

# Georgia Traffic Safety Facts

2018 Data

February 2021

## Key Findings

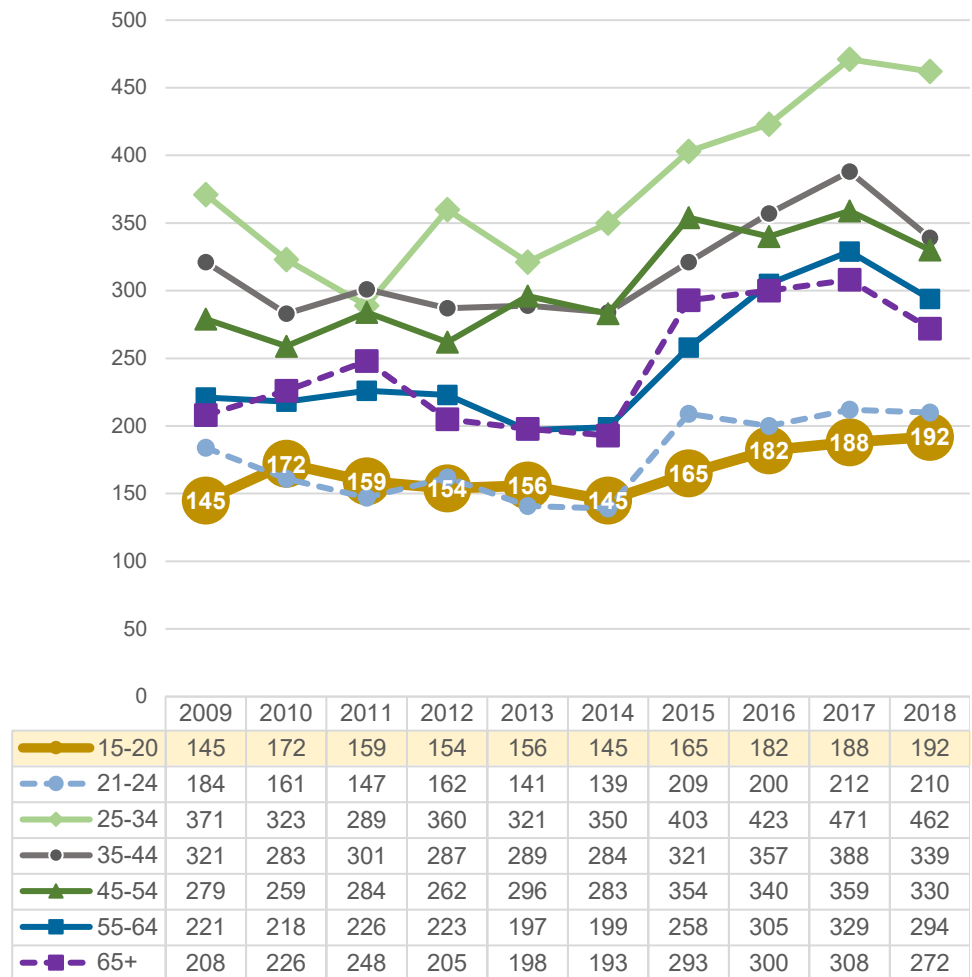
- In 2018, there were 192 young drivers involved in fatal crashes – a 32.4 percent increase (+47 drivers) since 2014.
- Total fatalities in crashes with young drivers increased steadily over the 5-year period from 156 in 2014 to 192 in 2018, resulting in a 23-percent increase.
- More than half of fatally injured passenger vehicle occupants 15-20 years of age were unrestrained.
- Young drivers accounted for 7.2 percent of all licensed drivers in 2019, 8.5 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes, and 9.5 percent of all motor vehicle crashes in 2018.
- In 2018, the total motor vehicle crash-related hospitalization and emergency room charges for Georgia residents 15-to-20 years old was \$147 million.

## YOUNG ADULT DRIVERS

The term young adult driver refers to a person 15 to 20 years old operating a motor vehicle. This document refers to these drivers as young drivers.

Since 2014, there has been a gradual increase in the number of young drivers (ages 15-20 years) involved in fatal crashes (Figure 1). The number of young drivers involved in fatal crashes has increased by 32.4 percent (from 145 drivers in 2014 to 192 drivers in 2018). This does not imply that young drivers caused the crash either by their actions or failure to act. Young drivers represented 8.9 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2018. Over the past 5-years (2014-2018), young drivers consistently represented 8.5 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes.

