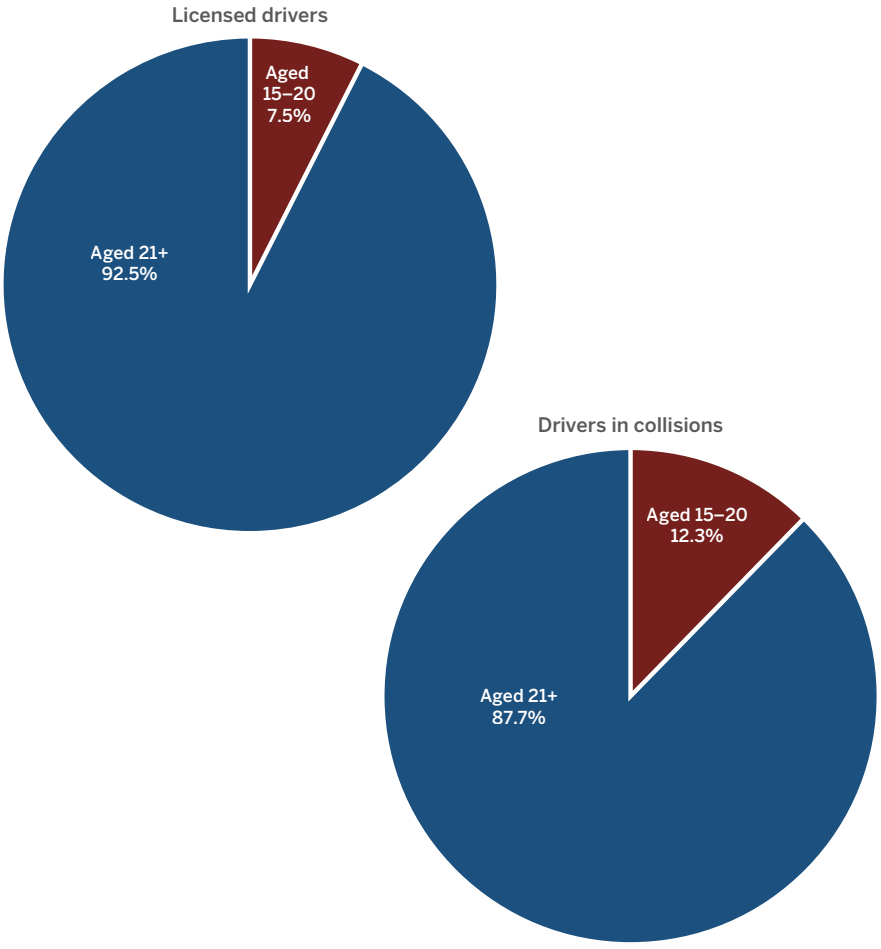
YOUNG DRIVERS[1]

Motor vehicle crashes were a leading cause of death among 15–20-year-olds in Indiana and in the United States in 2024.[2] In 2025, 41,572 individuals aged 15–20 were involved in traffic collisions in Indiana, including 39,469 young drivers. The same year, young drivers made up an oversized share of drivers in collisions, comprising 12.3% of drivers in collisions and only 7.5% of licensed drivers (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Licensed drivers and drivers in collisions in Indiana by age group, 2025



2025 KEY FINDINGS

- Young-driver collisions accounted for 18.0% of all collisions.
- Young drivers made up 12.3% of drivers in collisions and 8.3% of driver fatalities.
- Fatal and non-fatal injuries in young-driver collisions declined generally among young-drivers and their passengers but increased among non-motorists from 2021 to 2025.
- More than half (65.8%) of young-driver passengers were peers aged 15–20.
- Young drivers were speeding in collisions more often than drivers in all other age groups from 2021 to 2025.
- In fatal collisions, 35.4% of young drivers with drug or alcohol test results were impaired.
- Young drivers killed in collisions were half as likely to be wearing a seatbelt as young drivers who survived.

