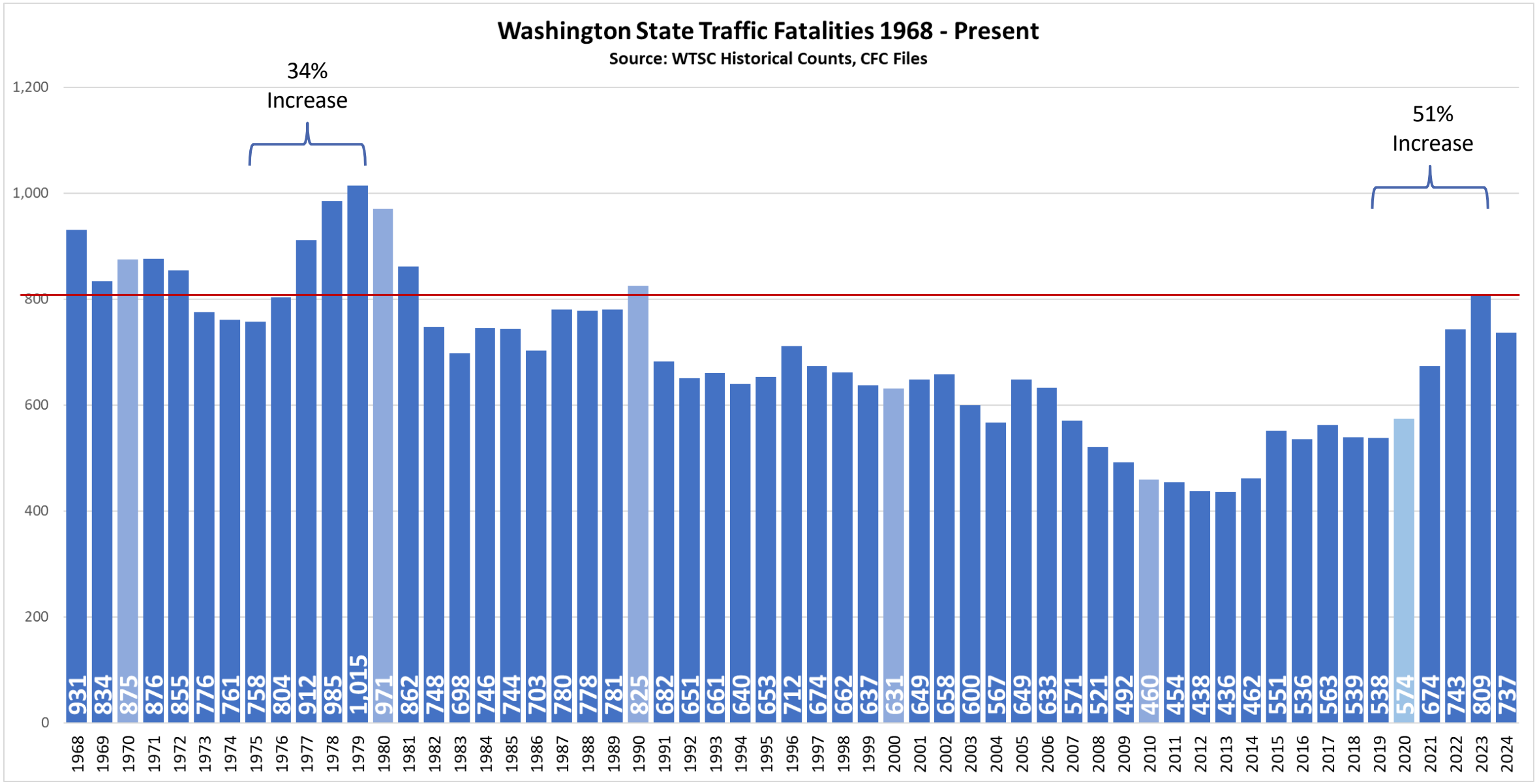
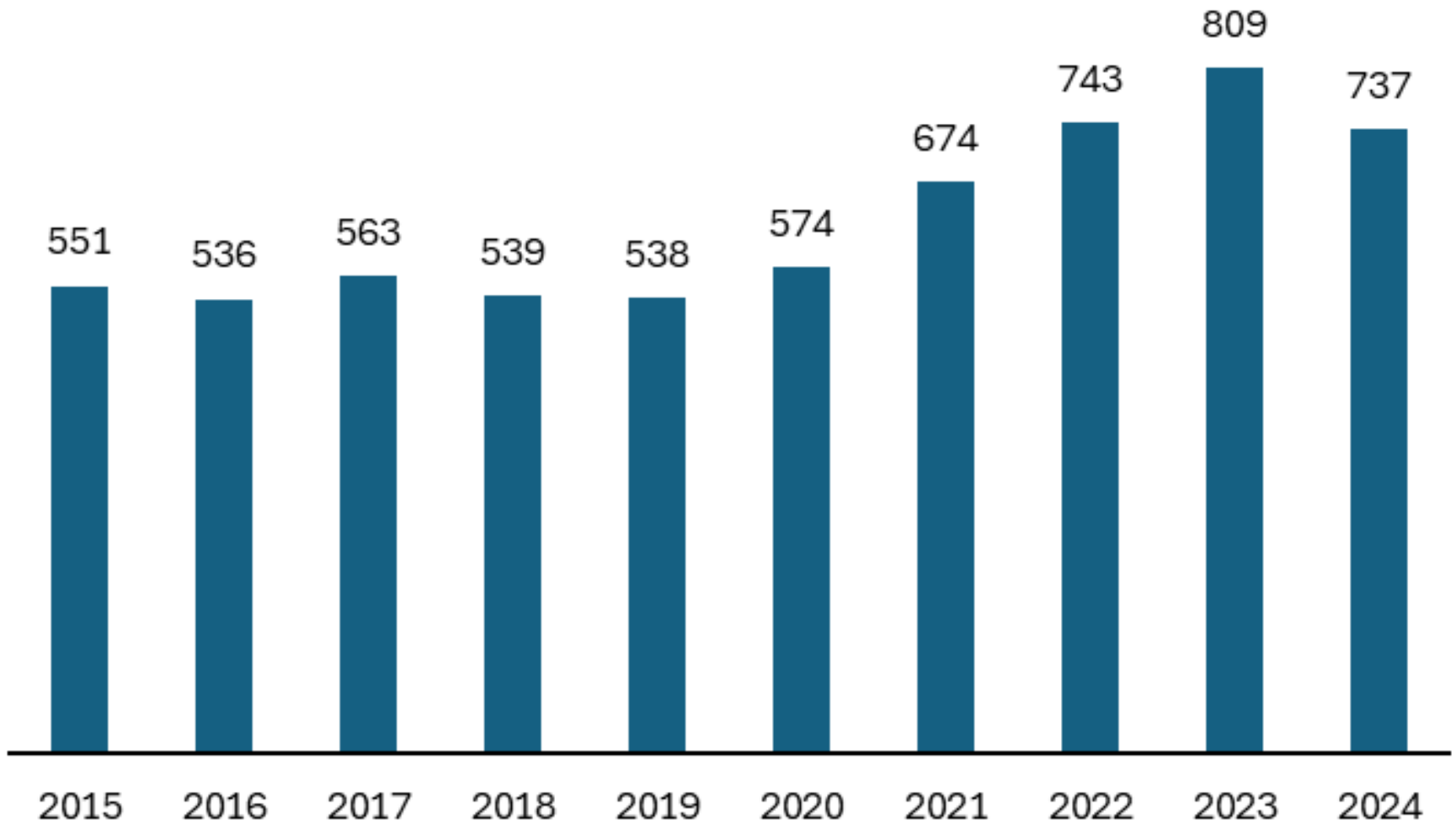
TRAFFIC SAFETY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mark McKechnie, Policy and Communications Director
Washington Traffic Safety Commission