Figure 1  
Number of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age Group, 2009–2018



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2009–2018



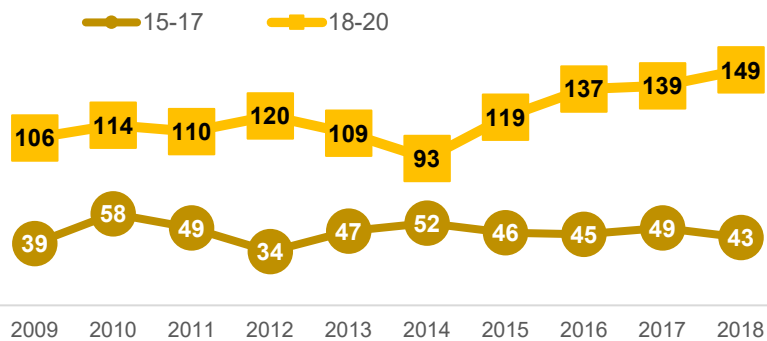
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Over the past decade, the majority of young drivers involved in fatal crashes were 18-to-20 years of age (Figure 2, square icons). In 2018, 78 percent of young drivers involved in fatal crashes were between 18 and 20 years old. The number of 18 to 20 years old drivers increased by 60 percent from 93 drivers in 2014 to 149 drivers in 2018.

Figure 2  
**Number of Young Drivers (15-17 and 18-20 Years) Involved in Fatal Crashes, 2009–2018**



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2009–2018

### Fatalities

Total fatalities in crashes with young drivers increased steadily over the 5-year period from 156 in 2014 to 196 in 2018, resulting in a 30-percent increase (Table 1). In fatal crashes involving young drivers for the 5-year period from 2014 to 2018:

- Young drivers fatally injured increased by 16 percent (from 62 fatalities in 2014 to 72 fatalities in 2018).
- Fatalities among the passengers of young drivers increased by 10 percent (from 31 fatalities to 34 fatalities).
- Occupant fatalities of other vehicles increased by 14 percent (from 49 fatalities to 56 fatalities).
- Nonoccupant fatalities – pedestrians, bicyclist, or other nonoccupants – increased by 143 percent (from 14 fatalities to 34 fatalities).

Figure 3 displays the percentage of fatalities in crashes involving young drivers by person type and year. In 2018:

- 37 percent of all fatalities in crashes involving a young driver, were the young driver themselves.
- 29 percent of all fatalities in crashes involving a young driver, were occupants of other vehicles.
- 17 percent of all fatalities involving young drivers (34 out of 196) were not in vehicles. Nonoccupant fatalities for fatal crashes involving a young driver were highest in 2018 in comparison to previous years.

Table 1

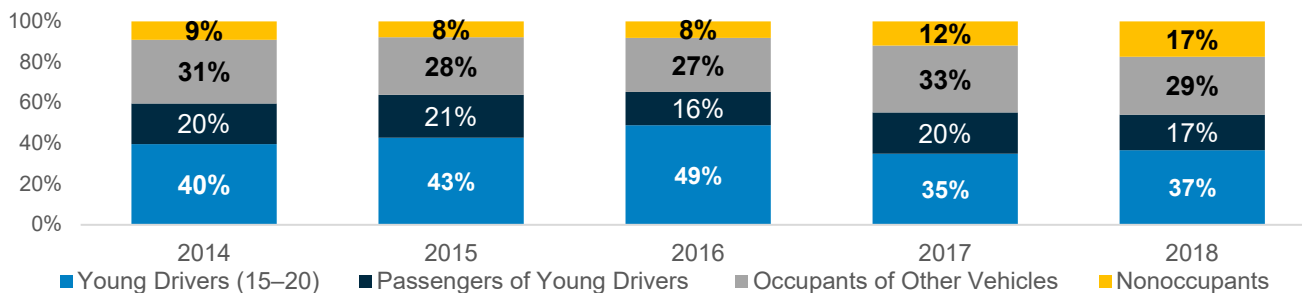
**Number of Fatalities in Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by Person Type and Year, 2014-2018**

Year	Young Drivers (15–20)	Passengers of Young Drivers by Age				Occupants of Other Vehicles	Nonoccupants	Total
		< 15	15 - 20	21 +	Total			
2014	62	3	18	10	31	49	14	156
2015	77	3	27	8	38	51	14	180
2016	96	7	18	7	32	52	16	196
2017	71	3	32	6	41	67	24	203
2018	72	3	16	15	34	56	34	196