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1 Analysis provided by the Indiana University Public Policy Institute using data from Indiana State Police, Automated Reporting Information Exchange System (ARIES), downloaded March 12, 2026.

2 National Vital Statistics System. (2026). Mortality 2018–2024. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved July 22, 2016, from CDC WONDER Online Database: http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html

Indiana's Graduated Driver's License (GDL)

The GDL program combines supervised practice, learner-permit requirements, driver education, and phased licensing privileges to help new drivers develop safe driving skills. Individuals may begin the phased licensing process at age 15 by enrolling in a behind-the-wheel driver education course, or at age 16 by passing a vision screening and a knowledge exam. All new drivers must complete 50 hours of supervised driving practice before becoming eligible for a probationary license. After holding a learner's permit for at least 180 days and completing a driver education course, drivers aged 16 to 20 become eligible for a probationary license.[3]

YOUNG-DRIVER COLLISIONS

In 2025, there were 36,684 young-driver collisions, accounting for 18.0% of all collisions and 115 fatal young-driver collisions, accounting for 15.5% of all fatal collisions. The proportion of all collisions involving young drivers remained relatively steady from 2021–25, ranging from a low of 17.5% in 2022 to a high of 18.4% in 2021. Fatal young-driver collisions reached a five-year high in 2023, at 16.5% of all fatal collisions (Figure 2).

Since 2021, young-driver motorcycle collisions have accounted for an increasing share of all motorcycle collisions, rising from 6.8% in 2021 to 11.7% in 2025. During the same period, the young-driver share of passenger-vehicle collisions declined slightly, from 12.9% in 2021 to 11.4% in 2025 (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Young-driver collisions as a percent of all collisions by severity, 2021–25

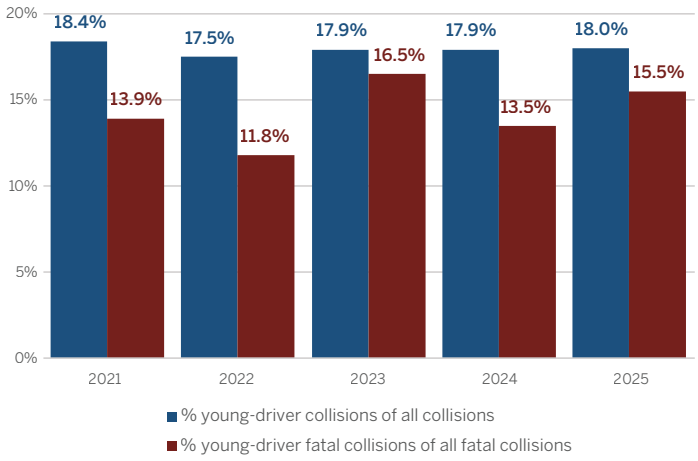
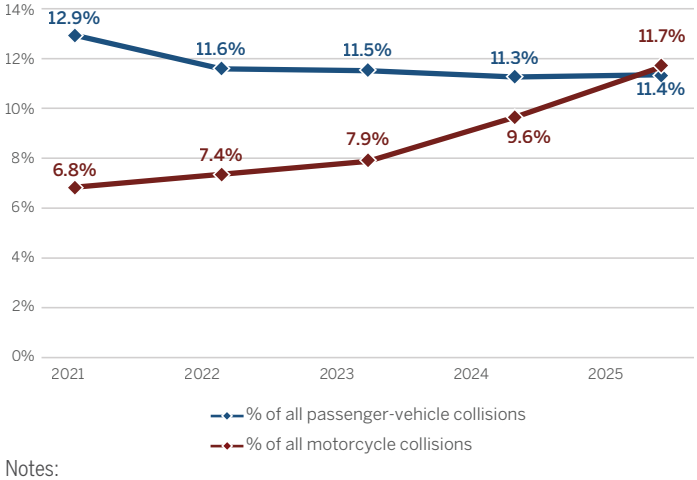


Figure 3. Young-driver collisions as a percent of all collisions by vehicle type, 2021–25



Notes:

1) Passenger vehicles include passenger cars, pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles, and vans.

