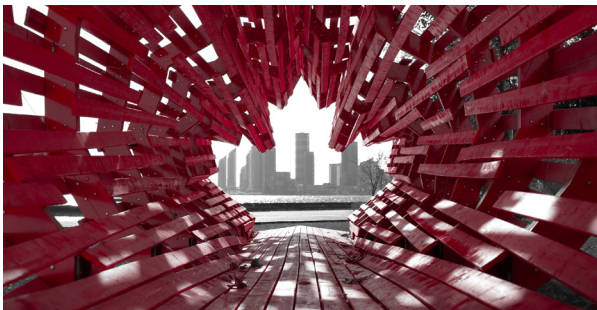




# SHARING THE ROAD: KEY FACTORS IN FATAL CRASHES IN CANADA

Traffic Injury Research Foundation & Toronto Police Service

May 2018



The most common contributing factors in fatal collisions are speeding, impairment (by alcohol or drugs), distraction, non-use of seatbelts, and aggressive driving. This fact sheet examines the prevalence of these factors among the 4,587 drivers of passenger vehicles (cars, trucks, vans) who died in Canada from 2011 to 2015. Data for Canada exclude British Columbia as data from this province were not available at the time of publication.

## Speeding

Among drivers of passenger vehicles:

- > Almost 1 in 4 drivers were speeding at the time of the crash.
- > 1 in 3 drivers killed in crashes which occurred on Saturday or Sunday were speeding compared to 1 in 5 drivers killed in weekday crashes.
- > More than 1 in 4 male drivers were speeding compared to 1 in 6 female drivers.

Source: TIRF National Fatality Database 2018



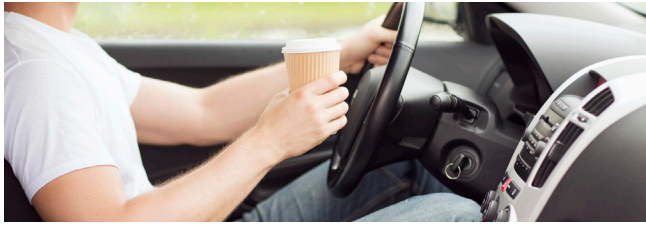
## Impairment

More than three-quarters of drivers of passenger vehicles killed in road crashes were tested for the presence of alcohol and drugs. Toxicological data revealed:

- > 1 in 3 drivers tested positive for alcohol.
- > Almost 2 in 5 drivers tested positive for drugs.
- > Almost 1 in 5 drivers tested positive for cannabis.

Source: TIRF National Fatality Database 2018

## Distraction



Among drivers of passenger vehicles:

- > Less than 1 in 6 drivers killed in crashes were distracted.
- > 1 in 6 drivers killed in multi-vehicle crashes were distracted compared to 1 in 10 drivers killed in single vehicle crashes.

Source: TIRF National Fatality Database 2018

## Seatbelt Use

Among drivers of passenger vehicles in Canada:

- > 1 in 3 did not wear seatbelts.



- > More than 1 in 3 male drivers did not wear seatbelts compared to 1 in 4 female drivers.
- > Drivers with passengers were more likely to wear seatbelts than drivers who were travelling alone (71% compared to 66%).

Source: TIRF National Fatality Database 2018

## Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving is more difficult to define as compared to other key factors. There is no code for “aggressive driving” in Canadian police-reported collision data. In TIRF’s Road Safety Monitor which surveyed driver behaviour (Vanlaar et al. 2007), aggressive driving was defined as follows:

- > running red lights;
- > street racing;
- > excessive speeding;
- > swearing;
- > using the horn when annoyed; and,

- > taking risks.

Some drivers involved in collisions who engaged in aggressive driving may have been coded as distracted or speeding. Furthermore, some of these drivers may also have tested positive for alcohol or drugs.

Studies linking driver aggression to increased collision risk suggest that curbing aggressive driving could save many lives and crash costs. Increased



enforcement, incentive programs (e.g., insurance companies offering rate reductions to customers who demonstrate safe driving

practices), and public service messages discourage aggressive and risky driving. Stresses experienced on the roadway may carry over into one’s work and family life. Even when aggressive driving behaviours such as shouting or cursing are not noticed by the driver at whom they were directed, reports of a collision were greater among drivers who self-reported this behaviour. (Wickens et al. 2016).

## Traffic Injury Research Foundation

TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute that studies road user behaviours. Visit [www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca) or call (877) 238-5235  
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