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2014-2018

Figure 3

**Percent of Fatalities in Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by Person Type and Year, 2014-2018**



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2014-2018

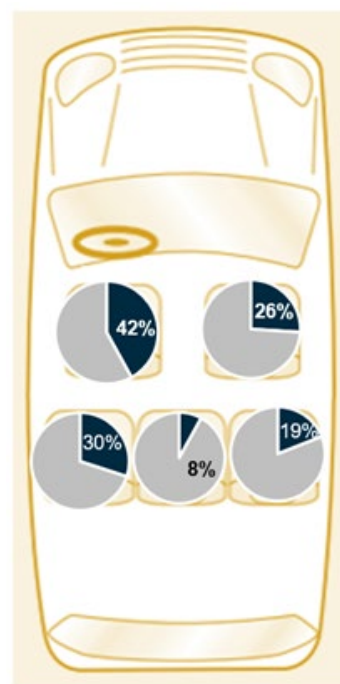
Figure 4 displays the seating positions of young drivers' passengers ages 15-20 fatally injured in 2016 through 2018. During 2016-2018:

- 70 percent of the occupants riding with a young driver were between 15-20 years of age.
- 42 percent of all young drivers aged 15-20 years old were fatality injured.
- 26 percent of front passengers aged 15-20 years old were fatality injured.
- 30 percent of back seat passengers (driver's side) aged 15-20 years were fatality injured.

In 2018, the top three contributing factors for fatal crashes involving young drivers were: (1) Failure to yield right of way; (2) Overcorrecting; and, (3) Improper lane usage. The top contributing factors for all motor vehicle crashes involving young drivers were: (1) following too close; (2) operating vehicle in erratic manner (e.g., speeding); and (3) driving while distracted<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 4

**Percent of Passenger Vehicle Occupants 15-20 Years Fatally Injured in Fatal Crashes by Seat Position, 2016-2018**



<sup>1</sup> Distracted driving includes texting, talking on hands-free device, talking on hand-held device, other activity-mobile device, occupant distraction, other interior distraction, or other exterior distraction.

## Restraint Use

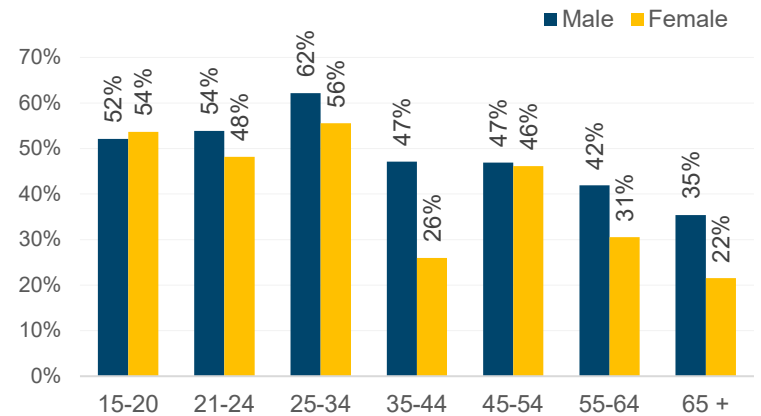
Figure 5 shows percent of passenger vehicle occupants (across all seating positions) fatally injured who were unrestrained and in traffic crashes by age group and gender in 2018. Passenger vehicles include passenger cars and light trucks such as pickups, SUVs, and vans.

In 2018:

- 54 percent of fatally injured **female** vehicle occupants 15-20 years of age were unrestrained.
- 52 percent of fatally injured **male** vehicle occupants 15-20 years of age were unrestrained.
- 18 percent of **young drivers** with serious injuries<sup>2</sup> were unrestrained (not shown in Figure 5).
- 29 percent of **passenger vehicle occupants** 15-20 years of age with serious injuries were unrestrained (not shown in Figure 5).

Figure 5

## Percent of Passenger Vehicle Fatally Injured Occupants Unrestrained and in Traffic Crashes, by Age and Gender, 2018



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2018

## Hospitalizations

In 2018, there were a total of 13,236 hospitalizations and emergency room visits<sup>3</sup> related to motor vehicle incidents among young persons aged 15-to-20 years. The total motor vehicle crash-related hospitalization and emergency room charges among Georgia residents 15-to-20 years was \$147 million.

