

# 2020 CRASH DATA

Risky  
Roadway  
Behavior  
during the  
COVID-19  
Pandemic of  
2020



**IN 2020, ROADWAY INJURIES  
AND FATALITIES AMONG  
MOTORISTS, PASSENGERS,  
PEDESTRIANS, AND CYCLISTS  
WERE UP SIGNIFICANTLY.**

**BUT, WHY?**



# EMPTY STREETS = INCREASED SPEEDING



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## Speeding

When faced empty streets, theories suggest motorists were enticed to speed – sometimes at extreme speeds – this of course resulted in more severe injuries among all road users when crashes inevitably occurred.

## What Else is Going On?

This theory begins to break down a bit as traffic volumes returned to pre pandemic levels and streets filled back up with cars – severe injuries and crashes only got worse – so it seems something else is going on.

# DRIVER IMPAIRMENT

Impairment increased significantly in 2020 – there were 417 more impaired linked crashes in 2020 compared to the prior four years. This increase occurred despite there being nearly 14,000 fewer total linked crashes. Impaired crashes in 2020 represented nearly 3.5 percent of all linked cases, which is more than double the rate of 2016 and up by a factor of 1.8 compared to the prior four year average.



# SAFETY PRECAUTIONS



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Crashes in which no safety equipment was used was at its highest rate in five years in 2020. For people involved in linked crashes in 2020, close to 6% of them did not use, or were not provided in the case of children, safety equipment.

# SEATBELTS

The rate of no seatbelt used among drivers and passengers in crashes was at its highest rate in 2020 across the study period.



# HELMETS

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In 2020, the rate of linked crashes involving motorcycles in which either the driver or passenger was not wearing a helmet was also at its highest level in five years.

# AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Aggressive driver actions as contributing crash factors, were up in 2020 by about 10 times the regular variation seen in the previous four years.



**RESEARCHING CAUSES OF  
INCREASED MORTALITY ON  
THE ROADS IN 2020 IS AN  
ONGOING EFFORT; HOWEVER,  
INCREASES IN RISKY BEHAVIOR  
BY ROAD USERS SEEMS TO BE A  
CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.**