2) Motorcycles include motorcycles, Class A and Class B motor-driven cycles, motorized bicycles, and mopeds.

3 Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. (2026). Learner's permit and driver's licenses overview. Accessed on July 22, 2026, at https://www.in.gov/bmv/licenses-permits-ids/learners-permits-and-drivers-licenses-overview/

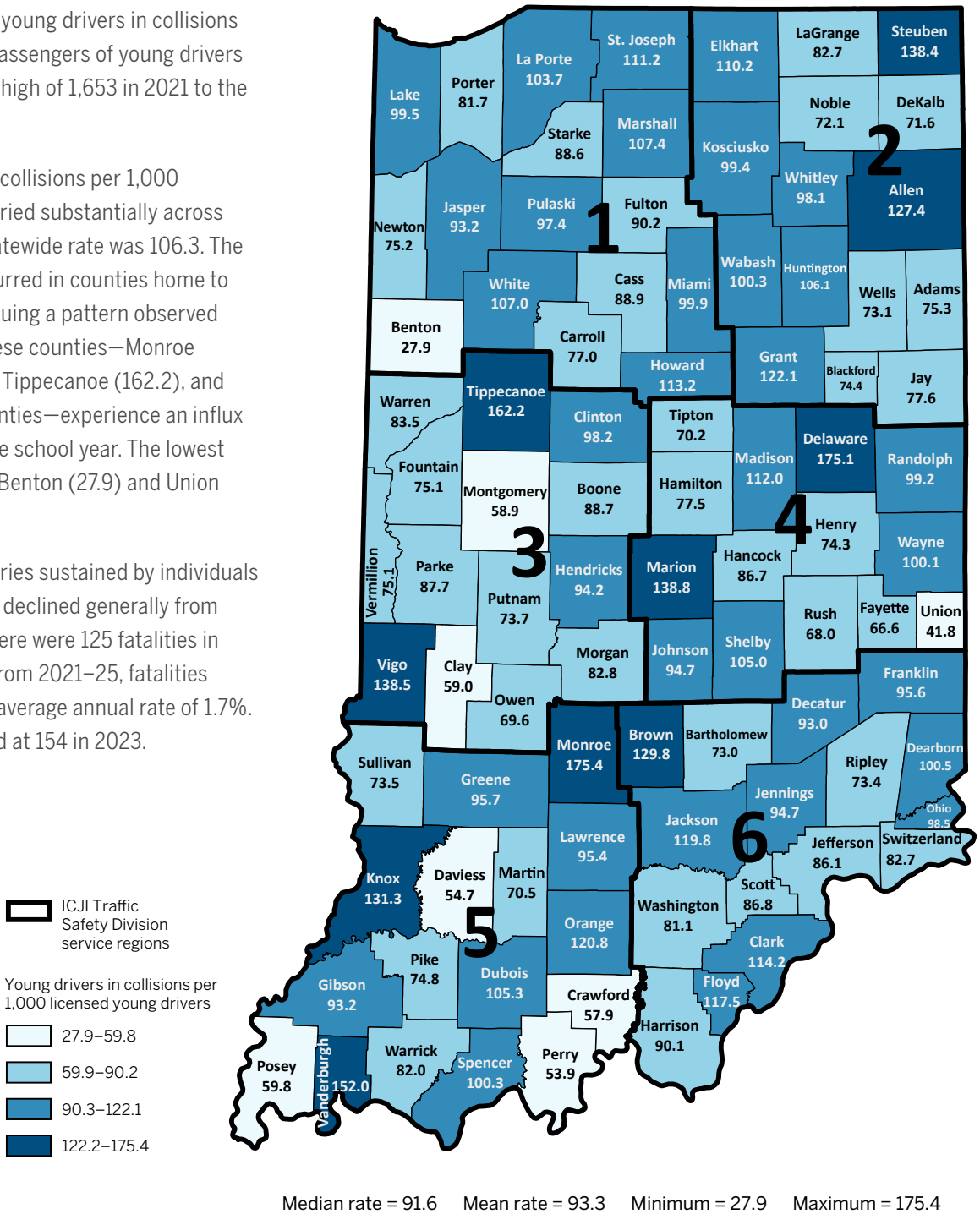
INDIVIDUALS IN YOUNG-DRIVER COLLISIONS

In 2025, there were 39,469 young drivers in collisions. The number of young drivers in collisions was relatively steady from 2021 to 2025, with a high of 41,400 in 2021 and a low of 38,635 in 2023. There were 1,419 passengers of young drivers in collisions in 2025. The number of passengers of young drivers declined from a five-year high of 1,653 in 2021 to the five-year low in 2025.

Rates of young drivers in collisions per 1,000 licensed young drivers varied substantially across the state. In 2025, the statewide rate was 106.3. The highest county rates occurred in counties home to major universities, continuing a pattern observed over the past decade. These counties—Monroe (175.4), Delaware (175.1), Tippecanoe (162.2), and Vanderburgh (152.0) counties—experience an influx of young adults during the school year. The lowest county rates occurred in Benton (27.9) and Union (41.8) counties (Map 1).