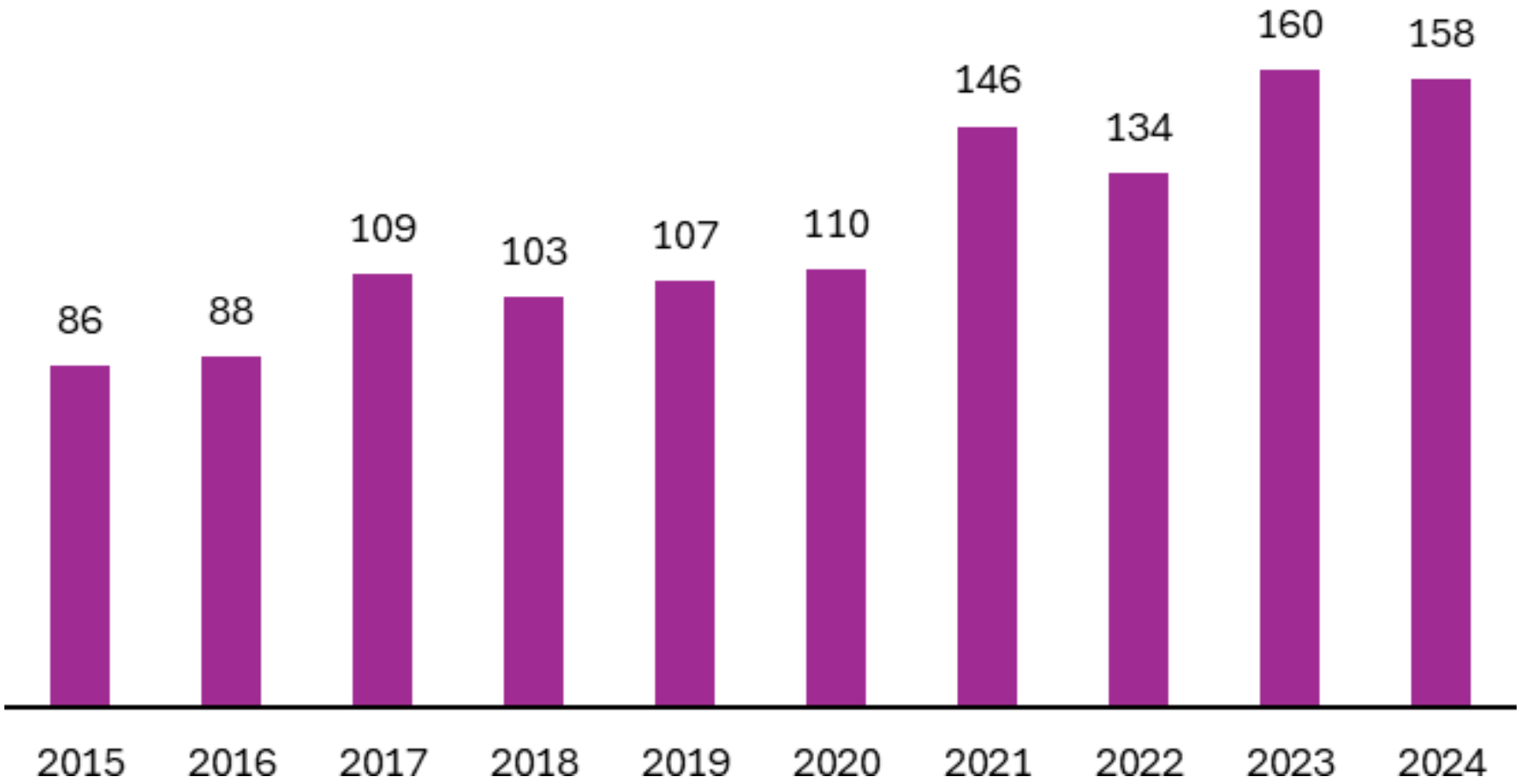
March 24, 2026


Washington State Traffic Fatalities 1968 - Present
Source: WTSC Historical Counts, CFC Files
34%
Increase
51%
Increase
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0
931 834 875 876 855 776 761 758 804 912 985 1,015 971 862 748 698 746 744 703 780 778 781 825 682 651 661 640 653 712 674 662 637 631 649 658 600 567 649 633 571 521 492 460 454 438 436 462 551 536 563 539 538 574 674 743 809 737
1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

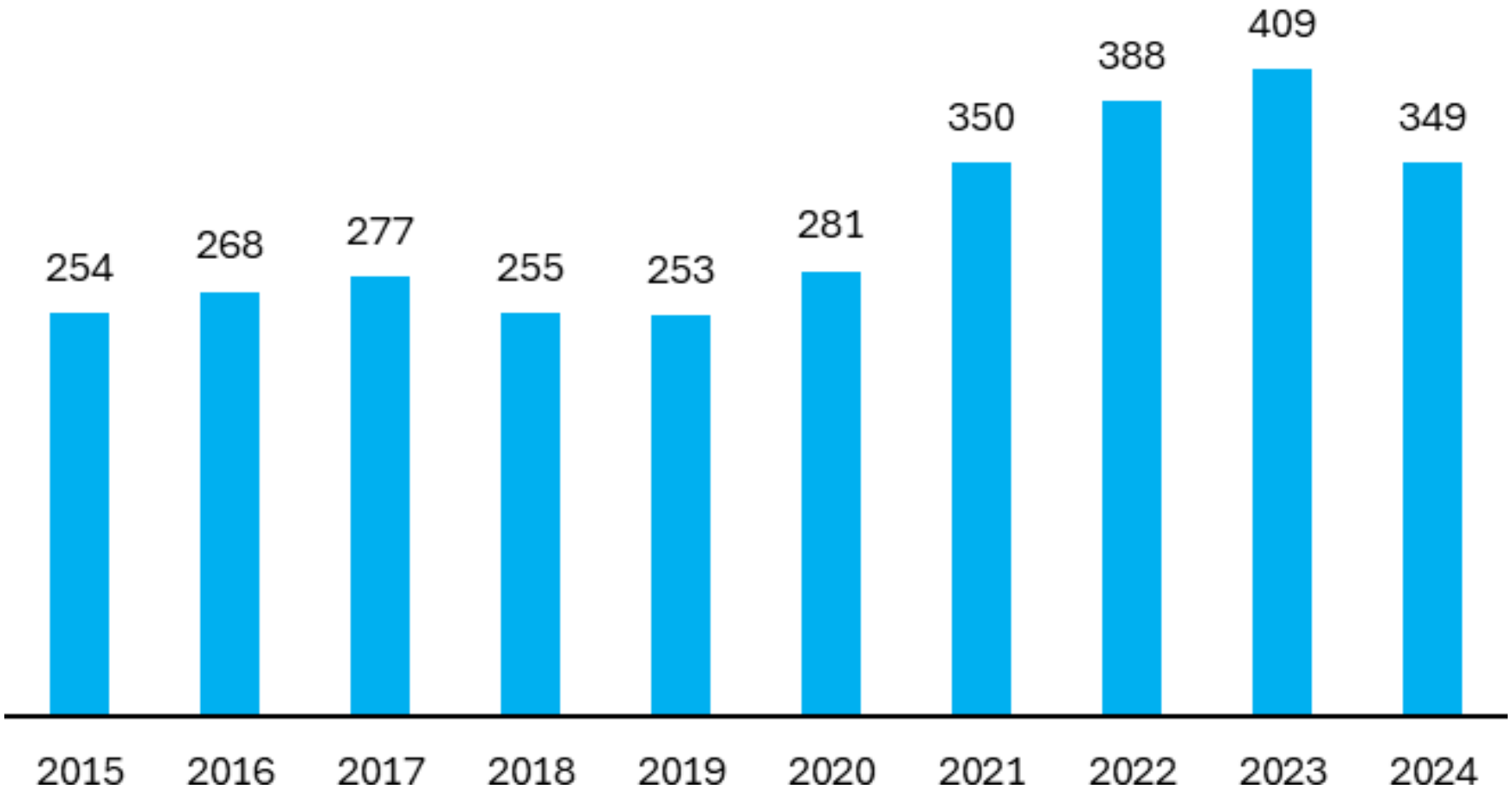
Washington Total Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024



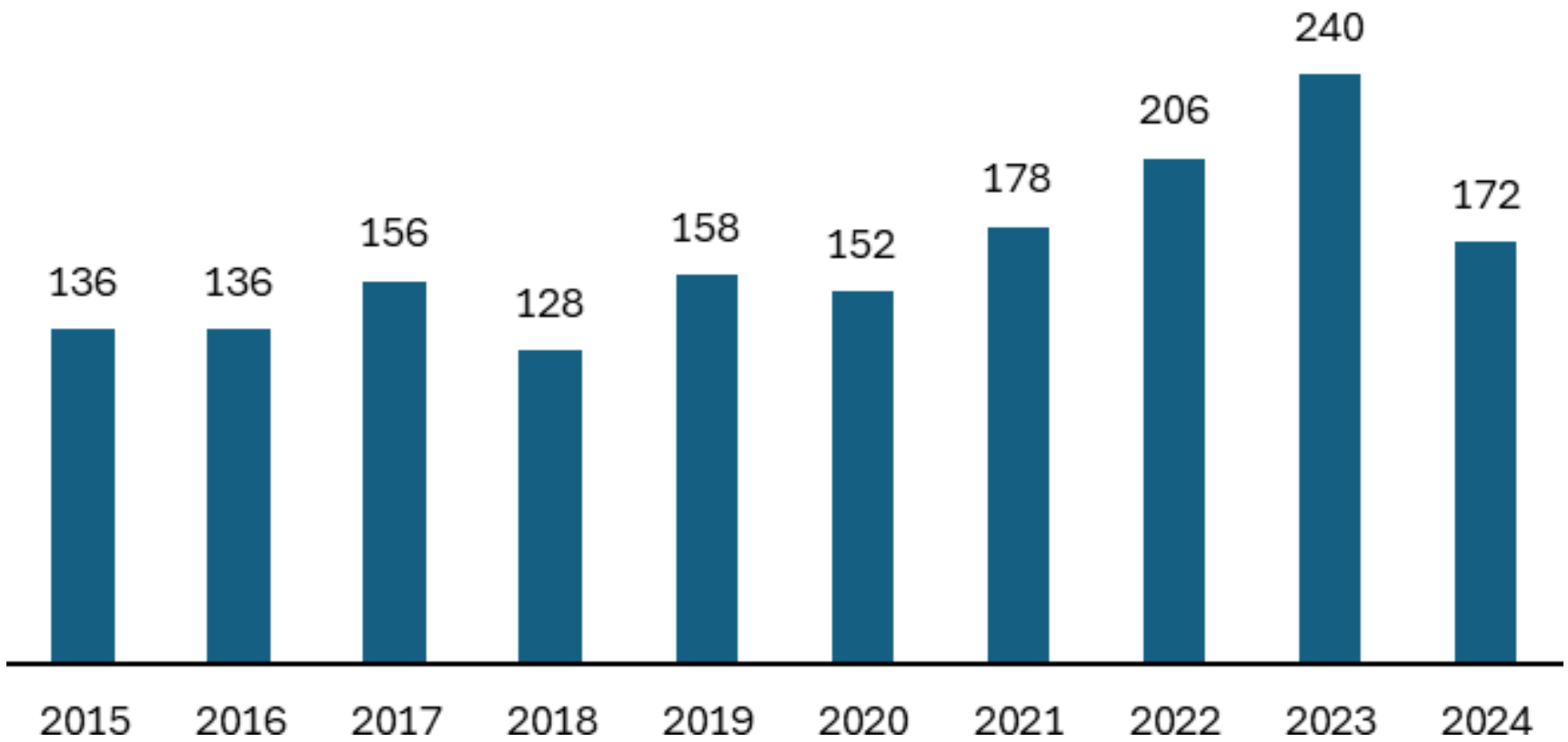
Washington Traffic Fatalities of Pedestrians, 2015-2024