Table 2: **Number, Rate and Percent of All Motor Vehicle Traffic-Related Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalizations and Fatalities by Age Group, 2018**

Age Group	Emergency Room Visits			Hospitalizations			Fatalities		
	Number	Percent of Total	Rate per 100,000 persons	Number	Percent of Total	Rate per 100,000 persons	Number	Percent of Total	Rate per 100,000 persons
<15	6,601	6%	318.72	72	1%	3.48	42	3%	2.16
<b>15-20</b>	<b>12,656</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>1,436.34</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>65.82</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>13.28</b>
21-24	11,002	10%	1,951.07	577	9%	102.32	141	9%	25.00
25-34	25,374	24%	1,722.32	1,295	19%	87.90	285	19%	19.35
35-44	18,524	17%	1,349.55	1,028	15%	74.89	214	14%	15.59
45-54	15,123	14%	1,071.46	1,051	16%	74.46	210	14%	14.88
55-64	10,307	10%	801.68	909	14%	70.70	237	16%	18.43
Older (65+)	7,188	7%	492.19	1,172	18%	80.25	257	17%	17.60
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	0%	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,775</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,263.85</b>	<b>6,684</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79.12</b>	<b>1,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14.47*</b>

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2018, OASIS 2018 Estimated Population; Georgia Department of Public Health, Office of Health Indicators for Planning (OHIP) Hospital Inpatient Discharge and Emergency Room Visit Data. Note: Population rate includes the total population for persons less than 15 years of age.

<sup>2</sup> Serious injuries are suspected serious injuries reported by law enforcement.

<sup>3</sup> Hospitalization may include individuals that visited the emergency room. Emergency room visit may include individuals who were hospitalized for inpatient care. Hospitalizations and emergency room visits are for Georgia residents only, while fatalities may not be Georgia residents.

## Young Adult Licensing and Driver's Education Completion Method

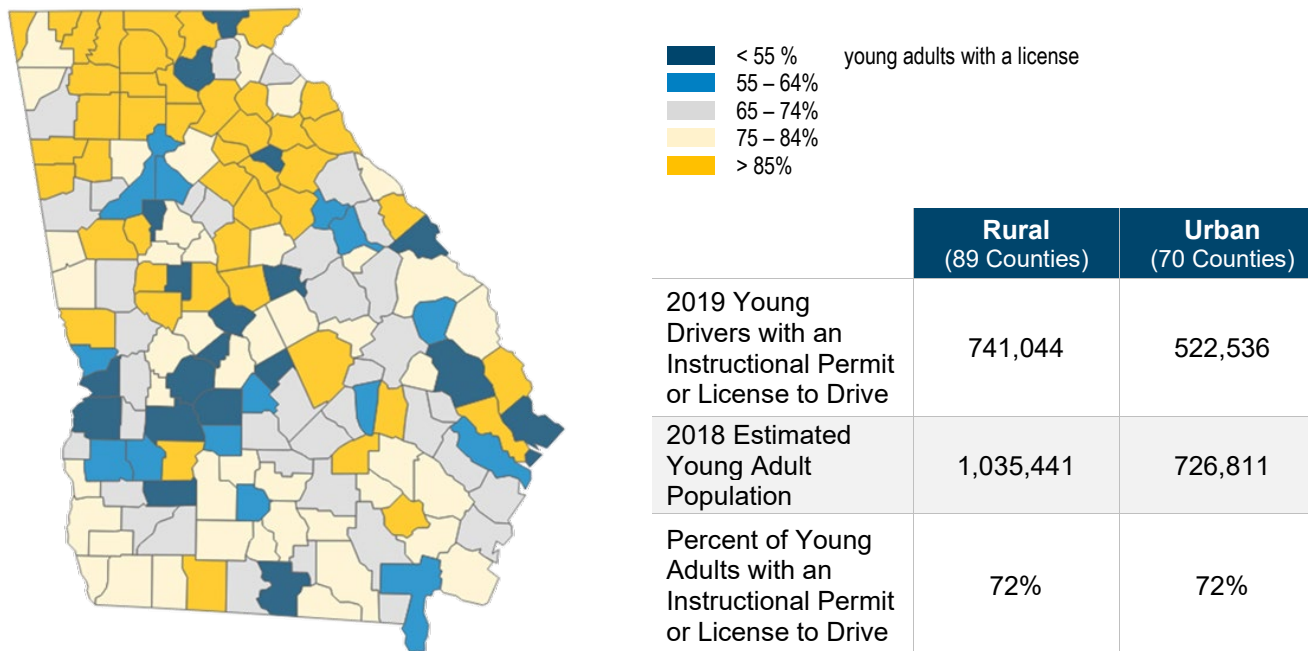
Young drivers (15 to 20 years old) generally obtain their licenses for the first time under a graduated driver licensing program as they learn driving skills.