Overall, fatalities and injuries sustained by individuals in young-driver collisions declined generally from 2021 to 2025. In 2025, there were 125 fatalities in young-driver collisions. From 2021–25, fatalities generally declined, at an average annual rate of 1.7%. However, fatalities peaked at 154 in 2023.

Map 1. Young drivers in collisions in Indiana per 1,000 licensed young drivers by county and ICJI Traffic Safety Division service region, 2025



Median rate = 91.6 Mean rate = 93.3 Minimum = 27.9 Maximum = 175.4

Young driver and young-driver passenger fatalities followed a similar pattern for the five-year period. Young-driver fatalities fell from 61 in 2021 to 46 in 2025, a 6.8% average annual decline. Young-driver fatalities peaked in 2023 at 66. Fatalities among young-driver passengers declined from 22 in 2021 to 16 in 2025, an average annual decline of 7.7%. Young-driver passenger fatalities also peaked in 2023 at 35.

Fatalities in young-driver collisions among drivers and passengers in other vehicles and non-motorists increased from 2021 to 2025. Fatalities among drivers and passengers in other vehicles increased from 37 in 2021 to 43 in 2025, a 3.8% annual average increase. There also were 43 fatalities in 2023. Non-motorist fatalities increased from 14 to 20 during the same period, a 9.3% annual average increase. The number of non-motorist fatalities in 2022–24 were lower than in 2021 and 2025 (Table 1).

