffic in an urban environment and lack appreciation of traffic control devices like traffic lights and pedestrian-crossing signals. Natives are particularly at risk because of widespread high-frequency hearing loss among Native adult males. Other factors involved are unfamiliarity with fast-moving vehicles and wearing dark clothing while walking. Efforts in Anchorage particularly need to be directed to lowering pedestrian fatalities among adult Alaskan Natives.

The situation cries for attention and effective action. Efforts to reduce pedestrian fatalities cannot focus only on drivers. Greater enforcement of speed laws and continued efforts to reduce alcohol use among drivers and pedestrians are essential, and we must modify the environment, particularly in Anchorage, to protect pedestrians from motor vehicles.

Table 5. Fatal Pedestrian Vehicle Crashes in Alaska, 1980-84 by alcohol involvement of the driver and pedestrian

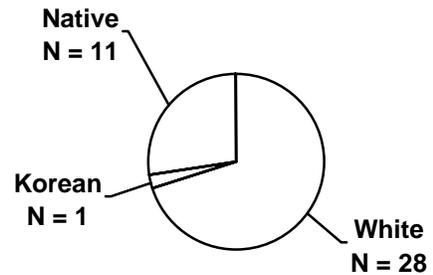
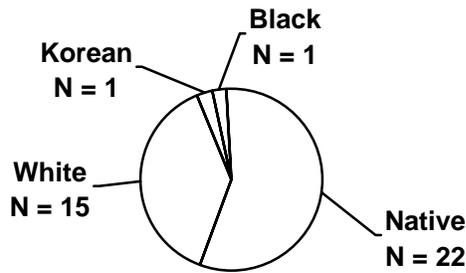
		Driver			Total
		Alcohol	No Alcohol	Unknown	
Pedestrian	Alcohol	13	19	6	38
	No Alcohol	8	26	5	39
	Unknown	2	10	3	15
Total		23	55	14	92

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Fatal Pedestrian Vehicle Crashes in Alaska 1980 – 1984
by Alcohol Involvement and Race of the Pedestrian

N = 94 N (alcohol) = 39 N (no alcohol) = 40 N (unknown) = 15



Alcohol

No Alcohol

Table 2. Pedestrian Fatalities in Alaska 1980 – 84
Fatality rates per 100,000 population per year

Age Group	Native	Non-Native	Alaska Total	USA 1977-79*
0-4	6.98	2.06	2.95	0.22
				3.88
5-9	8.72	2.45	3.54	4.42
10-14	2.72	4.32	4.03	2.23
15-19	9.40	1.91	3.51	3.44
20-24	16.22	3.12	5.24	3.33
25-29	9.55	2.70	3.44	2.72
30-34	11.22	2.92	3.75	2.33

35-39	15.24	1.74	3.13	2.56
40-44	12.61	0.83	2.20	
45-49	21.41	1.16	3.98	3.34
50-54	33.28	4.06	8.15	
55-59	29.93	1.67	5.73	3.86
				5.31
60+	4.24	9.07	8.05	9.73
				9.72
Totals	11.23	2.79	4.06	3.58

*Baker SP, O'Neill B, and Karpf RS. The Injury Fact Book, © 1984, p285.

Fatal Pedestrian Vehicle Crashes in Alaska 1980 - 1984

by age and alcohol use by the pedestrian

N = 94 N (alcohol) = 39 N (no alcohol) = 40 N (unknown) = 15