- There were 8 million licensed drivers in Georgia in 2019. Young drivers (ages 15 to 20 years old) accounted for 7.9 percent (631,790) of the all licensed drivers in 2019.
- Across the state, 71.1 percent of all youth (ages 15 to 20 years old) held either an instructional permit or driver's license in 2019.
- The percentage (72 percent) of young adults that held an instructional permit or driver's license in 2019 was the same across all rural and urban counties<sup>4</sup>, 89 and 70 counties respectively.

Figure 6 presents the percentage of young adults with an instructional permit or driver's license<sup>5</sup> by county.

Figure 6

### Percent of Young Adults (Ages 15-20) with an Instructional Permit or License to Drive, by County



Source: Drivers licenses information obtained from the Department of Driver Service (Dec 2019); 2018 estimated young adult population obtained from Georgia's Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS)

More than half (53 percent) obtain a class D license through completing a DDS approved school online course and completing the Parent Teen Driving Guide with no additional supervised driving required<sup>6</sup>. The least commonly used method to obtain a license for young drivers (ages 15-17 years) is to complete a DDS approved school online course (virtual), 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training at a DDS approved school, and 40 hours of supervised driving with a parent/guardian – 5 percent in 2019.

Table 3 shows the number of licenses issued to young drivers in 2019 by age and license type.

<sup>4</sup> Rural definition based on Office of Management and Budget (OMB) metro counties. A metro area includes one or more counties containing a core urban area of 50,000 or more people, together with any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core.

<sup>5</sup> GA DDS licensing as of December 2019: Class types include instructional permits, Class C, and Class D licenses.

<sup>6</sup> "Georgia Driver's Education Commission Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2019." Georgia Driver's Education Commission, Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety, 30 Sept. 2018, [www.gahighwaysafety.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/fy-2019-gdec-annual-report.pdf](http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/fy-2019-gdec-annual-report.pdf).

- 49% of 16 year old teens in rural counties had a Class D license (issued to those under 18 years of age<sup>7</sup>) compared to 41% in the urban counties.
- 164,070 young drivers (15-20 years old) held an instructional permit in urban counties and 31,081 young drivers in rural counties.
- 355,892 young drivers (15-20 years old) held a Class D license in urban counties and 79,624 young drivers in rural counties

Table 3

**Urban vs. Rural Licensed Young Drivers (Ages 15-20) by License Type**

Age (years)	Urban: OMB Metro Counties				Rural: Nonmetro Counties			
	Instructional Permit		License (Class C or D)		Instructional Permit		License (Class C or D)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
15 years	48,874	100%	-	0%	11,997	100%	-	0%
16 years	44,093	59%	30,539	41%	8,302	51%	8,097	49%
17 years	28,126	34%	54,982	66%	4,401	25%	13,118	75%
18 years	19,097	20%	77,329	80%	2,835	14%	17,284	86%
19 years	14,001	13%	93,474	87%	2,109	10%	19,907	90%
20 years	9,879	9%	99,568	91%	1,437	6%	21,218	94%

Source: Drivers licenses information obtained from the Department of Driver Service (Dec 2019)

**All Crashes**

In 2018, there were 74,735 crashes that involved young drivers in Georgia. Most of these crashes occurred among drivers ages 18-to-20 years of age. The overall rate of young drivers involved in fatal crashes was higher for youth in the 18-to-20 age group.

In 2018:

- 2.57 out of every 1,000 crashes involving drivers ages 15-to-20 were fatal
- 30.41 out of every 100,000 licensed drivers ages 15-to-20 were involved in a fatal crash
- 21.79 out of every 100,000 population of persons ages 15-to-20 were involved in a fatal crash

<sup>7</sup>Young drivers at least 15 years of age can obtain an Instructional (Learners) Permit (Class CP). For young drivers less than 18 years of age (16 & 17 years old), the Class D Provisional Driver's License is the first driver's license they can obtain by satisfying one of the four methods to complete the Georgia GDL requirements. The Class C license can be issued to all drivers 18 years of age and older with no driver's education required.