Table 1. Injury status for individuals in young-driver collisions, 2021–25

Person type/injury status	Count of individuals					Annual rate of change	
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2024–25	2021–25
All individuals in crashes with young drivers	**72,343**	**69,894**	**70,206**	**70,600**	**71,709**	**1.3%**	**2.2%**
Fatal	134	117	154	114	125	9.6%	-1.7%
Injured	9,318	8,739	9,063	8,792	8,862	0.8%	-1.2%
Not injured	62,891	61,038	60,989	61,694	62,722	1.7%	-0.1%
Young drivers	**41,400**	**39,107**	**38,635**	**38,675**	**39,469**	**2.1%**	**-1.2%**
Fatal	61	48	66	51	46	-9.8%	-6.8%
Injured	3,798	3,560	3,468	3,388	3,496	3.2%	-2.1%
Not injured	37,541	35,499	35,101	35,236	35,927	2.0%	-1.1%
Passengers of young drivers	**1,653**	**1,550**	**1,632**	**1,437**	**1,419**	**-1.3%**	**-3.7%**
Fatal	22	22	35	16	16	0.0%	-7.7%
Injured	1,538	1,434	1,510	1,339	1,263	-5.7%	-4.8%
Not injured	93	94	87	82	140	70.7%	10.8%
Drivers and passengers in other vehicles	**29,071**	**29,030**	**29,705**	**30,282**	**30,584**	**1.0%**	**1.3%**
Fatal	37	37	43	40	43	7.5%	3.8%
Injured	3,820	3,583	3,901	3,892	3,912	0.5%	0.6%
Not injured	25,214	25,410	25,761	26,350	26,629	1.1%	1.4%
Non-motorists	**219**	**207**	**234**	**206**	**237**	**15.0%**	**2.0%**
Fatal	14	10	10	7	20	185.7%	9.3%
Injured	162	162	184	173	191	10.4%	4.2%
Not injured	43	35	40	26	26	0.0%	-11.8%

There were 46 young-driver fatalities in 2025, making up 8.3% of all driver fatalities. Of those, 39 were young male drivers, representing 9.1% of all male driver fatalities. There were 7 female young driver fatalities, accounting for 5.6% of all female driver fatalities (Table 2).

Table 2. Injury status for young drivers by gender, 2025

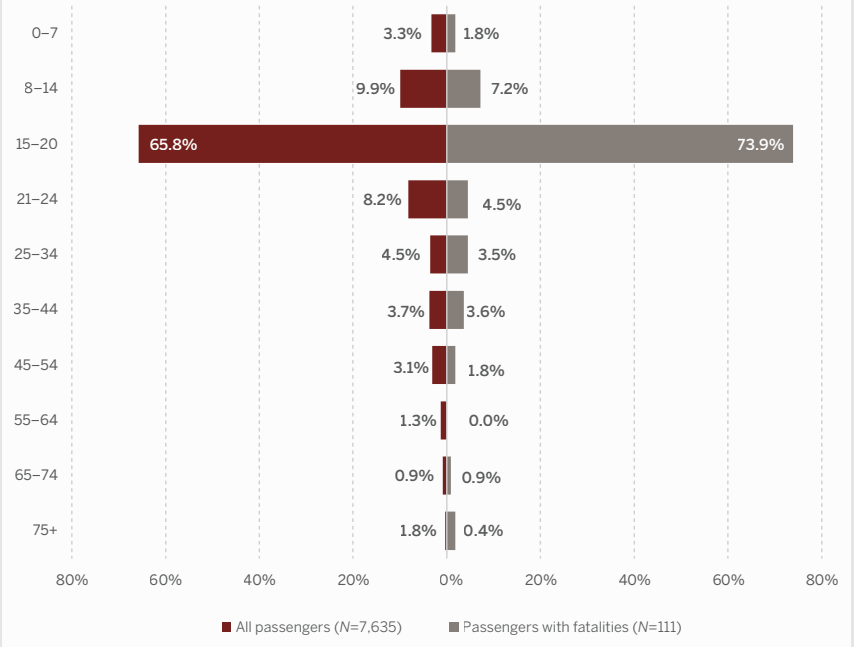
Gender	All drivers	Young drivers	% of all drivers
Driver fatalities	**552**	**46**	**8.3%**
Male	428	39	9.1%
Female	124	7	5.6%
Driver injuries	**31,106**	**3,494**	**11.2%**
Male	16,174	1,831	11.3%
Female	14,932	1,663	11.1%
Uninjured drivers	**290,059**	**35,914**	**12.4%**
Male	171,777	20,172	11.7%
Female	118,282	15,742	13.3%

Note: Excludes drivers with unknown or NULL gender.

