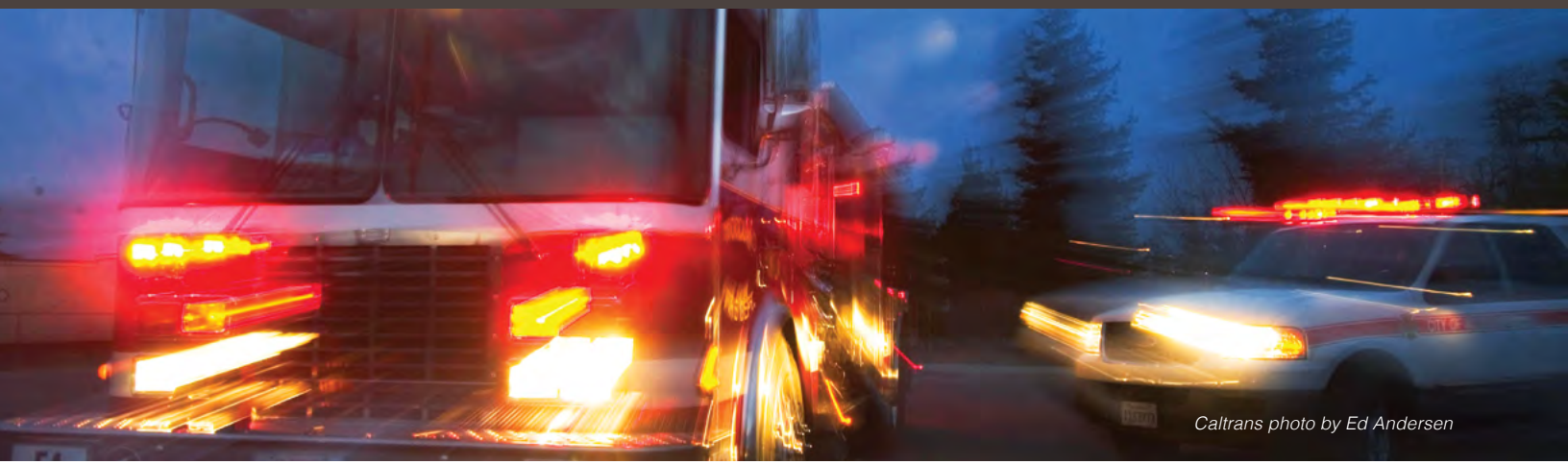
Trend Spotting

Collisions Mostly Caused by Speeding, Aggressive Driving



Caltrans photo by Ed Andersen

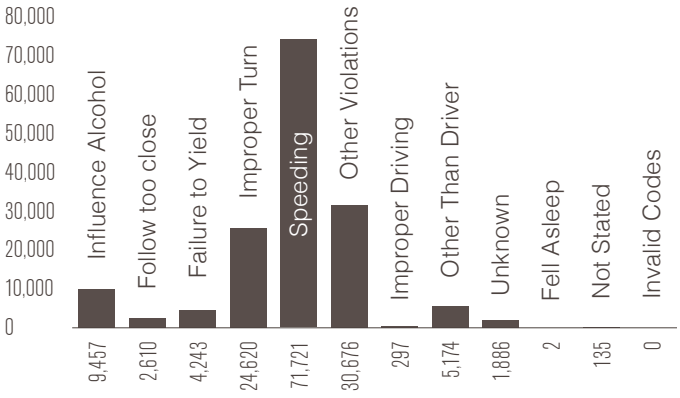
Speeding and aggressive driving were the most frequent causes of incidents on the California state highway system, with nearly 20 percent of traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries being speed-related, according to the 2013 Collision Data on California State Highways report, released in July.

In the 2013 report, the most recent year for which data is available, more than 71,000 collisions were attributed to speeding. Likewise, rear-end collisions occurred far more often than "sideswipes," the second-leading type (see charts).

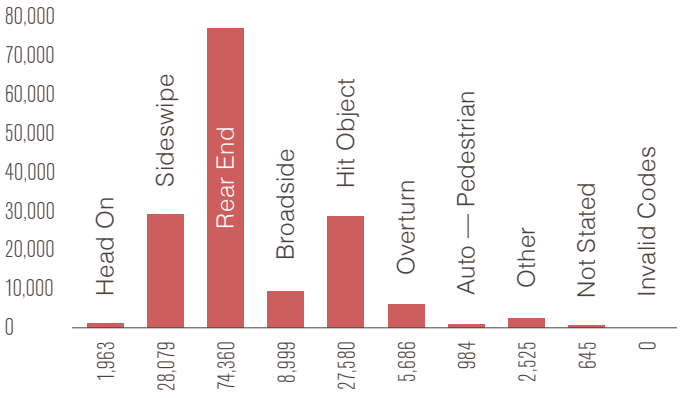
Despite these seemingly large numbers, traffic-related fatalities on California's highway system — and the nation as a whole — are actually continuing a downward trend.