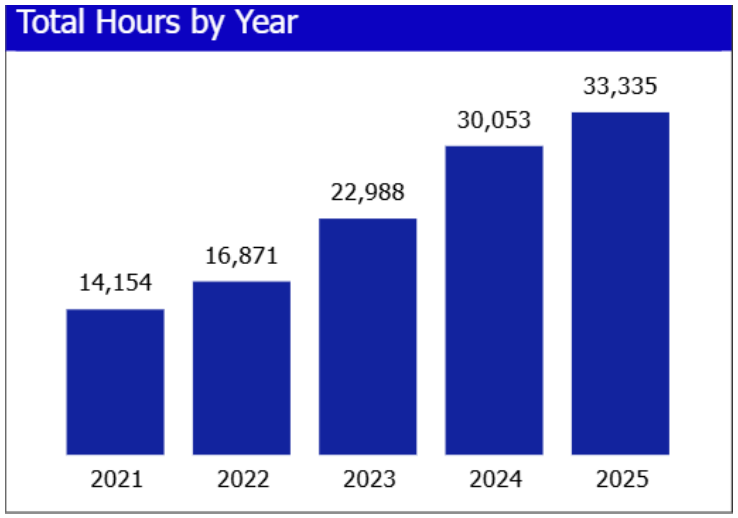
Washington Impaired Driver-Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024

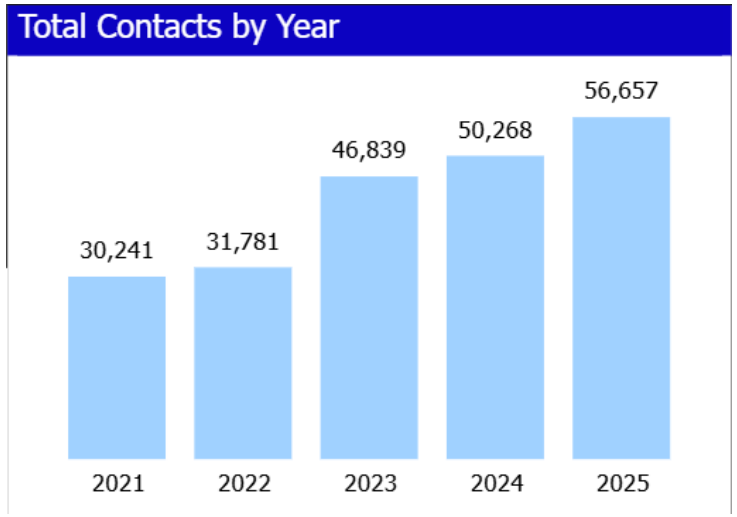


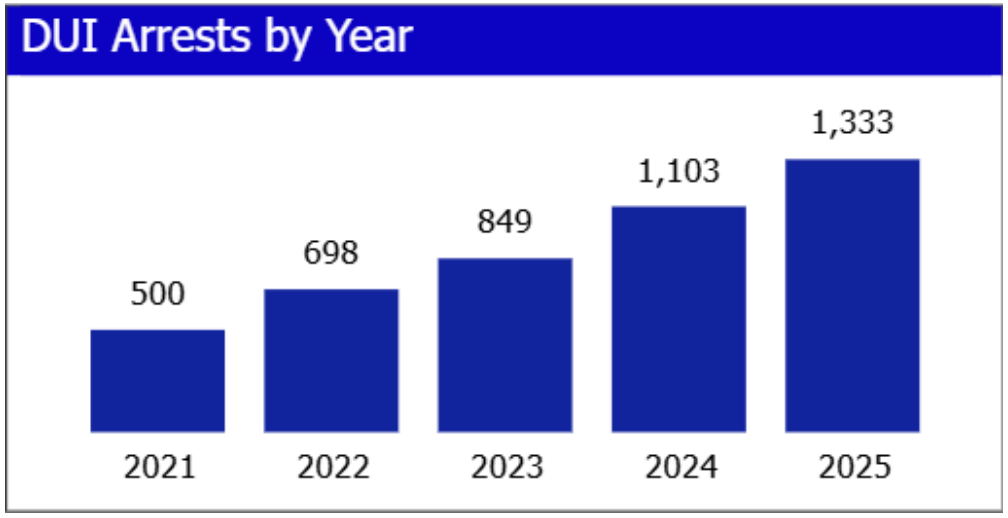
Washington Traffic Fatalities Involving Alcohol Impaired Drivers, 2015-2024