Table 4 shows the rates of drivers involved in fatal and non-fatal crashes by age group.

Table 4 **Rates of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age Group, 2018**

Age Group (Years)	Number of Drivers Involved		Licensed Drivers	2018 Est. Population	Rates of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes		
	Crashes	Fatal Crashes			Per 1,000 Crashes	Per 100,000 Licenses	Per 100,000 Population
<b>15-20</b>	<b>74,735</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>631,348</b>	<b>881,126</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>30.41</b>	<b>21.79</b>
15-17	21,861	43	254,079	435,270	1.97	16.92	9.88
18-20	52,874	149	377,269	445,856	2.82	39.49	33.42
21-24	76,572	210	541,228	563,896	2.74	38.80	37.24
25-29	93,989	259	714,713	767,745	2.76	36.24	33.74
30-34	78,204	203	692,364	705,501	2.60	29.32	28.77
35-39	71,101	169	668,253	705,228	2.38	25.29	23.96
40-44	61,822	170	635,406	667,374	2.75	26.75	25.47
45-49	61,688	178	676,590	718,419	2.89	26.31	24.78
50-54	55,541	152	661,115	693,019	2.74	22.99	21.93
55-59	48,652	155	668,614	682,347	3.19	23.18	22.72
60-64	37,722	139	590,498	603,335	3.68	23.54	23.04
Older (65+)	63,002	272	1,384,514	1,460,409	4.32	19.65	18.62
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>723,028</b>	<b>2,099</b>	<b>7,864,643</b>	<b>8,448,399</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>26.69</b>	<b>24.84</b>

\*Total measures among drivers 15 years of age or older with reported known ages. Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2018; Georgia Department of Transportation 2018 crash data revised by Crash Outcomes Data and Evaluation System; Drivers licenses information obtained from the Department of Driver Service 2019 Annual Report; Estimated 2018 population obtained from Georgia's Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS)

### Fatal Crashes with Other Vehicles

Table 5 shows the percentage of drivers involved in fatal crashes, licensed drivers, and population by age group. In 2018:

- Young drivers (15-20 years) accounted for 9.3 percent of all drivers involved in single-vehicle fatal crashes, compared to 8.7 percent in multiple-vehicle fatal crashes.
- Young drivers (15-20 years) accounted for 10.4 percent of the Georgia population and 8.0 percent of all 2019 licensed drivers.

Table 5

### Percentage of Population (15+ Years) and Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Age Group, 2018

Age Group (Years)	Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes			Licensed Drivers	2018 Est. Population
	Single-Vehicle	Multi-Vehicle	Total		
<b>15-20</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
21-24	12%	8%	10%	7%	7%
25-29	14%	11%	12%	9%	9%
30-34	8%	10%	9%	9%	8%
35-39	7%	8%	8%	8%	8%
40-44	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
45-49	9%	8%	8%	9%	9%
50-54	7%	7%	7%	8%	8%
55-59	6%	8%	7%	9%	8%
60-64	6%	7%	6%	8%	7%
Older (65+)	14%	15%	15%	18%	17%
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>1,355</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>7,864,643</b>	<b>8,448,399</b>

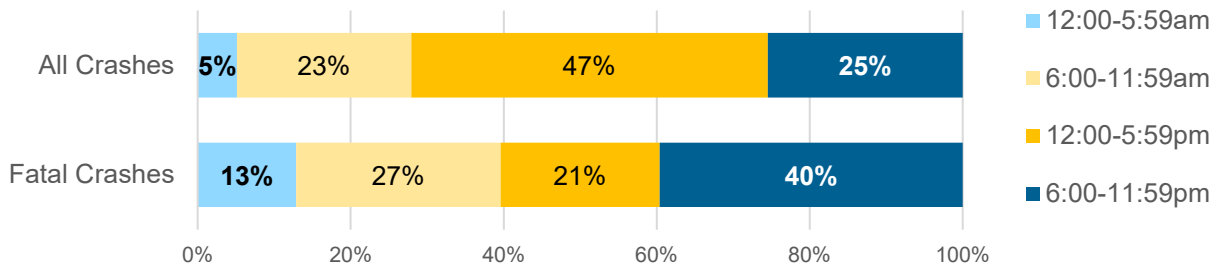
## Time of Day and Month

Figure 7 shows the time of day of all crashes and fatal crashes involving young drivers in 2018.

