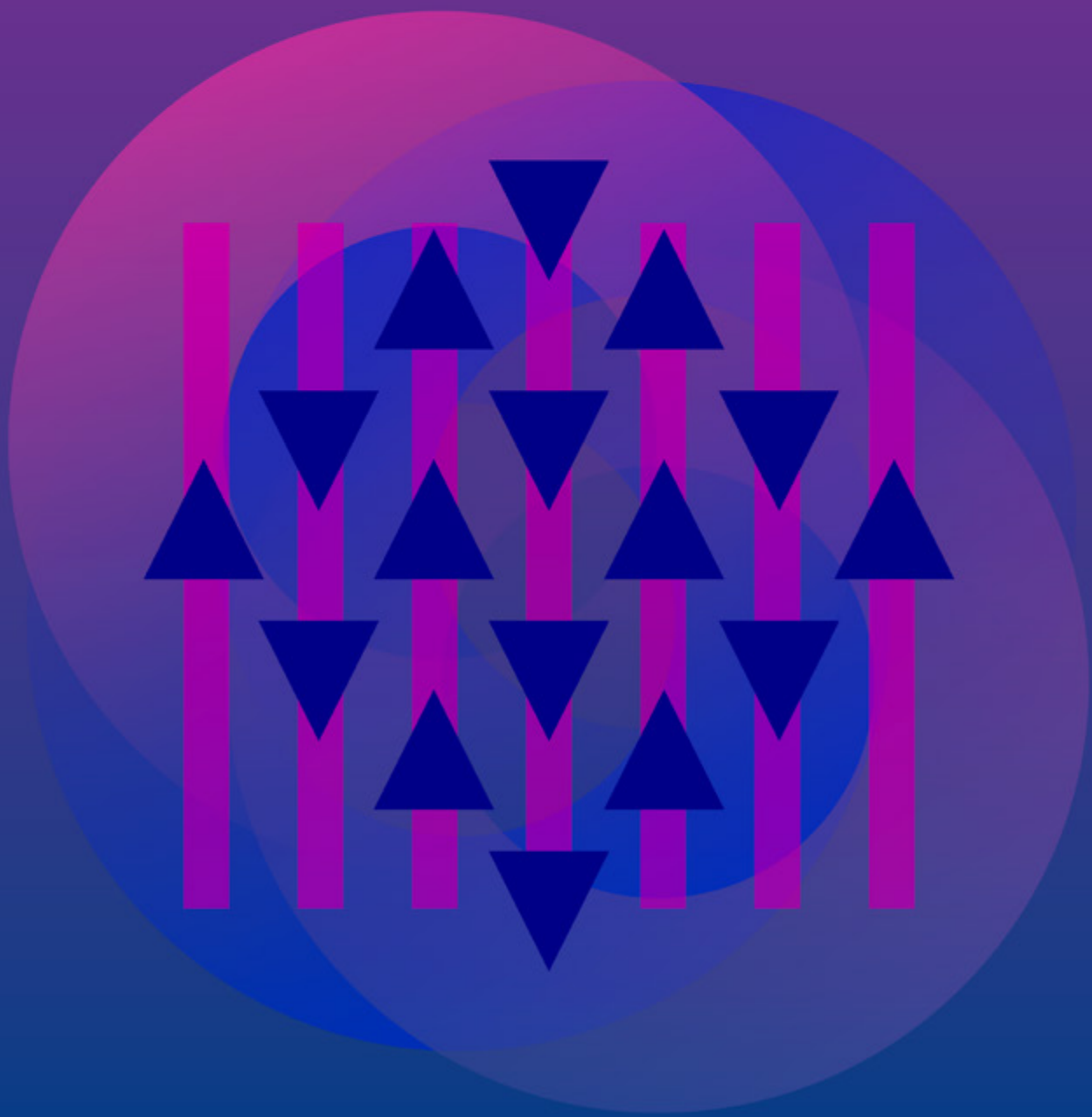
International Transport Forum

irtad Road Safety Data

Road Safety Country Profile

Austria 2023



Overview

Austria recorded 370 road deaths in 2022, eight more than in 2021 but 10.4% below the pre-Covid-19 period. Since 2012, the number of road deaths has fallen by 30.3%. In 2021, the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology issued a new Road Safety Strategy for 2021-2030, focusing on evidence-based interventions, using safety performance indicators, and managing safety objectives by establishing a Safe System.

Quick facts: Austria (all data from 2022, unless otherwise stated)

Population	9.0 million				
GDP per capita	USD 52 501				
Road network	128 305 km				
	Urban roads	Rural roads	Motorways		
	72%	26%	2%		
Total number of motor vehicles	7.2 million				
	Cars	Motorcycles	Goods vehicles	Buses	
	71%	12%	8%	0.1%	
Volume of traffic	+19.4% (2000-21)				
Speed limits	Urban roads	Rural roads	Motorways		
	50 km/h	100 km/h	130 km/h		
Limits on blood alcohol content	General drivers	Professional drivers	Novice drivers		
	0.5 grams/litre (g/l)	0.1 g/l	0.1 g/l		
Road fatalities	370				
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Car occupants	Motorised two-wheelers	Other and unknown
	13%	12%	49%	15%	9%
Road fatalities per 100 000 population	4.1				
Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles	0.5				
Cost of road crashes	2.8% of GDP (2021)				

Short-term trends

Mobility and road safety in Austria were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020. Figure 1 illustrates the number of road deaths in 2020, 2021 and 2022 compared to the linear trend before the pandemic. It shows that road death figures for 2020 and 2021 were below the trend.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mobility and road crashes, the data for 2020 and 2021 represent a poor reference point for benchmarking. Therefore, for short-term trends, this report compares data for 2022 and 2021 with the average for 2017-19.