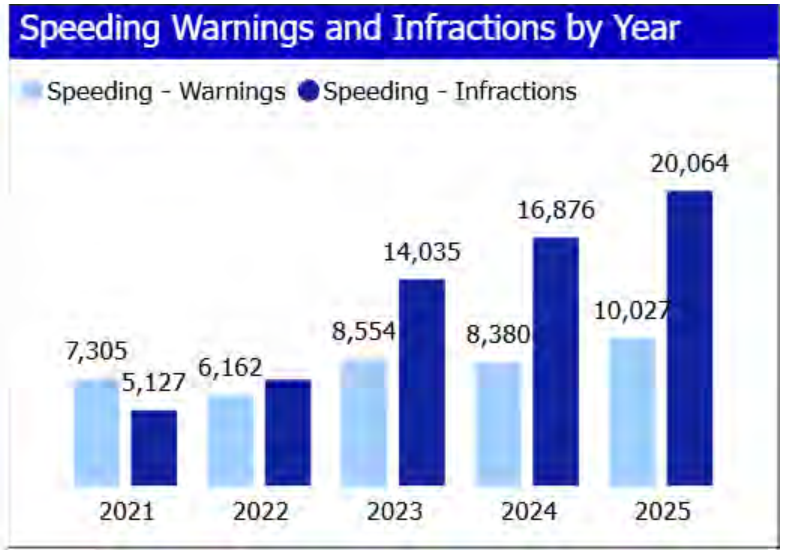


WTSC-FUNDED HIGH-VISIBILITY ENFORCEMENT



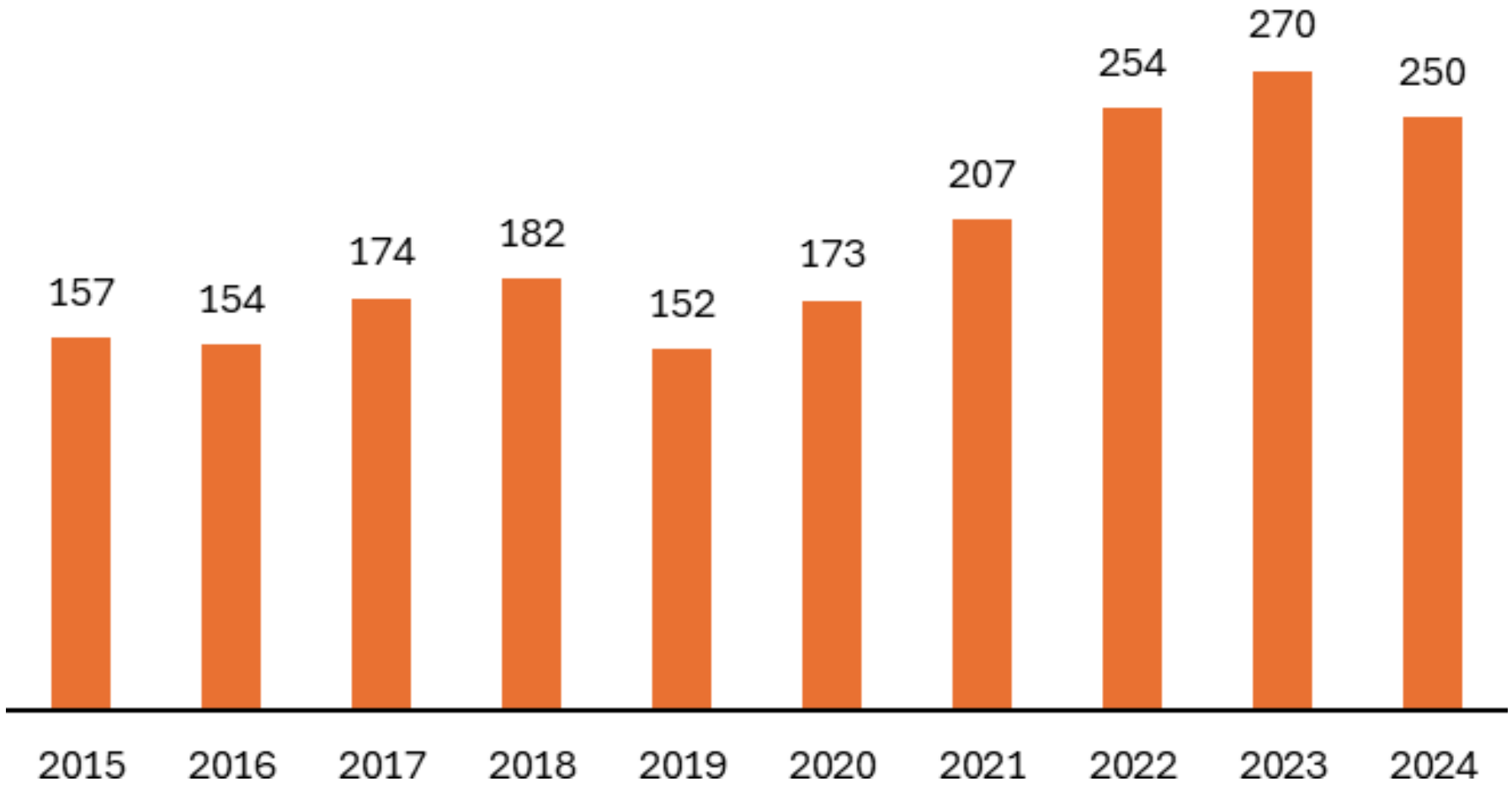




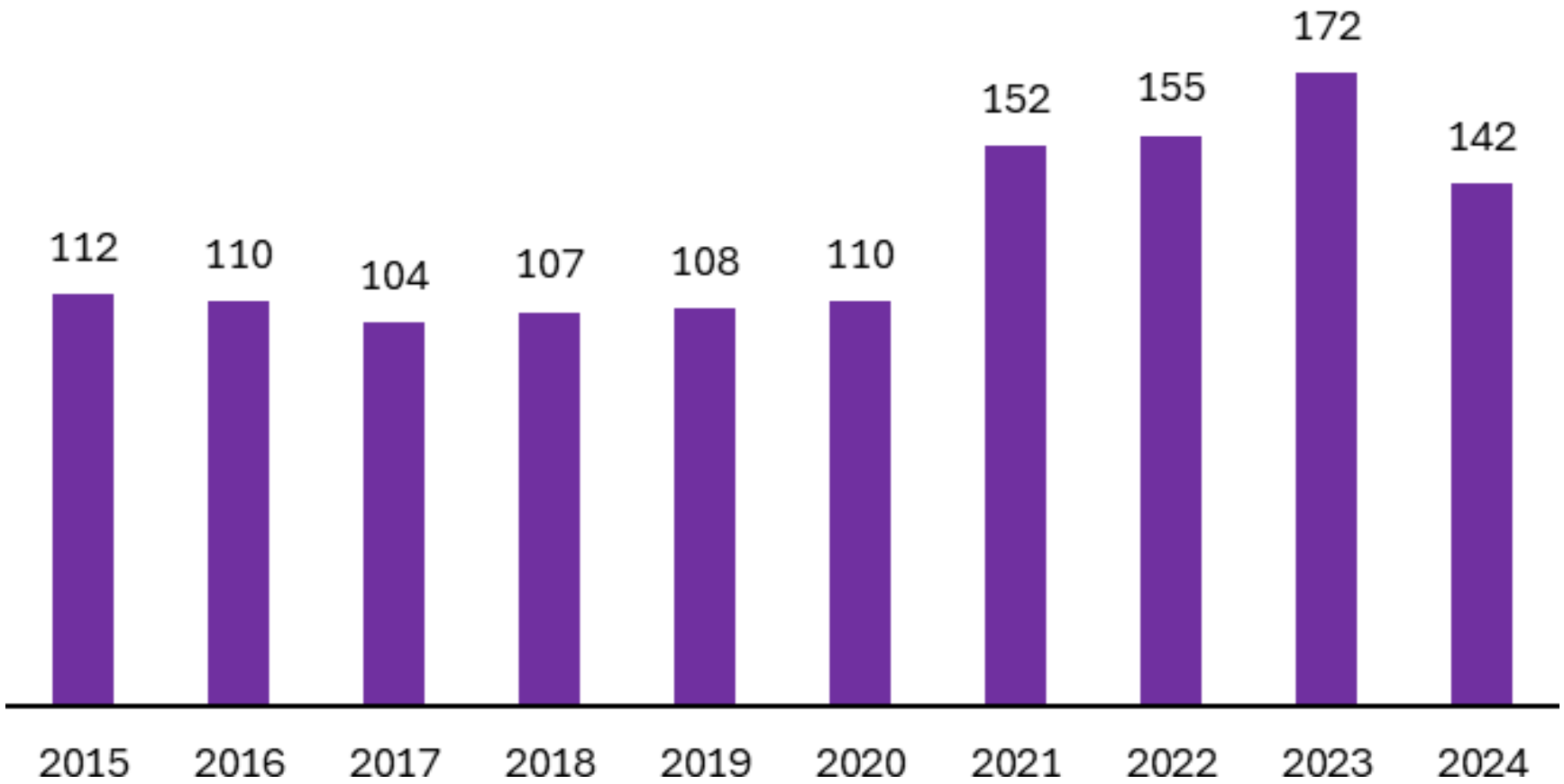


https://wtsc.wa.gov/dashboards/hve-dashboard/

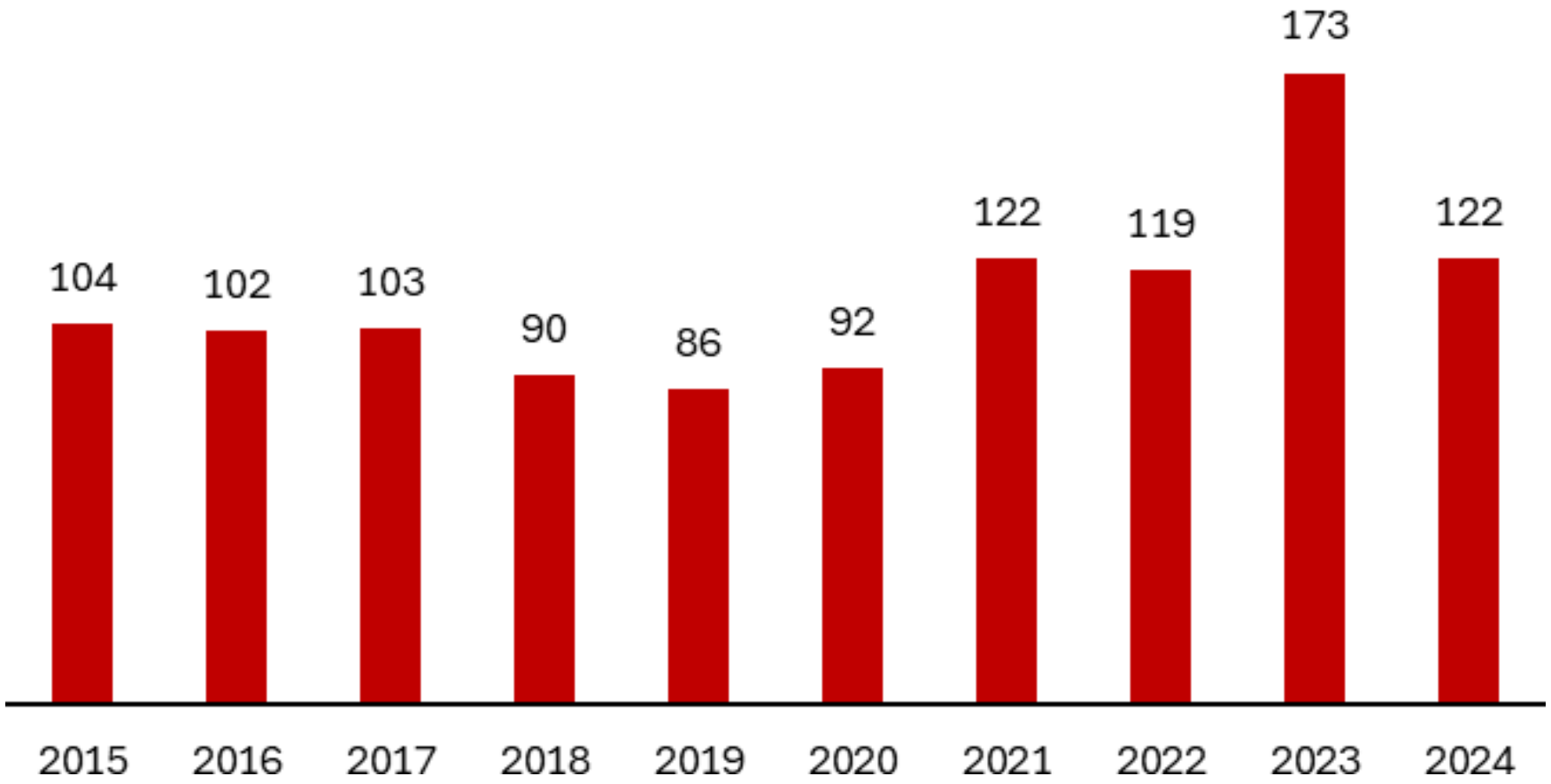
Washington Speeding Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024