- The majority of crashes involving young drivers occurred in the daytime hours during 12:00-5:59pm – 47 percent of all crashes.
- The majority of fatal crashes involving young drivers occurred in the nighttime hours during 6:00-11:59pm – 40 percent of all fatal crashes.

Figure 7

### Time of Day of All Crashes and Fatal Crashes Involving Young Drivers, 2018

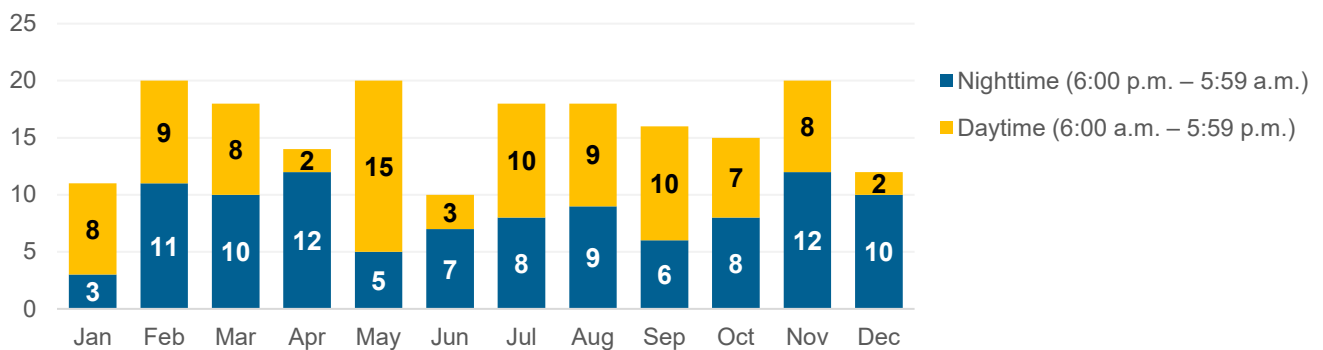


Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2018; Georgia Department of Transportation 2018 crash data revised by Crash Outcomes Data and Evaluation System.

Figure 8 shows the number of fatal crashes involving young drivers by the time of day and month. In 2018, more fatal crashes involving young drivers occurred in February, May, and November.

Figure 8

### Number of Fatal Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by Month and Time of Day, 2018



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2018



## Data Definitions and Considerations:

This fact sheet defines young drivers as persons 15 to 20 years old operating a motor vehicle. Young drivers' involvement in crashes does not imply they were "at fault" in the crash.

Fatal crashes are defined as crashes that involve a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway customarily open to the public and that resulted in the death of a motorist or a non-motorist within 30 days of the crash.

A traffic crash is defined as an incident that involved one or more motor vehicles where at least one vehicle was in transport and the crash originated on a public trafficway, such as a road or highway. Crashes that occurred on private property, including parking lots and driveways, are excluded.

Passenger vehicles are defined as passenger cars, light trucks (including vans), utility vehicles, and pickup trucks.

Serious injuries are those suspected serious injuries reported by law enforcement.

The Department of Driver Services provided licensing data for the 2019 year. Licensing data by age, county, and license type was not obtained for the 2018 year. The driver licensing database is a live database system and represents the information at a point-in-time on the date of extraction.

Estimated population counts were obtained from OASIS (Online Analytical Statistical Information System) Web Query Tool hosted by the Georgia Department of Public Health - Office of Health Indicators for Planning (OHIP).

There are three (3) types of licenses that young drivers can obtain in the state of Georgia. Young drivers at least 15 years of age can obtain an Instructional (Learners) Permit (Class CP). For young drivers less than 18 years of age (ages 16 and 17 years), the Class D Provisional Driver's License is the first driver's license they can obtain by satisfying one of the four methods to complete the Georgia GDL requirements. The Class C license can be issued to all drivers 18 years of age and older with no driver's education required.

### *For More Information:*

The two-page Quick Facts for young adult drivers can be found on the GOHS or DPH websites below:

- <http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/highway-safety/shsp/>
- <https://dph.georgia.gov/injury-epidemiology/crash-outcome-data-evaluation-survey-codes>

Other fact sheets available at the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation Systems (CODES) are Pedestrian, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists, Older Drivers, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection in Passenger Vehicles.

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