

ROAD COMMISSION

for OAKLAND COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Craig Bryson, Public Information Officer, (248) 645-2000, ext. 2202 (e-mail: cbryson@rcoc.org)

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OAKLAND COUNTY ROADS REMAIN SAFEST IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN; FATALITY RATE IS FAR LOWER THAN STATE AND NATIONAL RATES

Beverly Hills, MI — Once again in 2023, Oakland County saw a substantially lower traffic-fatality rate on its roads than either the state or nation as a whole or than any surrounding county.

The county, state and national fatality rates were recently released for 2023. For the year, Oakland County's fatality rate was less than half of either the state or national rate.

In fact, Oakland County has had the lowest, or among the lowest, traffic-fatality rate in the state nearly every year for the past several decades. In part that is the result of the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) making safety its top priority since 1978. Since that time, the agency has been a national leader in traffic safety and one of the first and most aggressive users of traffic-crash data to drive road-improvement and maintenance decisions.

For 2023, Oakland County's traffic-fatality rate was 0.46 deaths per 100 million miles of vehicle travel. For the year, the statewide rate was 1.15 fatalities per 100 million miles of vehicle travel and the national rate was 1.35.

“Safety is our number-one priority,” stated RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar. “While we are always striving to reduce the number of crashes on our roads, and even one fatality is too many, it is still encouraging to see that our roads remain very safe compared to others across the state and nation. That is the result of more than 40 years of using crash data as the number-one factor driving road project selection and design decisions. This has involved a lot of hard work and commitment to safety by everyone at RCOC, but that work has clearly paid off.”

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Not only is Oakland County's traffic-fatality rate lower than the state and national rates, it is also lower than other counties in Southeast Michigan, including Wayne, Macomb, Washtenaw, Livingston and Genesee counties.

"Most people don't realize it," Kolar noted, "but when they are driving in Oakland County, they are driving on some of the safest roads in the nation."

Kolar added that RCOC's data-driven safety efforts have been successful in part because they remove political considerations from road-improvement decisions. "Virtually everything we do is driven by an interest in safety," he said. "Whether it is how we select the projects we do each year, how we design those projects, how we prioritize our road maintenance activities, etc. It is all based on crash data and safety analyses and not on political considerations or political influence."

In fact, if Oakland's roads experienced the same fatality rate as the national rate, approximately 60 more people would die on Oakland roads every year. "That's a huge deal," Kolar said. "That's 60 families every year that do not have to suffer the loss of a loved one."

Kolar also thanked the Transportation Improvement Association (TIA), an Oakland County-based non-profit dedicated to promoting data-based traffic safety. "TIA was established to reduce traffic-fatality rates, and they have been our partner in making roads safer for more than three decades," he observed. "They are at the forefront, nationally, of traffic-data management."

For more information about RCOC, visit the RCOC website, www.rcocweb.org. For questions, contact RCOC through the website, by phone at 877-858-4808 (Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.) or via email at dcsmail@rcoc.org.

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Editor's note: Attached are a table and graph showing the 2008-2023 traffic-fatality rates for the Southeast Michigan region as well as the state as a whole and the nation as a whole, as compiled by the Transportation Improvement Association.

Below are a table and graph comparing Oakland County's traffic-fatality rate to that of the state and nation as well as to other Southeast Michigan counties for 2008 through 2023.

Year	United States	Michigan	Oakland Co.	Macomb Co.	Wayne Co.	Washtenaw Co.	Livingston Co.	Genesee Co.
2008	1.26	0.97	0.43	0.62	0.86	0.75	0.57	0.98
2009	1.15	0.91	0.44	0.68	1.08	0.72	0.72	0.79
2010	1.11	0.96	0.50	0.73	0.87	0.54	0.73	1.01
2011	1.10	0.94	0.54	0.76	0.83	0.94	0.79	1.05
2012	1.14	0.99	0.46	0.87	1.04	0.63	0.78	0.88
2013	1.10	1.00	0.45	0.87	1.08	0.89	0.67	0.75
2014	1.08	1.04	0.58	0.74	1.20	0.84	0.88	0.89
2015	1.11	0.98	0.53	0.93	1.24	0.69	0.52	0.78
2016	1.18	1.03	0.62	0.97	1.29	0.68	0.94	1.23
2017	1.17	0.98	0.53	0.66	0.98	1.01	0.96	0.91
2018	1.14	0.95	0.41	0.79	1.02	0.67	0.53	1.03
2019	1.10	0.96	0.52	0.78	1.05	0.67	0.66	1.28
2020	1.34	1.26	0.58	0.71	1.98	0.82	1.07	1.56
2021	1.37	1.17	0.55	0.90	1.55	0.83	0.53	1.52
2022	1.33	1.17	0.67	0.91	1.52	0.66	1.01	1.30
2023	1.35	1.15	0.46	0.82	1.43	0.61	0.58	1.55

Data for 2023 is based on finalized crash data. VMT for Counties is same percentage of State amount from 2022