There were 370 road deaths in 2022, 8 more than in 2021, but a decrease of 10.4% compared to the average for 2017-19 (Table 1).

Table 1. Road fatalities in Austria, 2017-2022

	2017	2018	2019	Average 2017-19	2020	2021	2022	2022 compared with average 2017-19
January	28	18	20	22	17	12	20	-9.1%
February	23	29	20	24	27	15	27	12.5%
March	20	32	24	25	25	21	30	18.4%
April	29	30	40	33	28	34	33	0.0%
May	40	49	37	42	22	24	41	-2.4%
June	31	41	56	43	34	45	40	-6.2%
July	40	37	39	39	33	39	40	3.4%
August	55	41	54	50	39	40	49	-2.0%
September	51	40	33	41	41	46	24	-41.9%
October	40	40	36	39	35	34	31	-19.8%
November	30	20	30	27	23	29	18	-32.5%
December	27	32	27	29	20	23	17	-40.7%
Total	414	409	416	413	344	362	370	-10.4%

Road deaths among cyclists increased by 24.5%, while they decreased among users of powered two-wheelers (-35.9%), pedestrians (-23.4%) and passenger car occupants (-4.1%). In 2022, fatalities decreased for all age groups, except for children under 14 and people aged 65-74, where four deaths more were reported.

Road deaths decreased on rural roads and motorways in 2022 compared to the average 2017-21, but not on urban roads, where five more deaths were reported.

In 2022, Austria had a mortality rate of 4.1 deaths per 100 000 population. Austria recorded 0.5 road deaths per 10 000 registered motor vehicles. In 2021, its fatality risk was 4.7 road deaths per billion vehicle-kilometres.

With 8.5 road deaths per 100 000 population, the senior citizens (75 and above) have the highest mortality rate in the country (Figure 8).

Nearly 61% of road deaths occur in rural areas (Figure 7).

Figure 1. Road fatalities in Austria in 2020, 2021 and 2022 compared to the linear trend since 2012

Figure 2. Evolution of road fatalities in Austria by user category, age group and road type, 2022 compared to the average 2017-19

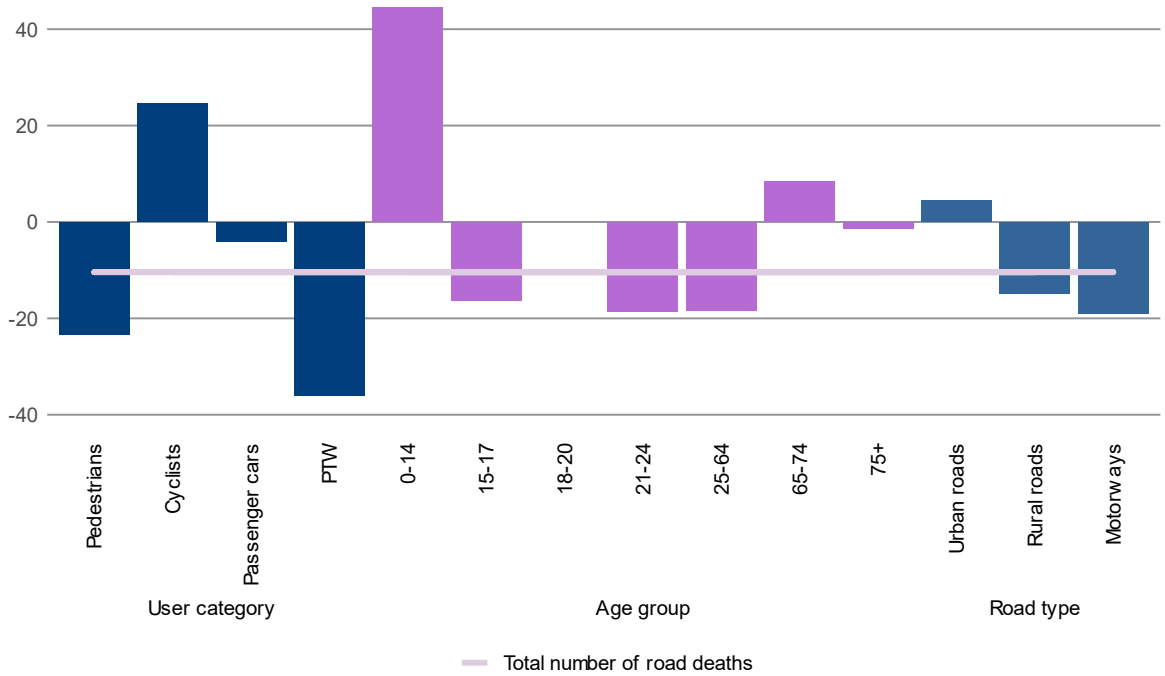


Figure 3. Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in Austria compared to other IRTAD countries, 2022