Young-driver passengers

Research shows that teen drivers are 2.5–3 times more likely to engage in risky driving behaviors when they are driving with one or more teenage peers than when they are driving alone.[4] In Indiana, drivers holding probationary licenses are restricted during the first six months of licensure from carrying non-family passengers unless accompanied by a licensed driver aged 25 or older or a certified driving instructor.[5] More than half (65.8%) of passengers of young drivers in collisions in Indiana from 2021 to 2025 were aged 15 to 20. Passengers aged 8–14 and 21–24 made up an additional 18.1% of young-driver passengers in collisions. Among the passengers of young drivers killed in collisions, 73.9% were aged 15–20 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percent of passengers of young drivers by age group, 2021–25



4 Goodwin, A.H., Foss, R.D., & O'Brien, N.P. (2012, April). The effect of passengers on teen driver behavior (DOT HS 811 540). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21949/1525713

5 Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. (2026). Learner's permit and driver's licenses overview. Accessed on July 22, 2026, at https://www.in.gov/bmv/licenses-permits-ids/learners-permits-and-drivers-licenses-overview/

DANGEROUS DRIVING BY YOUNG DRIVERS—SPEEDING AND ALCOHOL IMPAIRMENT

Young drivers are inexperienced, and the novelty-seeking and risk-taking behaviors associated with adolescent development influence their driving outcomes.[6] From 2021 to 2025, young drivers in collisions were more likely to be speeding than drivers in all other age groups. During this period, the number of young male drivers in speed-related collisions each year was nearly twice the number of young female drivers in speed-related collisions, on average. However, young male and female drivers represented similar proportions of all speeding drivers by gender (Figure 5).

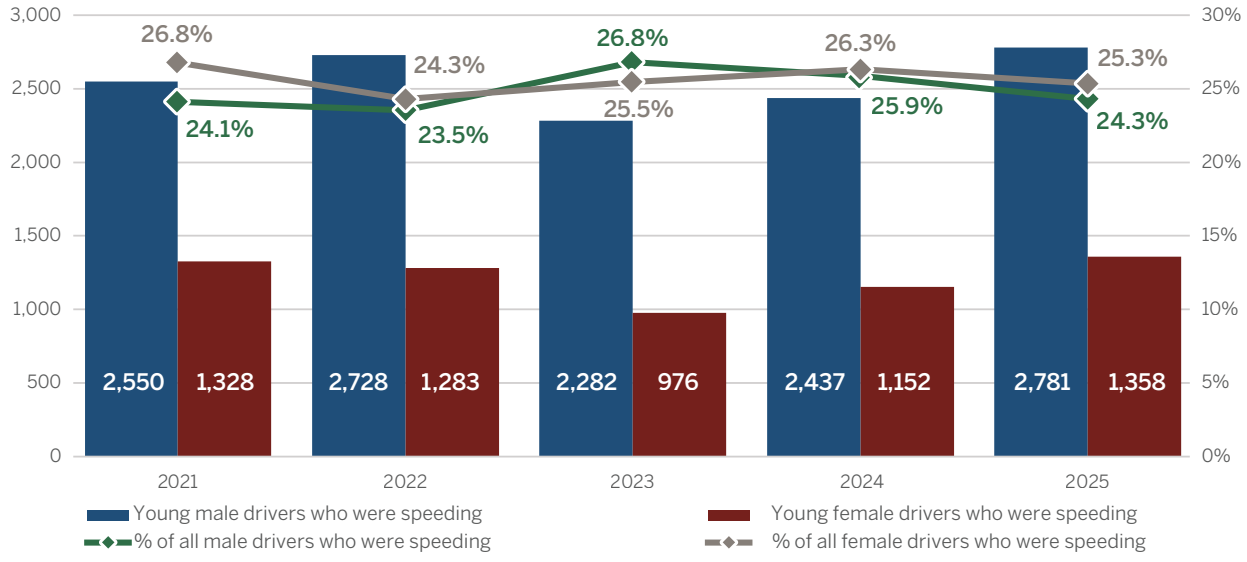
From 2021 to 2025, 985 young drivers involved in collisions were alcohol-impaired, and 254 were drug-impaired. During the same period, 21 young drivers in fatal collisions were alcohol-impaired, 33.3% of young drivers with reported results. In addition, 92 young drivers in fatal collisions tested positive for drugs. Among young drivers killed in collisions, 46.2% with reported alcohol results were impaired and 39.8% with reported drug results were drug-positive. Young drivers in fatal collisions with reported results who survived were less likely to be drug or alcohol impaired than those killed in collisions (Table 3).