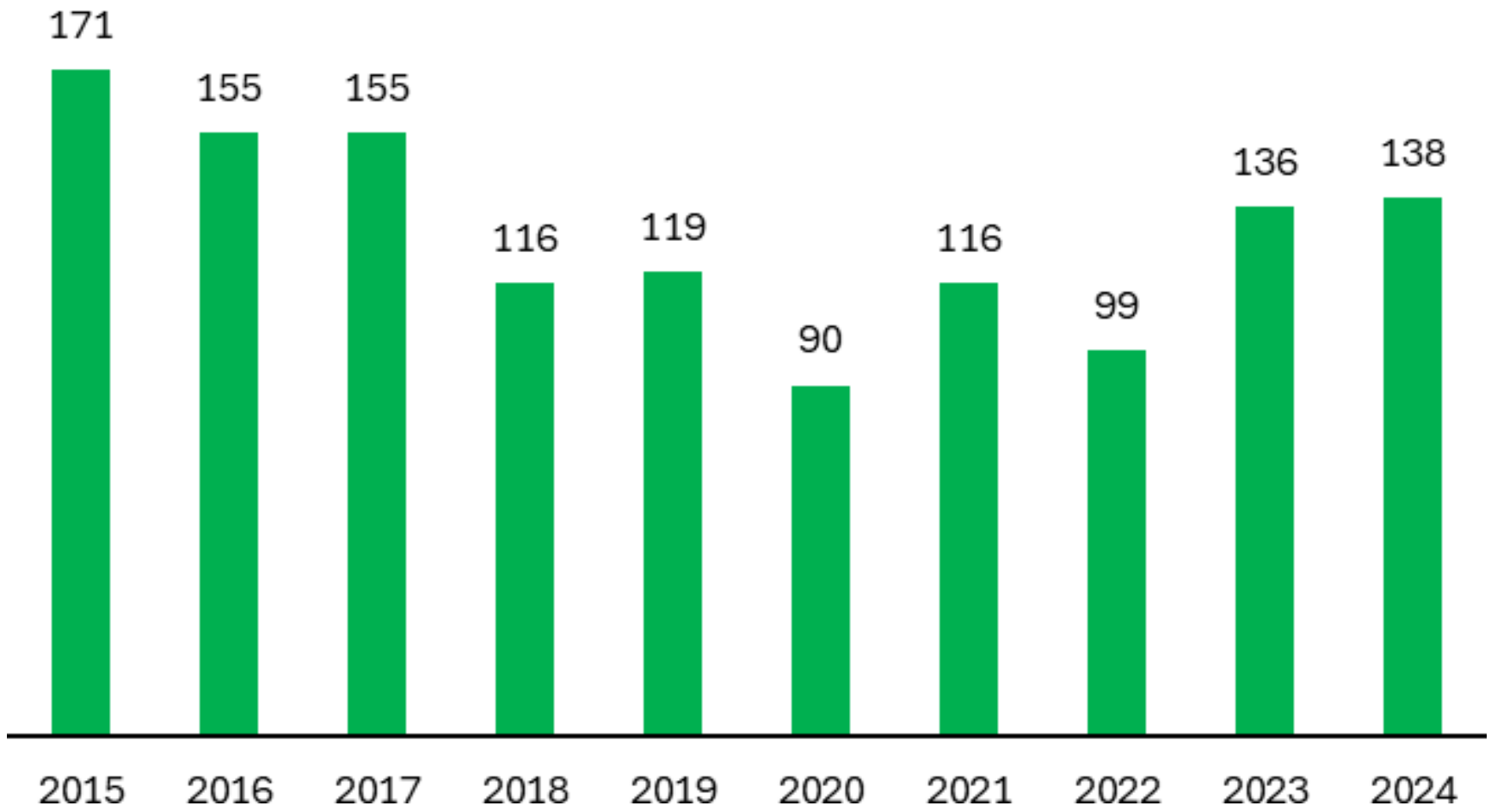
Washington Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024



Washington Traffic Fatalities among 15-24 Year Olds, 2015-2024



Washington Distracted Driver-Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024



TRAFFIC DEATHS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT THE AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE POPULATION

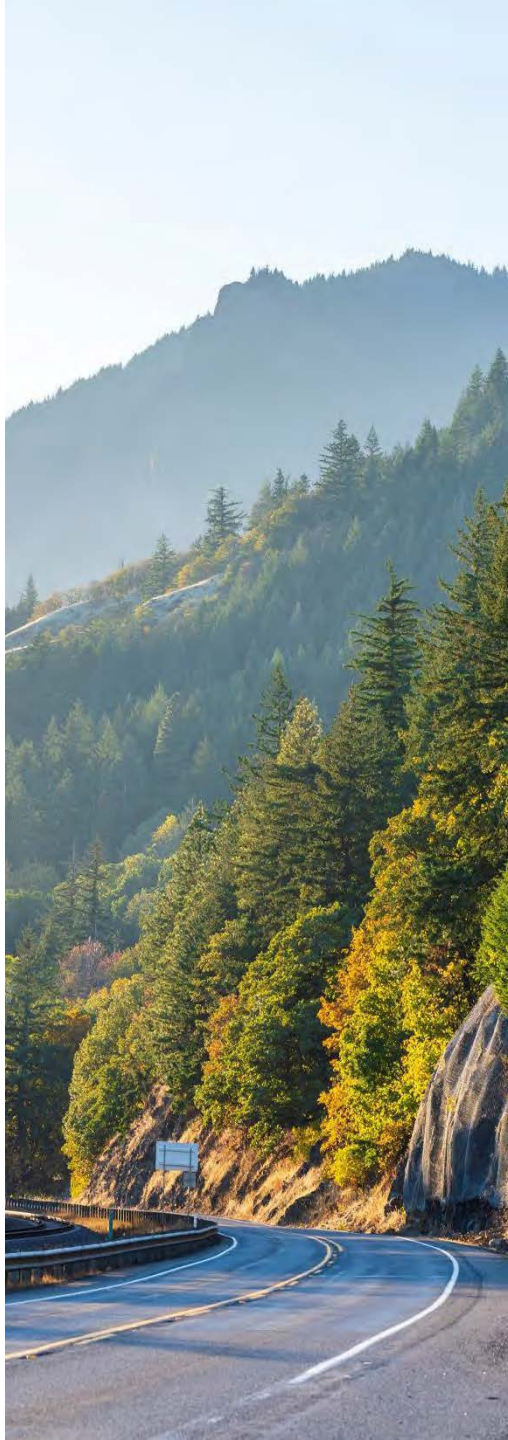
AGENCY REQUEST BILL: HB 2192

- Fatal crash reviews (FCR) help identify *why* crashes happen, not just *how many*.
- A structured, confidential review of multiple fatal crashes at once.
- Conducted by multidisciplinary experts, including law enforcement, trauma care, public health, engineering, planning, licensing, and other SME and knowledgeable volunteers.
- Reviews focus on patterns and contributing factors across multiple incidents which lead to strategies for prevention.

- The bill would expand existing authority for WTSC to conduct FCRs for any fatal crash in Washington and update the relevant statutes for WTSC to obtain and protect sensitive records used in these reviews.

Status:

Signed by Governor, March 23, 2026



WHAT HB 2192 DOES

- Designates WTSC as a public health entity for traffic injury prevention.
- Explicitly protects medical, post-mortem, and driver record information.
- Exempts confidential FCR materials from public records and meetings laws.
- Expands authority to review *all* fatal crash types, in addition to pedestrian and bicyclist crashes.
- Maintains confidentiality and liability protections for FCR participants from current law.