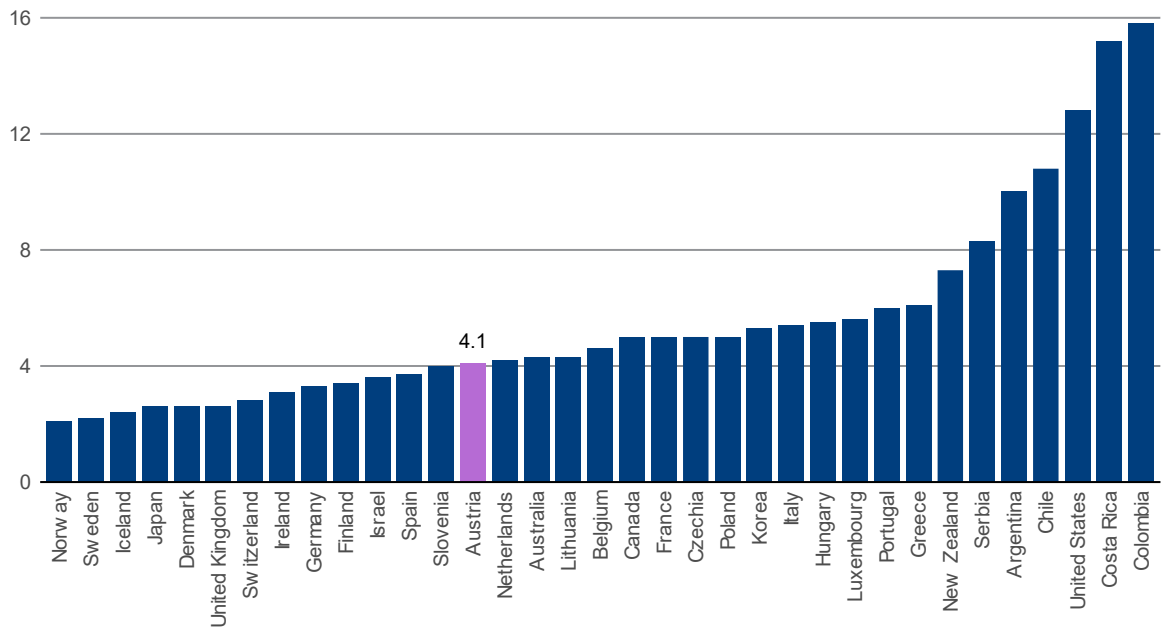
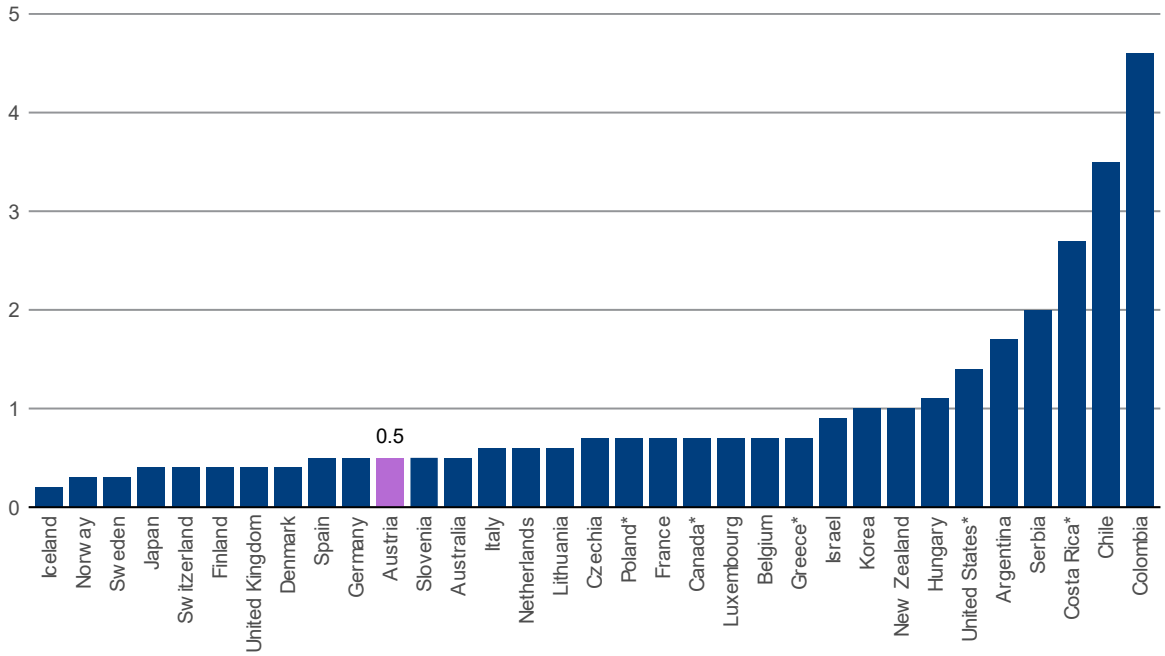


Figure 4. Road fatalities per 10 000 registered vehicles in Austria compared to other IRTAD countries, 2022



Note: in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Hungary, registered vehicles do not include mopeds. * 2021 data.

Figure 5. Road fatalities per billion vehicle-kilometres in Austria compared to other IRTAD countries, 2021