Table 3. Young-driver impairment in fatal collisions in Indiana with reported results by driver injury status, 2021–25

	Young drivers in fatal collisions	
	Surviving	Killed
Young drivers	**339**	**271**
Alcohol-impaired	9	12
Not impaired	28	14
No result reported	302	245
Alcohol-impaired, as a % of young drivers with reported results	**24.3%**	**46.2%**
Young drivers	**342**	**272**
Drug test positive	55	37
Drug test pending	1	1
Drug test negative	107	55
No result reported	179	179
Drug-positive, as a % of young drivers with reported results	**33.7%**	**39.8%**

Note: Drivers are considered impaired when they have a blood alcohol content of 0.08 g/dl or higher or they test positive for a Schedule I or Schedule II controlled substance or a substance produced when the body breaks down one of those drugs (a metabolite).

Figure 5. Young drivers speeding in collisions in Indiana by gender, 2021–25



Note: Collisions are defined as speed-related when unsafe speed or speed too fast for weather conditions is listed as the primary or a contributing factor of the collision, or when a vehicle driver receives a speeding citation.

6 Kirley, B.B., Robison, K.L., Goodwin, A.H., Harmon, K.J., O'Brien, N.P., West, A., Harrell, S.S., Thomas, L., & Brookshire, K. (2023). Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices, (11th ed.; DOT HS 813 490). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

YOUNG-DRIVER SEATBELT AND HELMET USE IN COLLISIONS

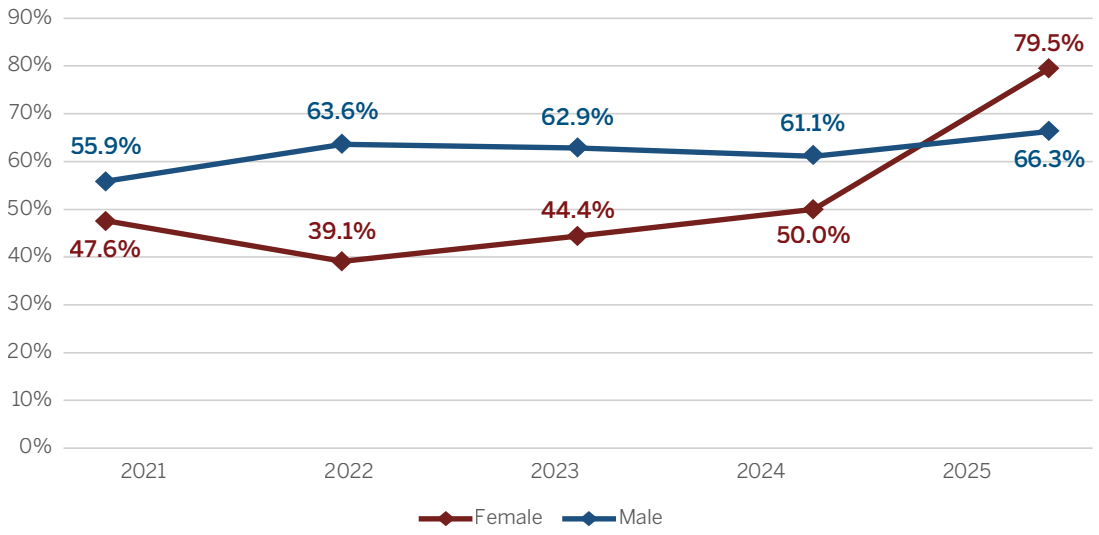
Seatbelt use declined among young drivers in passenger-vehicle collisions in all injury categories from 2021 to 2025. In 2025, 92.7% of young drivers in these collisions were wearing seatbelts. In the same year, young drivers killed in collisions were half as likely to be wearing seatbelts than young drivers who survived. Forty percent of young drivers who were killed in collisions were wearing seatbelts, compared to 83.4% of young drivers with non-fatal injuries and 93.7% with no injuries (Table 4).