Many people attribute the decline in traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries in the past eight years to the economic downturn when fewer jobs and less income led to less driving and therefore reduced exposure. The rate of driving is reflected in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). However, in California, VMT did not decline much during the economic

2013 All Accidents by Primary Collision Factor

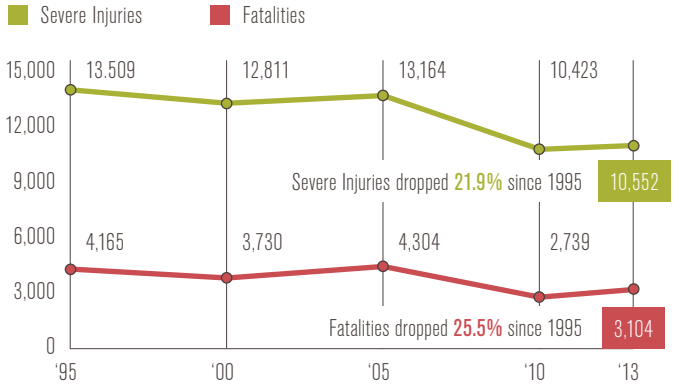


2013 All Accidents by Type of Collision



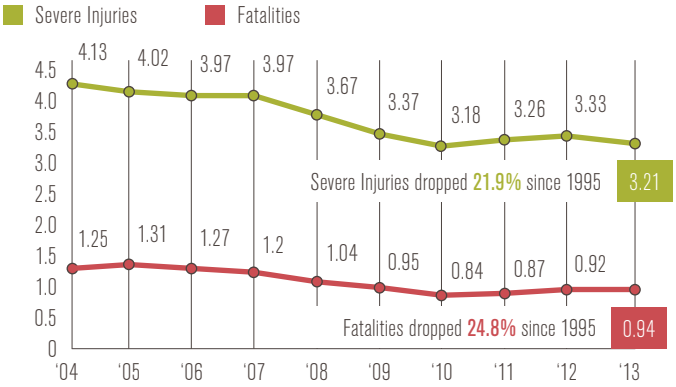
Source: 2013 Collision Data on California State Highways report

Collisions Resulting in Fatalities, Severe Injuries



Source: 2013 Collision Data on California State Highways report

Collisions Resulting in Fatalities, Severe Injuries *(per million vehicle miles)*



As the number of motorists on the California State Highway System has increased, the number of collisions leading to death or severe injuries per million vehicle miles has generally decreased.

downturn, and remained relatively flat between 2003 and 2013 compared to previous decades.

The Caltrans Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) Collision Coding Unit processes more than 180,000 traffic collision reports annually. The unit identifies the post-mile location for each incident on the state highway system, using location information from first responders. A small number are collected through the Caltrans district offices.

The federally mandated and funded Highway Safety Improvement Program assists Caltrans with decreasing the number and severity of collisions in California.

Caltrans uses the Transportation System Network database to identify locations with significantly high collision concentrations, wrong-way collisions (see story, page 25) and collisions across medians and multiple lanes, run-off road collisions and collisions involving pedestrians. The identified locations are systematically investigated to determine probable causes of the collisions in order to implement effective countermeasures to improve safety.

Nearly 3,000 traffic safety investigations were processed in calendar-year 2015. In addition, Caltrans processed 509 "other safety" investigations prompted by calls, letters, emails, etc., from the public.

In February 2012, Caltrans launched a five-year "California Roadway Departure Safety Implementation Plan." The plan identified more than 7,000 locations for possible low-cost countermeasures to systematically implement on many state highways in an effort to reduce roadway departure crashes. MM

***Source:** Brian Domsic, Traffic Accident Surveillance & Analysis System (TASAS), Division of Research, Innovation and System Information; 2013 Collision Data on California State Highways report*

Pedestrian Fatality and Injury Data

2013 Statewide

Highway Type	Fatality	Injury	Total
Expressway	11	37	48
Freeway	169	611	780
Conventional Highway	76	565	641
One-Way City Street	1	11	12
Total	257	1,224	1,481

Bicycle Fatality and Injury Data

2013 Statewide

Highway Type	Fatality	Injury	Total
Expressway	8	23	29
Freeway	7	307	315
Conventional Highway	16	760	776
One-Way City Street	0	20	20
Total	30	1,110	1,140

Source: 2013 Collision Data on California State Highways report