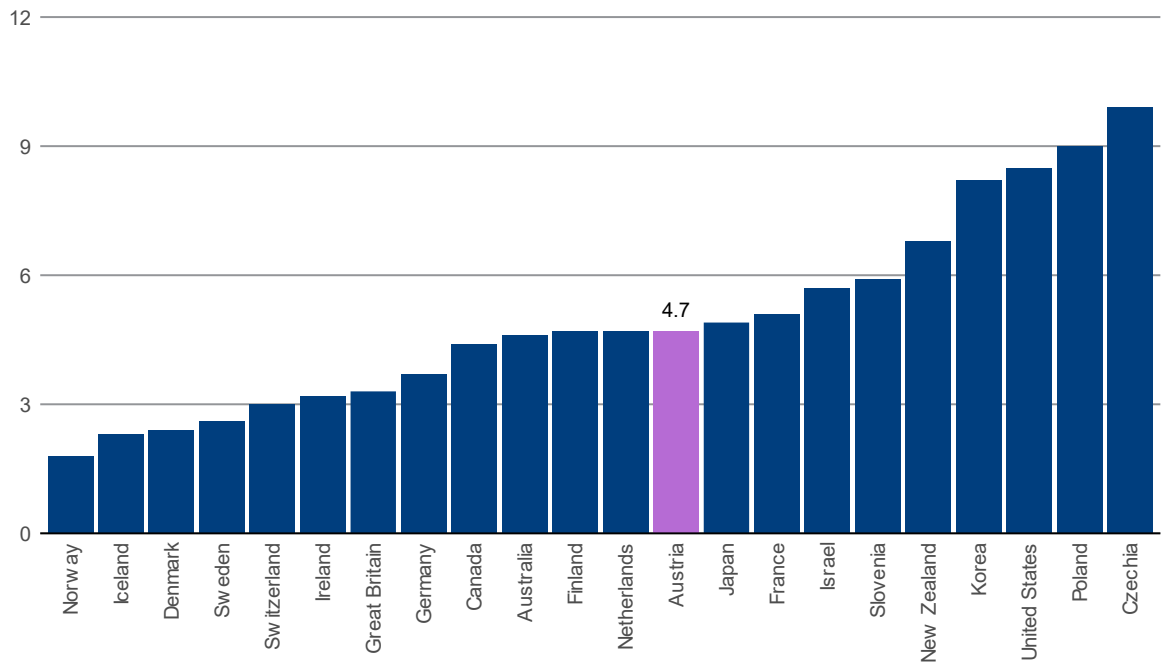


Figure 6. Road fatalities in Austria by user category, 2022

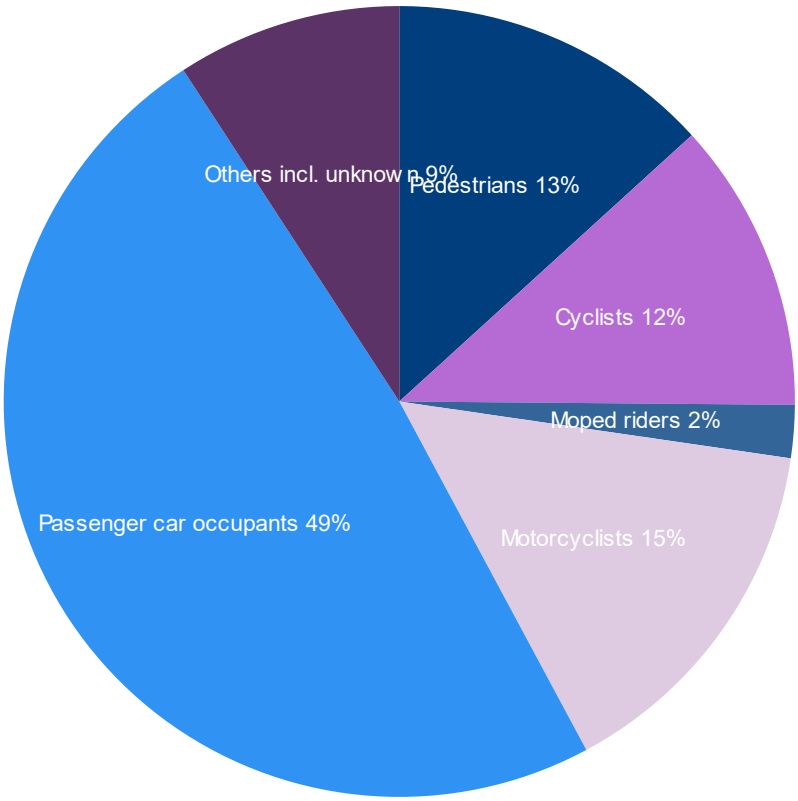


Figure 7. Road fatalities in Austria by road type, 2022

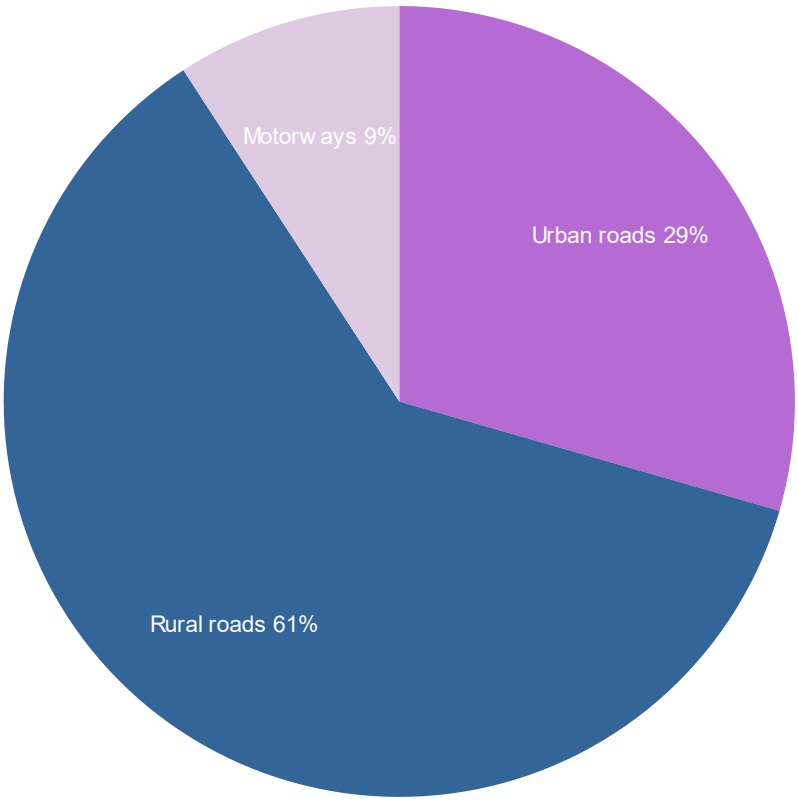
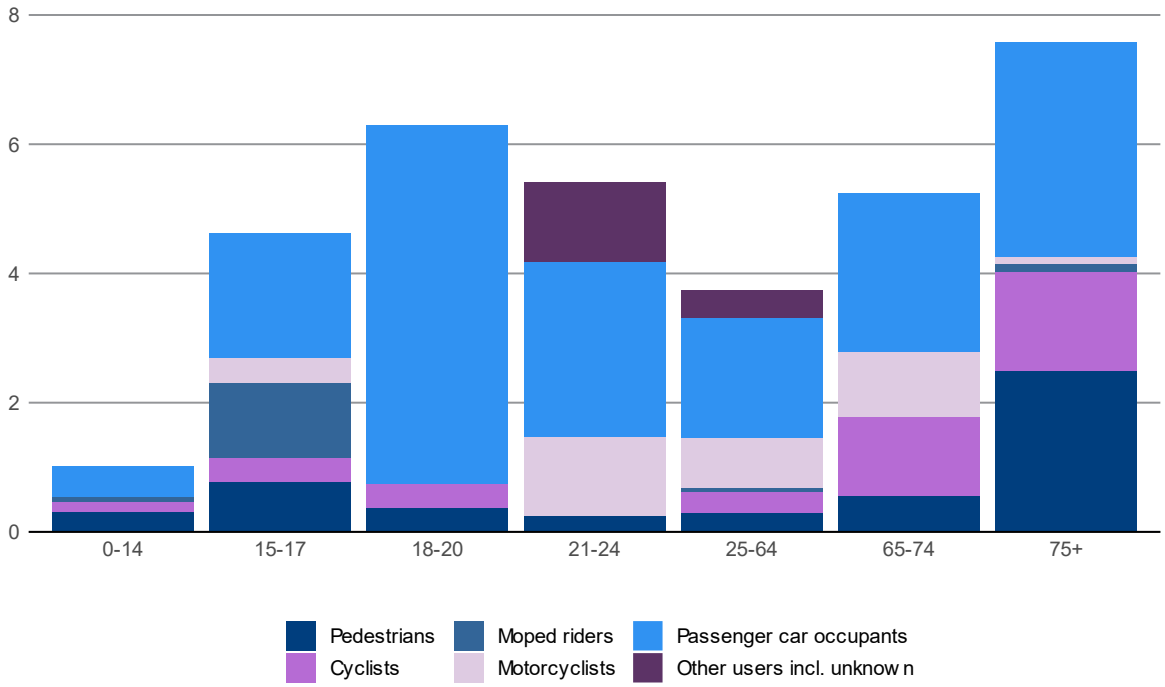


Figure 8. Road fatality rate in Austria by user category and age group, 2022

Rate per 100 000 population in the same age group



Road safety data 2012-22

Between 2012 and 2022, road deaths decreased by 30.3%.

The number of road deaths fell for all categories of road users. It fell for all age groups but less markedly for the elderly population. Road mortality decreased in all road categories, with the smallest reduction on urban and rural roads (-27.8%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Crash, casualty and traffic data in Austria, 2012-22

	2012	2020	2021	2022	Evolution 2012-22
Reported safety data					
Fatalities	531	344	362	370	-30.3%
Injury crashes	40 831	30 670	32 774	34 869	-14.6%
Deaths per 100 000 population	6.3	3.9	4.1	4.1	-34.7%
Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5	-40.2%
Deaths per billion vehicle-kilometres	7.3	4.6	4.7	..	..
Fatalities by road user					
Pedestrians	81	51	37	49	-39.5%
Cyclists	52	40	50	44	-15.4%
Moped riders	18	4	13	8	-55.6%
Motorcyclists	68	74	75	55	-19.1%
Passenger car occupants	279	146	161	180	-35.5%
Other road users	33	29	26	34	3.0%
Fatalities by age group					
0-14 years	8	2	6	13	62.5%
15-17 years	24	9	21	12	-50.0%
18-20 years	43	13	17	17	-60.5%
21-24 years	41	30	24	22	-46.3%
25-64 years	261	184	195	187	-28.4%
65-74 years	65	46	39	47	-27.7%
≥ 75 years	89	60	60	72	-19.1%
Fatalities by road type					
Urban roads	151	89	99	109	-27.8%
Rural roads	316	221	226	227	-28.2%
Motorways	64	34	37	34	-46.9%
Traffic data					
Vehicle kilometres (million)	72 376	74 452	76 395	..	..
Registered vehicles (thousands)	6 195	6 996	7 099	7 215	16.5%
Registered vehicles per 1 000 population	736.8	786.0	794.7	803.5	9.1%

Figure 9. Evolution of road fatalities, motorisation, traffic and GDP in Austria, 2012-22