In 2025, 67.9% of young motorcyclists were wearing a helmet. Helmet use among young female motorcyclists varied more from 2021 to 2025 than helmet use among young male motorcyclists. In 2025, 79.5% of young female motorcyclists in collisions wore helmets, a five-year high. The five-year low was 39.1% in 2022. Helmet use by young male motorcyclists was relatively steady for the same period, with a low of 55.9% in 2021 and a high of 66.3% in 2025 (Figure 6).

Table 4. Young-driver seatbelt use in passenger-vehicle collisions by injury status, 2021–25

Person type/injury status	Count of individuals					Annual rate of change	
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2024–25	2021–25
All young drivers	**36,488**	**33,705**	**32,686**	**31,664**	**31,693**	**0.1%**	**-3.5%**
Restrained	35,640	32,014	30,686	29,349	29,371	0.1%	-4.7%
% restrained	97.7%	95.0%	93.9%	92.7%	92.7%	0.0%	-1.3%
Fatal	**46**	**32**	**47**	**30**	**25**	**-16.7%**	**-14.1%**
Restrained	22	13	23	18	10	-44.4%	-17.9%
% restrained	47.8%	40.6%	48.9%	60.0%	40.0%	-33.3%	-4.4%
Injured	**3,386**	**3,121**	**2,995**	**2,825**	**2,928**	**3.6%**	**-3.6%**
Restrained	3,091	2,715	2,544	2,333	2,441	4.6%	-5.7%
% restrained	91.3%	87.0%	84.9%	82.6%	83.4%	0.9%	-2.2%
Not injured	**33,056**	**30,552**	**29,644**	**28,809**	**28,740**	**-0.2%**	**-3.4%**
Restrained	32,527	29,286	28,119	26,998	26,920	-0.3%	-4.6%
% restrained	98.4%	95.9%	94.9%	93.7%	93.7%	0.0%	-1.2%

Figure 6. Helmet use among young motorcyclists in collisions in Indiana by gender, 2021–25



Indiana Traffic Safety Facts

Designing and implementing effective traffic safety policies requires data-driven analyses of traffic collisions and their causes. To assist in the policy-making process, the Indiana University Public Policy Institute (PPI) collaborates with the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) to analyze annual crash data from the Automated Reporting Information Exchange System (ARIES) maintained by the Indiana State Police. These statistics are used to inform the public, practitioners, as well as state and national policymakers on matters of road safety. They also serve as the analytical foundation of traffic safety program planning and design in Indiana.

This publication—Young Drivers, 2025—is one in a series of Indiana Traffic Safety Facts publications. The series also includes Indiana Crash Facts 2025, Indiana County Profiles 2025 and two additional topical issue briefs. Funding for these publications is provided by ICJI and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The Indiana Criminial Justice Institute

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) serves as Indiana's central hub for public safety funding and research, managing more than $300 million in state and federal funds and administering grants to public and nonprofit partners engaged in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, traffic safety, and victim services.

The ICJI Traffic Safety Division leads statewide efforts to reduce injuries and fatalities on Indiana's roadways. The division oversees state and federal funds awarded to Indiana by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. In this role, ICJI manages grants, coordinates targeted enforcement with state and local law enforcement agencies, develops and distributes educational materials, and executes campaigns aimed at improving public awareness and promoting safer driving behaviors.

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