FAQ

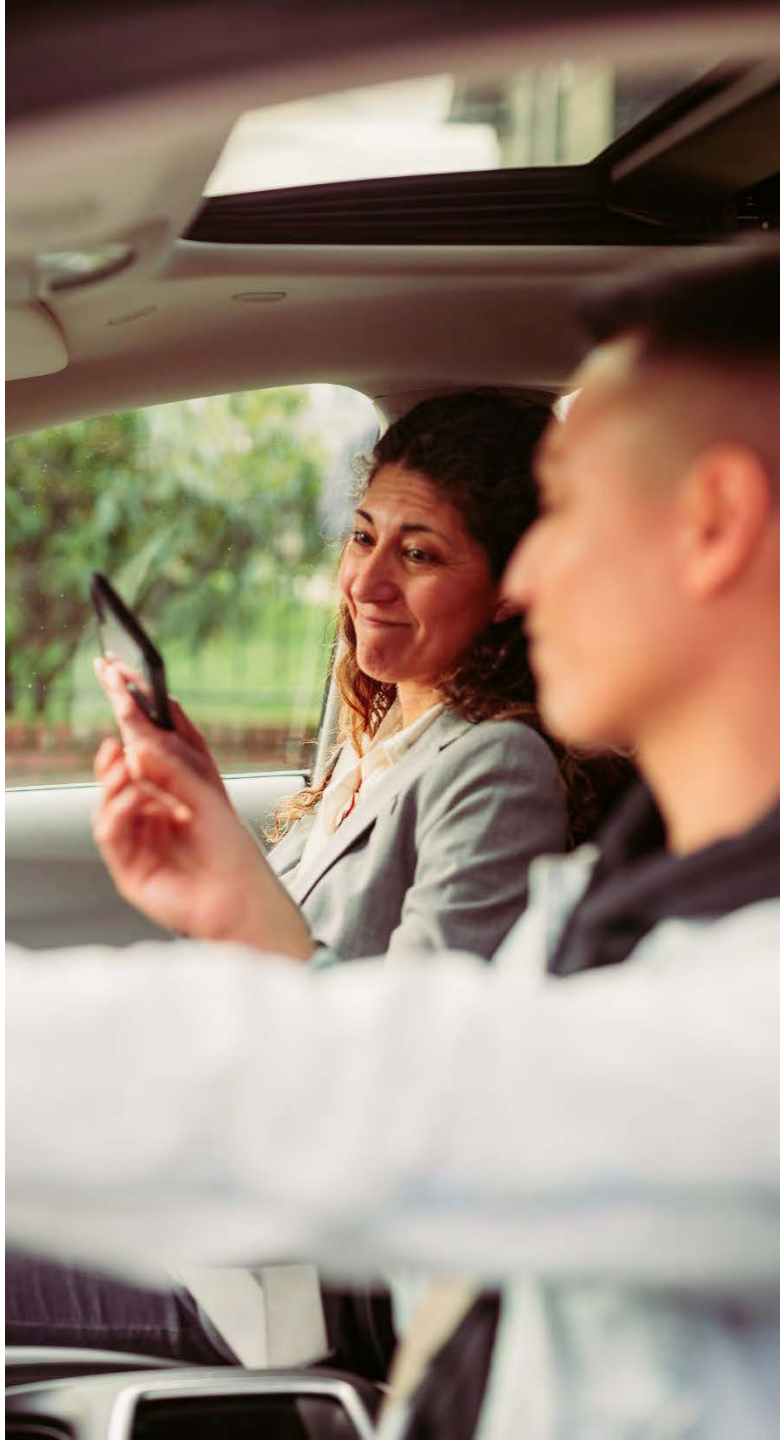
Does this legislation increase costs? No.

Do FCRs determine fault or liability? No.

Do FCRs identify individual crashes or people involved in their reports? No.

Are there any additional benefits?

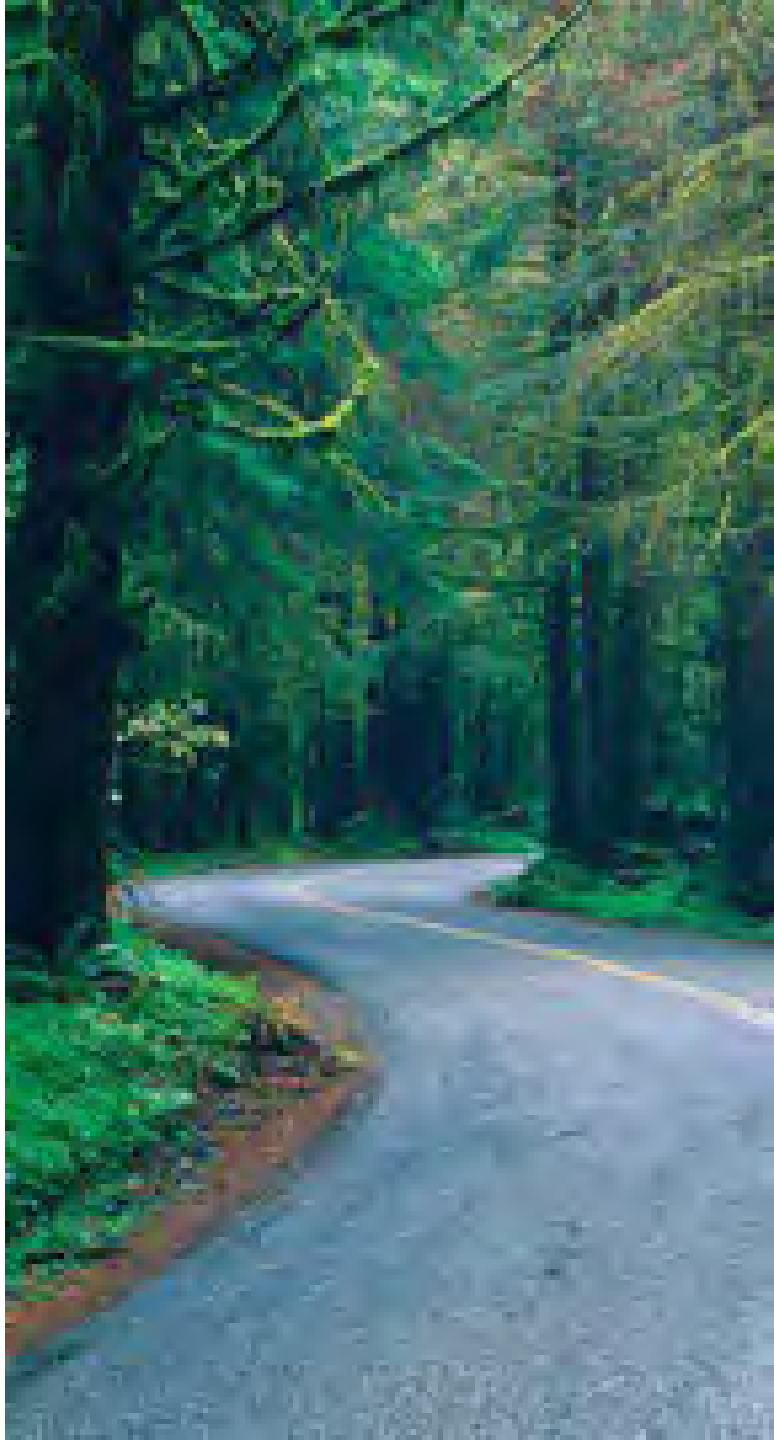
Yes, transfer of records can be streamlined through data sharing agreements when records access is addressed in statute. This may avoid the need for agencies to redact records or to use the more cumbersome public records process.



SB 6110: E-BIKES AND ELECTRIC MOTORCYCLES

- Clarifies the definition of an electric-assisted bicycle (<=28 mph or <=20 mph without pedal assist).
- Creates a work group to recommend definitions and requirements for electric motorcycles.

Status: Signed by Governor, 3/23/26



HB 2410

- Creates the Commercial Truck Safety and Education Council (12 members)
- The Council will prioritize safety and education programs
- WTSC will issue contracts for truck safety and education programs
- Increases Commercial Vehicle Safety Fee from $16 to $32 per year to fund programs

Effective date 6/11/2026

SB 5880

Allows certain private laboratories to perform breath or blood tests for impaired driving offenses.

Allows a city or county to transfer evidence to a private laboratory if the Washington State Patrol is reimbursed for the costs to transmit the evidence from the State Toxicological Laboratory.

