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Pedestrian Fatalities in Anchorage, 2016–2025

Background

Pedestrian injuries are a leading cause of unintentional transportation-related deaths in the United States. As Alaska’s largest city and primary urban center, Anchorage experiences higher volumes of both vehicle and pedestrian traffic than other parts of the state. Understanding the patterns and circumstances of pedestrian fatalities in this setting is important for informing safe active transportation strategies. This *Bulletin* describes the recent epidemiology of pedestrian fatalities in Anchorage.

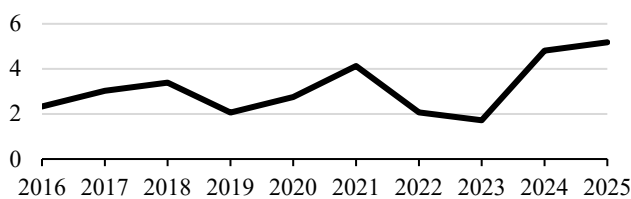
Methods

Mortality data were obtained from Alaska death certificates. Pedestrian injuries were identified using ICD-10 codes V02–V04 (subcategories .1 and .9), and V09.2.¹ Population estimates were obtained from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Information on driver behaviors and substance use was obtained from Anchorage Municipal traffic records.

Results

From 2016–2025, 92 pedestrian fatalities occurred in Anchorage. The highest annual death rate occurred in 2025, with 15 deaths (rate: 5.18 deaths per 100,000 people) (Figure 1). Across all years, September had the highest number of fatalities (n=15, 16%). When examined by season and time of day, the greatest concentration of fatalities occurred during August–October between 11PM and 2AM (Figure 2). Decedents were predominantly male (n=56, 61%). Driver behaviors included fleeing the scene (30%, 28/92) and speeding (4%, 4/92). Alcohol and substance use was common among both drivers and decedents (Table).

Figure 1. Fatality Rate per 100,000 People, Anchorage 2016–2025



Pedestrian fatalities were concentrated in several areas:

- Midtown (n=23, 25%): bordered by West Fireweed Lane and West 25th Ave. to the north, the Seward highway to the east, East 36th Ave/ Spenard Rd to the south, and Minnesota Drive to the west.
- East downtown (n=8, 9%): bordered by East 3rd Avenue to the north, Reed Blvd. to the east, East 5th Avenue to the south, Ingra St. to the west.
- Two intersections along C Street (n=6, 7%): located at 32nd Avenue and West 48th Avenue.

In all other areas, <6 deaths were observed.

Figure 2. Total Fatalities, by Time of Day and Time of Year — Anchorage, 2016–2025

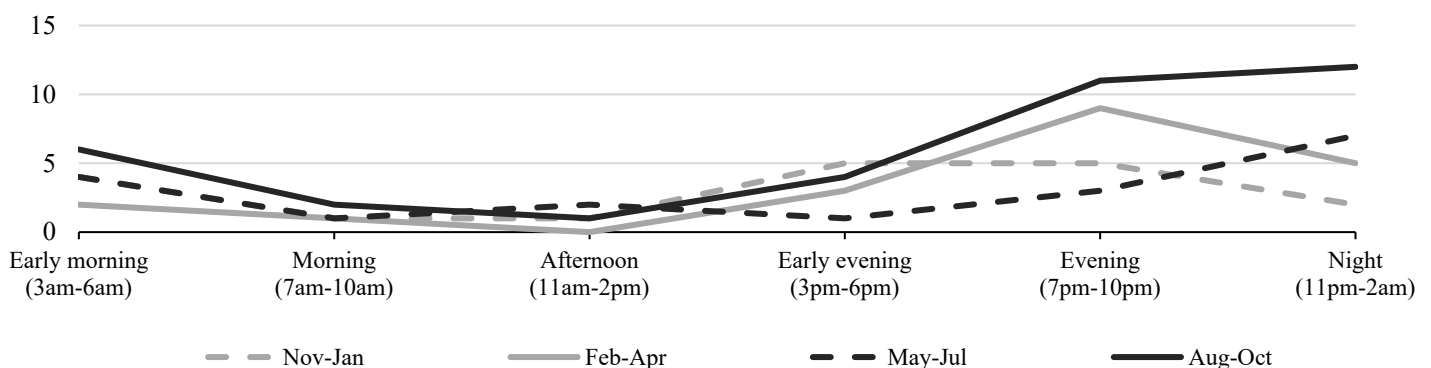


Table. Alcohol and Substance use Among Drivers and Pedestrians Involved in Fatal Pedestrian Crashes — Anchorage, 2016–2024*

Substance	Pedestrians (n=83)	Drivers (n=91)
Alcohol only	18% (n=15)	9% (n=8)
Any substance(s)	36% (n=30)	25% (n=23)

*Data are only available for 2016–2024. Some crashes include multiple pedestrians or drivers.

Discussion

Pedestrian fatalities in Anchorage appear to be influenced by both environmental and behavioral factors before and during the collision. Seasonal changes that reduce daylight, particularly in late summer and early fall, coincide with twilight hours when deaths are most frequent, and the onset of winter driving conditions may further increase collision risk. Reduced visibility, combined with drivers adjusting to changing conditions, likely contributes to these incidents. In addition, illegal driver behaviors such as impaired driving and fleeing the scene were frequently documented in crashes involving pedestrian fatalities, suggesting that many of these deaths may be preventable through improved driver behavior and targeted safety interventions.

This analysis has limitations. Circumstantial information about driver/pedestrian behavior was not available for all cases. Death certificate data were available through 2025, while municipal traffic records were available only through 2024. Differences in case definitions between data sources resulted in some inconsistencies in annual counts. Driver behavior data were not available if the driver fled the scene.

Continued monitoring of pedestrian fatalities can help identify risk patterns and guide targeted prevention strategies to improve pedestrian safety in Anchorage. Ongoing roadway safety improvements and law enforcement efforts to reduce impaired and illegal driving are important strategies to decrease pedestrian risk.³ Public messaging can further support prevention by encouraging pedestrians to increase their visibility in low-light conditions by wearing reflective clothing and crossing only at designated locations, and reminding drivers to avoid driving after using alcohol or drugs, to refrain from texting or other distractions, and to always use headlights.

References

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