Index 2012 = 100

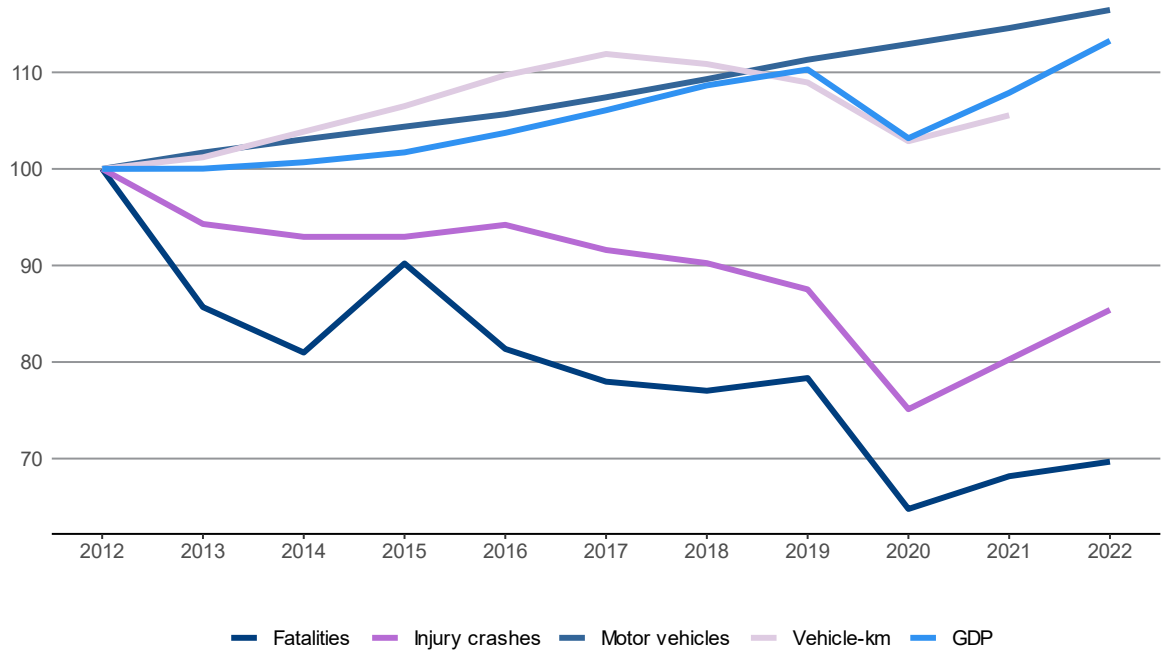
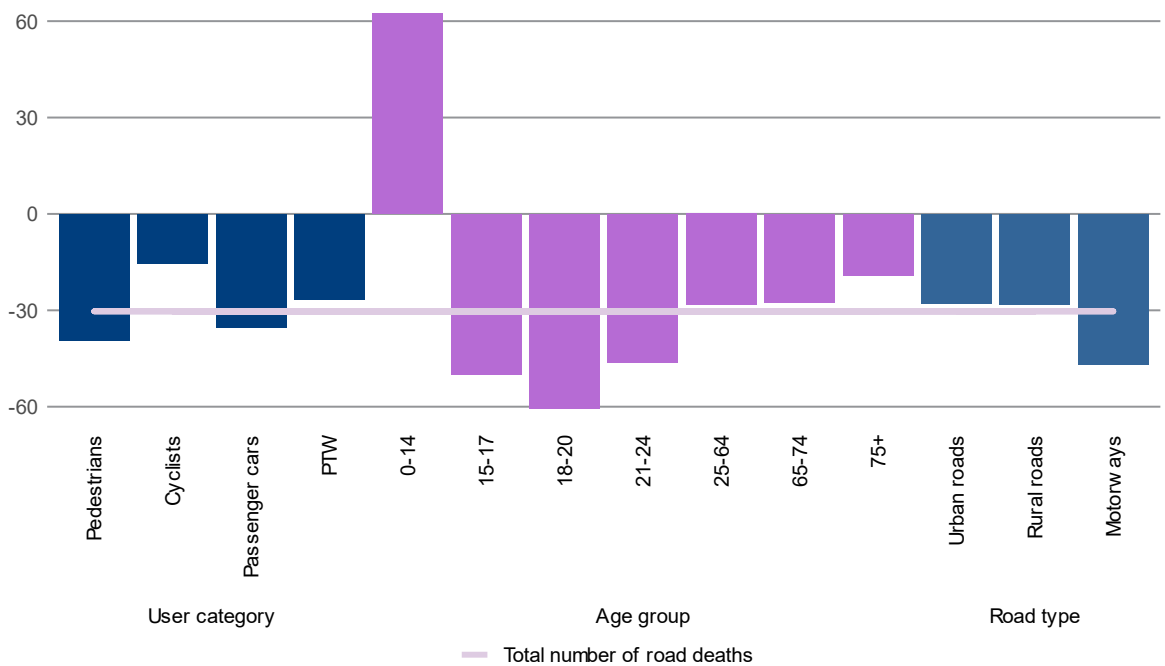


Figure 10. Evolution of road fatalities in Austria by user category, age group and road type, 2012-2022



Safety performance indicators

Speed

Speed is one of the leading causes of crashes in Austria. In 2022, 13% of all injury crashes and 23% of all road fatalities were caused by inappropriate speed, an increase compared to 2019.

Due to restrictions in the workforce, increases in speed surveillance by traffic police cannot be expected in the future. Still, automatic speed enforcement, including section controls, will be further developed.

In 2022, the government announced that drivers in Austria going above speed limits will have their cars seized and auctioned off. Measure for stricter laws against extreme speeding and car racing is being taken.

Table 3 summarises the main speed limits for passenger cars in Austria.

Table 3. Passenger car speed limits by road type in Austria, 2023

	General speed limit
Urban roads	50 km/h
Rural roads	100 km/h
Motorways	130 km/h

Drink driving

Driving under the influence of alcohol is another major cause of road crashes in Austria, as in most IRTAD countries. In 2022, 8 % of all road traffic crashes were due to alcohol consumption and drink driving. Statistics Austria reported that this is the highest rate of alcohol-related crashes in the past 30 years.

Austria uses the definition of drink-driving crashes recommended by the EU project SafetyNet: any crash in which any active participant had a BAC above the legal limit. The maximum authorised BAC is 0.5 g/l for general drivers and 0.1 g/l for moped riders under 20, professional and novice drivers.