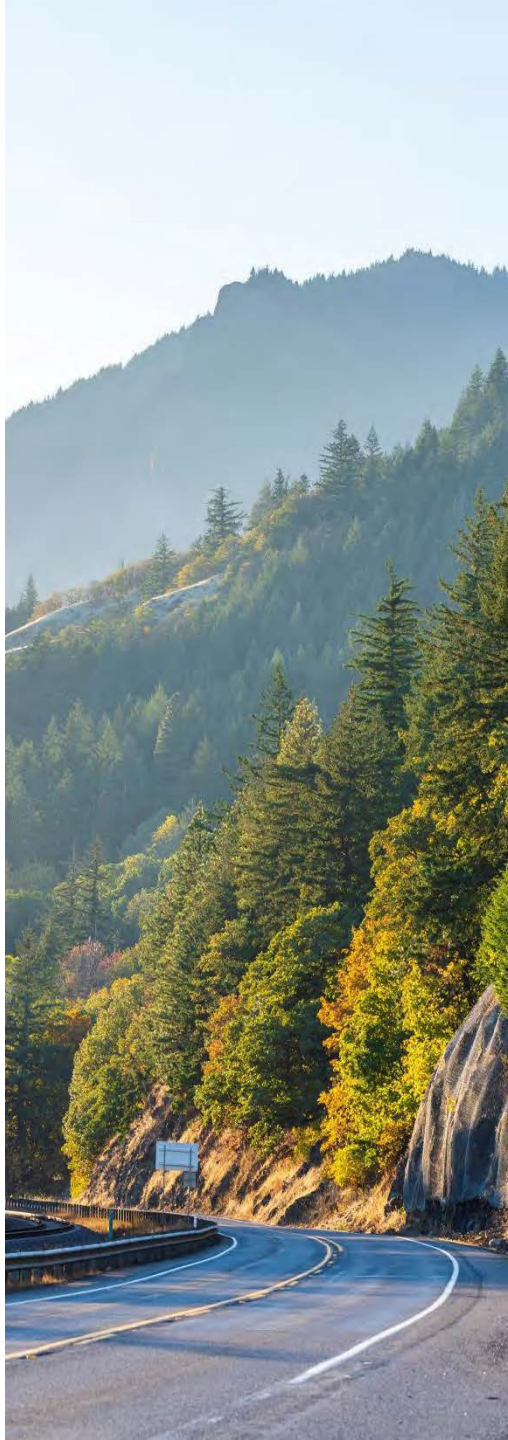
The costs for testing and testimony by technicians are the responsibility of the individual jurisdiction.

Effective date 6/11/2026

BUDGET (SB 6005, SECTION 201)

State funds support programs at WTSC:

- Telematics data purchases to identify patterns of speeding, hard braking, and device use on Washington roadways
- Additional enforcement for DUI, including dedicated officers and high-visibility enforcement
- Tribal traffic safety grants (can include equipment, program, and staffing costs)
- Efforts to increase ignition interlock use for people arrested for DUI (Yakima County Court pilot project)
- Walker and roller safety (Cooper Jones account grants)
- School zone safety grants

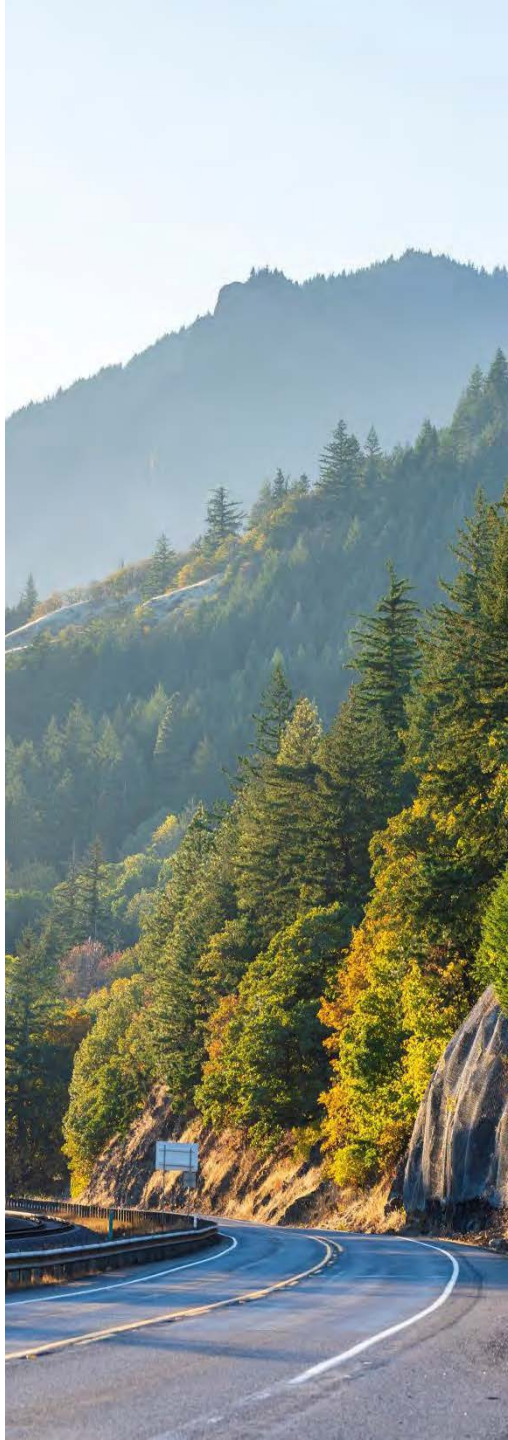


TELEMATICS DATA EXAMPLE

- Cambridge Mobile Telematics "Street Vision" program was used to evaluate the expansion of speed camera use in Kenmore, WA
- The city went from using camera enforcement during school hours to 24/7
- Limits were 20 mph during student arrival/departure and 30 mph at other times

Within two weeks of expanded enforcement speeds outside of school arrival/departure times were reduced:

- Speeds above 30 mph dropped by 30%
- Speeds above 35 mph fell by 39%.

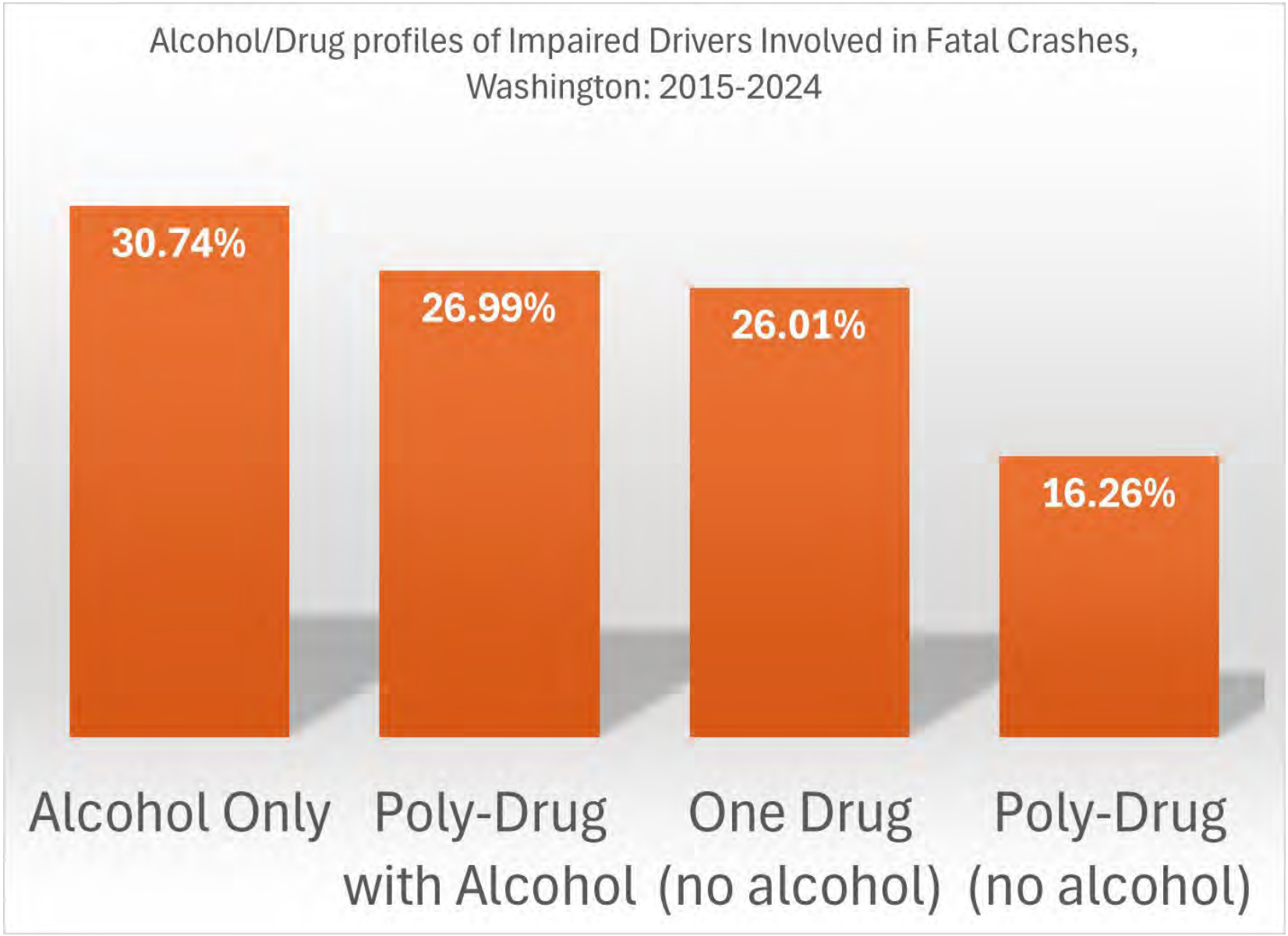


[Here's What Drivers Actually Do When They Encounter Speed Cameras - Cambridge Mobile Telematics]

