



Hartford, Health, Public Safety

Hartford Ranks Fifth in U.S. for Fatal Drunken Driving Crashes

— Laura Arman, 7.25.2024



Hartford ranks fifth in the nation for fatal drunken driving crashes, a **recent study** found.

The report, published by Philadelphia-based law firm Van Der Veen, Hartshorn, Levin & Linhein, examined the number of fatal drunken driving incidents per 100,000 people in the United States' 300 largest

cities between 2018 and 2022.

Connecticut's capital city ranked behind Odessa, Texas, San Bernardino, California, Pueblo, Colorado and Corona, California. Waterbury and New Haven also ranked in the top 75 cities, placing 13th and 60th, respectively.

"About 35% to 40% of roadway deaths in Connecticut are caused by an impaired driver," state Department of Transportation spokesperson Josh Morgan told CT Examiner.

According to the study, Hartford had 14.91 drunken driving fatalities per 100,000 people, while Waterbury had 12.17 deaths and New Haven had 7.20 deaths. Between 2018 and 2022, Hartford experienced 29 drunken driving-related deaths, Waterbury had 24 and New Haven had 16.

Statewide, the Connecticut Transportation Institute documented 689 fatalities for DUI crashes by drivers 21 and above, and 59 fatalities by drivers under 21 between 2015 and 2023.

Last year, Connecticut's Department of Correction **documented** 9,302 procedural DUI cases, an increase from the previous year with 6,388 cases.

DUI attorney Jay Ruane told CT Examiner that penalties between DUI crashes involving fatalities and standard DUI with no fatalities differ.

DUI convictions with fatalities carry up to 10 years in jail and fines of \$1,000 to \$10,000, regardless of age, Ruane said.

For a first non-fatal DUI offense, the minimum penalty is 40 hours in jail or 100 hours of community service, with a maximum of six months, and fines between \$500 and \$1,000.

A second offense involves a mandatory 120 days in jail, with a maximum of two years, and fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000. A third offense mandates one year in jail, up to three years maximum, and fines between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

DUI involving fatalities include a maximum of 10 years in jail and fines between \$1,000 and \$10,000, regardless of the driver's age.

A majority of DUI crashes in Connecticut involve a male driver, according to data provided by Eric Jackson, the executive director of the Connecticut Transportation Institute. Men aged 21 and older are three times more likely to be involved in a DUI crash than women, while men under the age of 21 are four times more likely to be involved.

The annual economic **cost** from motor vehicle crashes costs Connecticut \$4.8 billion annually.

The state DOT is currently **piloting** Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety technology, an in-vehicle alcohol detection system, to prevent crashes and fatalities.

“Ultimately, the responsibility to drive or not drive impaired rests with the individual person, and we need motorists to understand their actions can have deadly consequences,” Morgan said.

Morgan said the DOT continues to have partnerships with law enforcement in reducing drunken driving crashes.

“The most important action people can take to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities is to follow the rules of the road,” he said. “Slow down, pay attention, and drive sober.”

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