Since 2002, every active participant involved in an injury crash has been tested for alcohol. However, it is not permitted in Austria to test a dead or an unconscious person unless the prosecutor requires it. Therefore, the number of unreported cases is believed to be substantial.

Drugs and driving

Austrian regulations provide no specific thresholds for drug concentrations. It is forbidden to drive or ride a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs. Little is currently known about the prevalence of drugs as a causal factor in crashes. Alcohol, drugs or prescription medicines were the presumed leading cause of 7.4 % of all road crashes in 2022.

Use of mobile phones while driving

According to the road crash statistics compiled by Statistics Austria, distraction (lack of attention, lack of concentration, and simply overlooking other road users) was the presumed leading cause of 25.7% of all road fatalities in 2022, down from 24% in 2019. In Austria, driving is not permitted while using a hand-held mobile phone. However, the use of hands-free devices is tolerated. The use of hand-held mobile phones while cycling was prohibited in 2013. Since 2016, the prohibition of using hand-held mobile phones while driving has included texting, dialling, and social media, but not navigation. KFV has developed distraction workshops for Austrian schools, the first pilot projects of which were successfully deployed in all Austrian provinces in 2016.

Fatigue

Fatigue was the presumed leading cause of 3% of all road fatalities in Austria in 2022. However, driver fatigue and the corresponding drop in attention and concentration levels are a vastly underestimated cause of crashes on Austria's roads – particularly its motorways. The number of unreported/undetected cases is estimated to be far higher.

Seat belt and helmet use

Seat belt wearing has been compulsory in Austria since 1984 in front seats and from 1990 for rear seats. The use of dedicated child restraint devices has been mandatory in Austria since 1994 for children under 14 years of age or less than 150 cm tall. Wearing a seat belt is an important road safety measure and contributes significantly to reducing injury severity in the event of a crash. The risk of being killed in a road crash is almost nine times higher for car occupants who are not wearing seat belts than for those who are.

The Austrian Road Safety Board observes and records Austria's seat belt wearing rate each year. In 2022, 98% of drivers, 98% of front-seat passengers and 97% of rear-seat passengers wore seat belts. From a gender perspective, more women (99%) than men (97%) wore seat belts. The seat belt wearing rate for children up to 12 was 99 % in 2022; for all other age groups, the rate was 98%.

For motorcyclists, helmet wearing is the most effective passive safety habit. In Austria, helmets have been compulsory for all motorised two-wheeler users since 1979. The helmet wearing rate of riders of motorised two-wheelers is at 100%.

Since June 2011, bicycle helmets have been compulsory for children up to 12 years. According to a police assessment, in 2022, 59% of injured cyclists and 75% of killed cyclists (all ages) did not wear a helmet.

Table 4. Seat belt and helmet wearing rates in Austria

Percentages

		2000	2010	2022
Front seats				
	General (driver and passenger)	76	84	98
	Driver	74	84	98
	Passenger	79	83	98
	Urban roads (driver)	70	82	98
	Rural roads (driver)	75	85	98
	Motorways (driver)	78	86	99
Rear seats				
	General	60	79	97
	Children (use of child restraint)	71	92	..
Helmet				
	Mopeds	..	..	100
	Motorcycles	..	..	100

Cost of road crashes

Traffic crashes represent a significant annual cost for Austria, estimated at around EUR 11.2 billion in 2021 (2.8% of GDP). According to research funded by the Austrian Road Safety Fund, despite the rising average cost of each crash, the total cost of road crashes decreased between 2011 and 2016. The effect of fewer crashes on the road has outweighed the increasing cost of those crashes.

Table 5. Cost of road crashes in Austria, 2021

	Unit Cost (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Fatalities	4 801 407	..
Seriously injured	593 479	..
Slight injuries	42 899	..
Property damage costs of non-injury crashes	6 450	..
Total	..	11.2 billion
Total as % of GDP	..	2.8 %

Road safety management and strategy

Evolution of road safety

The substantial decline in road mortality since 1990 coincides with the implementation of the first two integrated road safety programmes in Austria. These programmes introduced a variety of measures, including second phase education for novice drivers after obtaining a driving licence; automatic section control of average speeds along stretches of motorway and rural roads; awareness campaigns on seat belt and child restraint use, alcohol, child safety and choice of adequate speed on rural roads; large-scale roadside testing for alcohol using screening devices and the introduction of a penalty point system.

Governance of road safety

Austria's primary responsibility for road safety lies with the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK). BMK co-operates with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and other government ministries, regional and local authorities, interest groups, chambers of commerce and industry, trade and labour associations, and road safety organisations.

The Roads Taskforce of the Transport Safety Advisory Council serves as the institutional platform for all road safety stakeholders. It was established in 2006 at BMK as the forum for decision makers in matters relating to road safety and for the preparation, ongoing evaluation and development of road safety programmes and strategies for all modes of transport. The Austrian Road Safety Fund, also established at BMK, was set up to promote road safety. The Road Safety Fund is financed with revenues from personalised vehicle number plates. It plays a crucial role in funding road safety research and activities.

Road safety strategy

In 2021, BMK issued a new Road Safety Strategy for 2021-2030, focusing on evidence-based interventions, using safety performance indicators, managing safety objectives and establishing a Safe System. To remain flexible throughout the decade, the Strategy will be accompanied by targeted, shorter-term Action Plans. The BMK has developed it with KFV (Austrian Road Safety Board) and FGM/AMOR (Austrian Mobility Research). In addition to a Vision Zero for child fatalities, the Strategy sets out a bundle of ambitious targets: a 50% reduction of road fatalities and serious injuries and numerical objectives for eight performance indicators, such as the share of driving within speed limits, seatbelt and helmet use, and the use of hand-held mobile phones. The seven fields of action have been directly derived from key problem areas in crash statistics:

1. active, safe and climate-friendly mobility
2. safe rural roads
3. motorcycle safety
4. passenger car safety

5. roadworthy and with full attention on the road
6. effective raising of awareness, education, and training
7. effective legislation, control activities, administration, and information processes.