NEW PROVISO

[The WTSC], in collaboration with the department of licensing and Washington state patrol, to evaluate and make recommendations for policies to improve ignition interlock device compliance based on the joint legislative audit and review committee's preliminary "Ignition Interlock Device Compliance and Monitoring Report" and findings from the ongoing ignition interlock compliance Yakima County Superior Court pilot project, including through a review of ignition interlock device financing program eligibility screening and fund distribution recommendations on improving access to and increased funding for the program

ALCOHOL IS THE MOST COMMON DRUG, ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, DETECTED IN IMPAIRED DRIVERS INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES



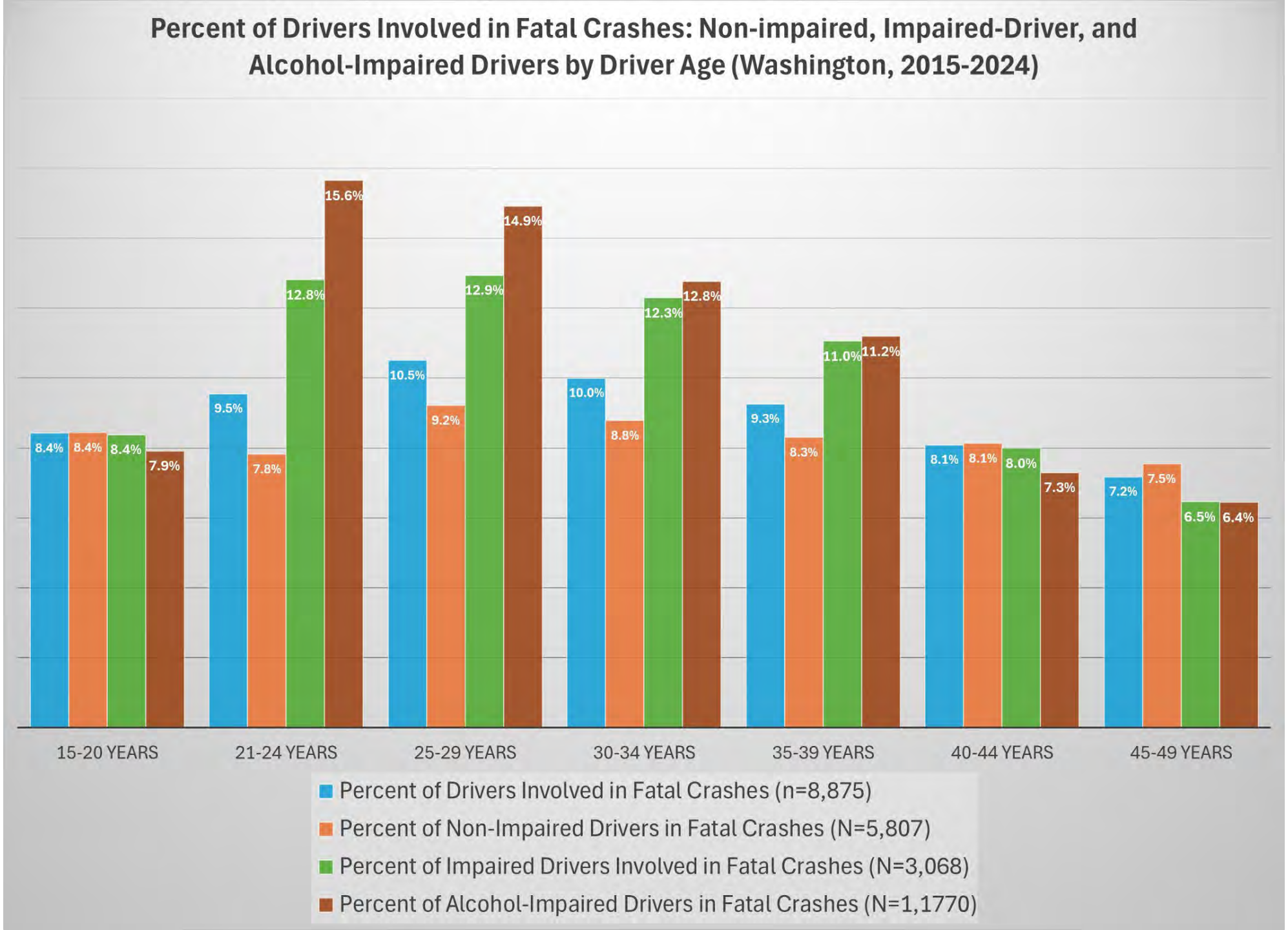
Total Alcohol impaired: 57.7%

INCREASE IN HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS:

SPEEDING AND BAC IN FATAL CRASHES (2015-2024)

Alcohol Levels of drivers involved in a fatal crash (includes alcohol only and poly-drug impairment)	Drivers who were speeding (%)
0.00 BAC and no other drugs detected	11%
0.00 BAC, but impaired by one or more other drugs	30%
0.01 - 0.049	37%
0.05 - 0.079	43%
0.08 - 0.119	46%
0.12 - 0.159	48%
0.16 - 0.199	52%
0.200 or higher	47%

Source: WTSC Fatal Crash Files, Impairment-Involved Fatal Crashes dashboard


Percent of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes: Non-impaired, Impaired-Driver, and Alcohol-Impaired Drivers by Driver Age (Washington, 2015-2024)
8.4%
8.4%
8.4%
7.9%
9.5%
7.8%
12.8%
15.6%
10.5%
9.2%
12.9%
14.9%
10.0%
8.8%
12.3%
12.8%
9.3%
8.3%
11.0%
11.2%
8.1%
8.1%
8.0%
7.3%
7.2%
7.5%
6.5%
6.4%
15-20 YEARS
21-24 YEARS
25-29 YEARS
30-34 YEARS
35-39 YEARS
40-44 YEARS
45-49 YEARS
Percent of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes (n=8,875)
Percent of Non-Impaired Drivers in Fatal Crashes (N=5,807)
Percent of Impaired Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes (N=3,068)
Percent of Alcohol-Impaired Drivers in Fatal Crashes (N=1,1770)

0.05 BAC: SB 5067

- Reduces the current per se blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for driving from 0.08 to 0.05 percent
- Requires WTSC to conduct public education
- Requires WSIPP evaluation of impacts
- No change in server/establishment liability

Status: SB 5067 passed the Senate; heard in House Community Safety Committee on Feb. 19th.

RESEARCH ON 0.05

1. Research has found that lowering the BAC limit from 0.08 to 0.05 results in an average 11% decrease in alcohol-related traffic fatalities.
2. With a BAC level of 0.05% - 0.079%, a driver (ages 21-34) is nearly 5 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash compared to a driver with no alcohol in their system.
3. Research has found that driving performance declines between 25% and 55% for a person with a BAC of 0.05%.
4. In states and countries that have reduced their BAC levels, they find that fewer people drive under the influence of alcohol and the level of alcohol among people who do drive is reduced.
5. Impairment at 0.05% BAC means that a person's abilities to drive are reduced in terms of reaction time, visual functioning, ability to shift attention, steering, emergency responses, and coordination.

WA SURVEY (N=850)

- 19% thought the BAC limit was already below 0.08
- But 23% of drinkers believe you can’t be impaired below 0.08.
- Initial support for 0.05 was 54% of Washingtonians
- Support increased to 71% after receiving basic information (on previous slide)

SPEED AND RECKLESS DRIVING: SB 5890

Amends the elements of Reckless Driving to include a driver who drives a motor vehicle more than 30 miles per hour over the posted speed limit (and 20 mph over in work zones).

[Under HB 1596 (2025): Starting in 2029, drivers convicted of Reckless Driving will be subject to a period of required use of Intelligent Speed Assistance devices during their period of probation.]

Status: Passed the Senate; heard in House Appropriations, but no action taken.

SB 5374 TRIBAL TRAFFIC SAFETY

Requires certain local and regional transportation planning efforts to work in coordination and in consultation with affected tribal governments to assess impacts on affected tribal areas.

Requires the Traffic Safety Commission to establish a Tribal Traffic Safety Coordinator Program to assist tribes in implementing traffic safety strategies (subject to funds appropriated for this purpose).

Status: Passed the Senate; Placed on Second Reading by House Rules Committee

SB 5581: SSA AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Integrates shared-use paths that are part of a state or local active transportation plan into certain highway planning, design, and construction.
- Defines the term roundabout, and updates definitions for crosswalk and intersection within the context of roundabouts.
- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to identify existing or planned active transportation facilities on publicly or tribally owned property and determine if such facility provides equal or better access to destinations and is an appropriate network connection providing mitigation in lieu of fulfilling Complete Streets requirements on state rights-of-way, subject to a cooperative agreement and certain conditions.
- Authorizes the WSDOT to implement Complete Streets requirements on Safe Routes to School Program, Connecting Communities Program, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program recipients, when there are changes on state rights-of-way.

Passed Senate; heard in House Transportation on Feb. 18, 2026

SB 5705

- Doubles the fine for distracted driving in a school, crosswalk, or park zone.

Status: Passed the Senate; Referred to House Rules

Questions?

Thank You