

## TRANSPORTATION MODE COMPARISONS



Passenger transportation incidents account for about 2 out of every 10 unintentional injury deaths. But the risk of death to the passenger, expressed on a per mile basis, varies greatly by transportation mode. Highway travel by personal vehicle presents the greatest risk; air, rail, and bus travel have much lower death rates. The tables below show the latest information on passenger transportation deaths and death rates.

The statistics for automobiles, vans, sport utility vehicles, pickups, and other light trucks shown in the tables below represent all passenger vehicle usage, both intercity and local. The bus data also include intercity

and local (transit) bus travel. Railroad includes both intercity (Amtrak) and local commuting travel. Scheduled airlines includes both large airlines and commuter airlines, but excludes on-demand air taxis and charter operations. In comparing the four modes, drivers of automobiles (except taxis), vans, SUVs, and pickup trucks are considered passengers. Bus drivers and airline or railroad crews are not considered passengers.

Other comparisons are possible based on passenger trips, vehicle miles, or vehicle trips, but passenger miles is the most commonly used basis for comparing the safety of various modes of travel.

TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENT DEATH RATES, UNITED STATES, 2006-2008

Mode of transportation	2008			2006-2008 average death rate
	Passenger deaths	Passenger miles (billions)	Deaths per 100,000,000 passenger miles	
Passenger automobiles <sup>a</sup>	14,579	2,633.8	0.55	0.61
Vans, SUVs, pickup trucks <sup>b</sup>	10,765	1,817.5	0.59	0.66
Buses <sup>c</sup>	50	61.1	0.08	0.05
Transit buses	23	21.9	0.11	0.03
Intercity buses	11	39.2	0.03	0.03
Railroad passenger trains <sup>d</sup>	24	18.2	0.13	0.06
Scheduled airlines <sup>e</sup>	0	568.2	0.00	0.003

Source: Highway passenger deaths: Fatality Analysis Reporting System data. Railroad passenger deaths and miles: Federal Railroad Administration. Airline passenger deaths: National Transportation Safety Board. Airline passenger miles: Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Passenger miles for transit buses: American Public Transit Association. All other figures: National Safety Council estimates.

<sup>a</sup>Includes taxi passengers. Drivers of passenger automobiles are considered passengers.

<sup>b</sup>Includes two-axle, four-tire vehicles less than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating other than automobiles.

<sup>c</sup>Figures exclude school buses but include "other" and "unknown" bus types.

<sup>d</sup>Includes Amtrak and commuter rail service.

<sup>e</sup>Includes large airlines and scheduled commuter airlines; excludes charter, cargo, and on-demand service and suicide/sabotage.

PASSENGER DEATHS AND DEATH RATES, UNITED STATES, 1999-2008

Year	Passenger automobiles		Vans, SUVs, & pickup trucks		Buses		Railroad passenger trains		Scheduled airlines	
	Deaths	Rate <sup>a</sup>	Deaths	Rate <sup>a</sup>	Deaths	Rate <sup>a</sup>	Deaths	Rate <sup>a</sup>	Deaths	Rate <sup>a</sup>
1999	20,851	0.84	11,295	0.76	40	0.07	14	0.10	24	0.005
2000	20,689	0.81	11,545	0.76	3	0.01	4	0.03	94	0.02
2001	20,310	0.78	11,736	0.76	11	0.02	3	0.02	279	0.06
2002	20,564	0.78	12,278	0.78	36	0.06	7	0.05	0	0.00
2003	19,723	0.74	12,551	0.78	30	0.05	3	0.02	24	0.005
2004	19,183	0.71	12,678	0.75	27	0.05	3	0.02	13	0.002
2005	18,509	0.68	13,043	0.76	43	0.07	16	0.10	22	0.004
2006	17,792	0.66	12,723	0.72	15	0.02	2	0.01	52	0.01
2007	16,613	0.61	12,462	0.68	18	0.03	5	0.03	0	0.00
2008	14,579	0.55	10,765	0.59	50	0.08	24	0.13	0	0.00
<b>10-year average</b>	<b>18,881</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>12,108</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0.01</b>

Source: See table above.

<sup>a</sup>Deaths per 100,000,000 passenger miles.