

Traffic safety remains a critical issue in Iowa with speeding, impaired driving, aggressive driving, driving distracted and not utilizing seat belts. Nationally, four of these categories are contributing factors to fatality crashes. Iowa continues to see an increase in speed violations since the Covid Pandemic (2020). Iowa State Patrol wrote 1,062 citations in 2024 for individuals traveling over 100 mph and the top speed observed was 164 mph, which was faster than 2023. Nationally, 25% of fatalities involve speeding as a contributing factor to fatalities.

In 2023, Iowa reported 378 fatalities occurred with 109 fatalities determined to be “Alcohol-Related” (BAC at least .01), 83 fatalities to be “Alcohol-Impaired” (BAC at least .08), and 93 fatalities determined to be “Drug-Related”. 75% of Iowa fatalities in 2023 had alcohol or drugs within the system of a person who passed away from a motor vehicle collision, which was an increase from 2022.

It is important for Law Enforcement to be aware of these statistics and for departments to become more proactive in enforcing traffic laws. According to, The American Journal of Criminal Justice 2024, “the evidence on the crime prevention effects of police presence suggests that in their sentinel role, police can have a material deterrent effect, especially when targeting locations in which opportunities for crimes are abundant (hot spots)”. Police presence is also linked to public satisfaction because often the public sees the police are effective and they express greater confidence (Metcalf & Bolaji, 2024, p.868).

A quick and easy way for Law Enforcement to be proactive in traffic safety areas of concern (hot spots) for crashes and traffic violations is to use the Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT). This tool helps agencies look through crash data and could play a significant role in using department resources by effectively placing an officer in an area of concern. By using this data and placing an officer in the specific area, it could lead to decreased crashes and motor vehicle violations.

Iowa continues to strive for below 300 fatalities each year, this has not been achieved since 1925. Iowa’s Governors Traffic Safety Bureau has created a multi-discipline Traffic Fatality Reduction Task Forces to implement educational, enforcement and legislative initiatives to help Iowa achieve this. Central Iowa also has a task force for traffic safety known as, The Central Iowa Traffic Safety Task Force, which has 19 agencies dedicated to traffic enforcement and education. Iowa has passed the “Hands Free Bill”, which will be enforced starting July 1st of 2025. Iowa continues to improve laws to keep our state safe and has created safe driving campaigns, Drive Safe Iowa: The Power Is In Your Hands.

Metcalf, C., & Bolaji, Q. (2024, September 26). Increasing Police Presence: Examining Race, Ethnicity, and Perceived Neighborhood Disadvantage as Correlates of Support. Retrieved May 15, 2025,.

Iowans challenged to do their part to reduce traffic fatalities below 300. Iowa Department of Public Safety. (2021, June 8). <https://dps.iowa.gov/press-release/2021-06-08/iowans-challenged-do-their-part-reduce-traffic-fatalities-below-300>