The fields of action are clustered into challenges, objectives until 2030 and potential solutions. Therefore, the Strategy does not contain a catalogue of interventions in the classical sense but instead holds a repository of possible ways forward, which are to be refined and further detailed in future Action Plans. It is foreseen to organise annual results conferences with road safety stakeholders across the domains and regions to regularly analyse the latest data and discuss initiatives for new and adapted Action Plans and interventions.

Latest road safety measures

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, several campaigns and awareness-raising measures have been carried out. Different issues were included: visibility during the night for pedestrians and cyclists, safety in tunnels, risk of drink driving for novice drivers, teaching road safety to kids and distraction.

Authorities can regulate a truck driving ban without a turn-off assistant in entire or particular local areas.

In 2022, Austria introduced the eAusweise, an eID that allows drivers to have a driving licence on their smartphones. The aim is to digitise IDs and link them to biometrics for efficient use.

In 2021, the Ministry of Transport issued measures against excessive speeding. It includes higher fines, extended withdrawal periods, and actions against illegal road races.

Research and resources

Publications

KFV (2021), *Safe (e-)Bike to Work*, (in German with an executive summary in English), KFV – Sicher Leben No. 27, https://www.kfv.at/download/27-sicheres-e-radfahren-am-arbeitsweg/?wpdmdl=10667&refresh=61f94fe1f25191643728865

KFV (2021), *Fighting the deadly danger of blind spots*, (in German with executive summary in English), KFV – Sicher Leben No. 29, https://www.kfv.at/download/29-toter-winkel-toedliche-gefahr/?wpdmdl=10672&refresh=61f916eb8b8301643714283

Gatscha (2021), *Evaluation of the Austrian 2nd phase driving licence education (class B)*, (in German), https://www.bmk.gv.at/dam/jcr:dad14579-4d4c-4359-8799-cfc8f99e74bb/Summary_MEP_VSF.pdf

KFV (2020), *E-Scooters: Crashes, risk perception and behaviour*, (in German with an executive summary in English), KFV – Sicher Leben No. 24., https://www.kfv.at/download/24-e-scooter-imstrassenverkehr/?wpdmdl=8143&refresh=5fb6a2d849f041605804760

KFV (2020), *'Dooring' crashes of cyclists and engineering countermeasures*, (in German with an executive summary in English), KFV – Sicher Leben No. 20., https://www.kfv.at/download/20-dooringunfaelle/?wpdmdl=7690&refresh=5fb6a2d84e67e1605804760

Websites

Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK): https://www.bmk.gv.at/themen/verkehr/strasse/verkehrssicherheit.html

Austrian Road Safety Board (KFV): https://www.kfv.at/

Statistik Austria: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/EnergyEnvironmentInnovationMobility/transport/road/road_traffic_accidents/index.html, https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/tourism-and-transport/accidents/road-traffic-accidents

Austrian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030: https://www.bmk.gv.at/en/topics/transport/roads/safety/vss2030.html

Definition, methodology, data collection

Term	Definition
Road death	A person who dies within 30 days of the crash.
Injury crash	Any crash which results in at least one injured or killed person.
Person seriously injured	A person who suffers an injury resulting in an inability to work or health problems for more than 24 days.
Person slightly injured	Any other injured person not included in the definition of seriously injured.

Since 2015, the number of people seriously injured with a Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale of three or more (MAIS3+) injuries has been reported.

The police collect crash data. The crash data acquisition process was transformed entirely in January 2012 from paper forms to integrated data input, including geographic information system (GIS) support. This has significantly reduced underreporting rates, especially for less severe road crashes. Due to this change, data for injuries and crashes since 2012 cannot be directly compared with previous figures. This does not apply to the number of fatalities.

Injury severity is assessed by the police at the crash scene, with only occasional feedback from hospitals. It is impossible to link police and hospital data directly based on the present data architecture.

As required by the European Commission, the number of serious injuries (MAIS3+) has been estimated since 2015 based on Classification of Diseases-10 (ICD-10) hospital data on road traffic victims.

About the IRTAD Database

The IRTAD Database includes road safety data, aggregated by country and year from 1970 onwards. It provides an empirical basis for international comparisons and more effective road safety policies.

The IRTAD Group validates data for quality before inclusion in the database. At present, the database includes validated data from 35 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The data is provided in a common format based on definitions developed and agreed by the IRTAD Group. Selected data is available for free; full online access requires IRTAD membership.

Access the IRTAD Database via the OECD statistics portal:

https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=IRTAD_CASUAL_BY_AGE

About the International Transport Forum

The International Transport Forum (ITF) is an intergovernmental organisation with 66 member countries that organises global dialogue for better transport. It acts as a think tank for transport policy and hosts the Annual Summit of transport ministers. The ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous.

www.itf-oecd.org

About the IRTAD Group

The International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis (IRTAD) Group is the ITF's permanent working group for road safety. It brings together road safety experts from national road administrations, road safety research institutes, international organisations, automobile associations, insurance companies, car manufacturers, etc. With 80 members and observers from more than 40 countries, the IRTAD Group is a central force in promoting international co-operation on road-crash data and its analysis.

www.itf-oecd.org/irtad

Disclaimer

Data in this country profile have been provided by countries to the database of the International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis (IRTAD) Group. Where data has not been independently validated by IRTAD, this is indicated.

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https://www.itf-oecd.org/road-safety-annual-report-2023

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