In 2020, Chile registered 1,794 road deaths, a 9.1% decrease on 2019. Pedestrians account for almost a third of Chilean road deaths. In December 2020, the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications released the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30, setting a goal of 30% fewer annual road fatalities by 2030, compared to the average 2011-19. The impact of Covid-19 on 2020 fatalities resulted in a more significant decrease than in previous years, where the numbers were decreasing very little year after year. Traffic volume data showed that from March to December of 2020 there was a decrease in mobility and traffic in big cities such as Santiago, where there was a reduction of 38% in traffic volume. Importantly, Chile had total restrictions on mobility and curfews, among other measures, between April and September. Even though mobility restrictions were stringent during most of the year, the decrease in fatalities was only 9.1% compared to 2019.

Road safety management and strategy

Between 2000 and 2020, fatalities in Chile fluctuated with no clear trend emerging. This is partly explained by the exponential increase in the number of vehicles and motorcycles on the roads during the same period.

Chile's responsibility for road safety lies with the National Road Safety Commission (Comisión Nacional de Seguridad de Tránsito or CONASET), an inter-ministerial body created as a presidential advisory commission through Supreme Court Decree 223, of 27 December 1993.

Executive Secretary is in charge of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030, which is agreed on by the board.

In 2017, Chile updated its National Road Safety Policy, initially written in 1993 and served as the general strategy guide. This new policy was created through a participative process with representatives of public and private entities, citizens’ associations, road traffic victims’ associations, experts, and relevant road safety stakeholders. With this new road safety policy, Chile will subscribe to the Safe System approach by adopting its principles and hold Vision Zero as its long-term goal regarding road traffic deaths and seriously injured people.

This new policy delivers a strategic framework to develop a concrete strategy and action plans focused on the five strategic pillars established in the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The development of this strategy and action plan seeks to serve as a guideline for all actions related to road safety carried out in Chile, with measurable targets and timeframes to meet such targets.

Chile presented a National Accord for Road Safety in September 2018. This national accord laid out priority actions that were immediately implemented and supported the development of the framework for the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 through citizen participation in private and public organisations. It includes a new target to reduce road fatalities by 30% by 2030 compared to the average number of fatalities in 2011-19. In addition to the new target, the strategy sets out several measures, initiatives and indicators that will contribute to reaching the target.

### Latest road safety measures

The process to implement a digital driver’s licence began in 2020. This is expected to reduce document forgery and raise safety standards on the roads. In addition, the process modernises the whole licence granting system.

In 2020, a decree established the National Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on the third Sunday of November each year.

The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications continues to pursue legislation in Congress to allow for automated speed management.

The National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 was launched in December 2020.

The *Revisa tu silla* (Check your seat) program was created in 2019 to assist parents with installing child restraint systems with free orientation during the year. In 2020, during
lockdown for Covid-19, the program was made available online through personalised appointments.

A new theoretical exam for motorcycle licences was launched in 2020.

An anti-lock braking (ABS) system has been required for light vehicles since 2020.

The medical exam to obtain a driver’s licence was made more rigorous by updating the medical guidelines and list of diseases.

Along with CONASET, the Ministry for Transport and Telecommunications published a guide in 2020 to provide technical support for the implementation of tactical bike lanes, sidewalk extensions for walking and queuing, public transport sanitisation and physical distancing for passengers.

In 2020, the procedure to establish traffic calming areas was published, allowing municipalities to set lower speeds in some areas.

Theoretical online courses for professional driving schools were launched to support the education of new drivers. To progress in their courses, applicants will have practical driving modules in person.

Decree no. 71/2019 was published in 2020, modifying the road-traffic sign manual to incorporate the new design of information signs related to road traffic co-existence. This modification resulted from the working groups that originated from the road co-existence law, with the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Transport and CONASET.

In December 2020, a new practical exam was introduced to evaluate applicants' abilities and behaviour for a C class licence (for motorcycles and other similar two and three-wheeled vehicles). This evaluation unifies the criteria for all evaluation centres in municipalities at a national level, setting a closed circuit in which all applicants must prove driving abilities and knowledge. The evaluation has two parts: one with the engine turned off where the applicant must guide and park their vehicle; and the other with the engine turned on, where the applicant must drive on an established circuit and stop in a determined spot.

**Costs of road crashes**

CONASET has reviewed several methodologies to assess the cost of road crashes. As a starting point, it uses the 2011 “Simplified methodology for estimating the social benefits of reducing accidents in interurban road projects” from the Road and Urban Transport Programme of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Social Development. This methodology considers material damage to vehicles, treatment of injured people, administrative costs and loss of productivity (i.e. the human capital approach). In addition, CONASET uses the willingness-to-pay approach to evaluate the benefit of preventing road death, based on a 2014 study commissioned by the vice minister of the environment.
Based on this methodology, the estimated cost of traffic crashes for 2020 was USD 5.5 billion (2.01% of GDP).

**Safety performance indicators**

**Speed**

Inappropriate speed is one of the leading causes of road crashes. A study conducted by Chile’s Automobile Club during 2020 in the biggest city of Chile, Santiago, revealed that 60% of drivers exceed the speed limit in urban areas at any given time. The study also showed speeding was equally present in men and women and different age groups.

It is estimated that speeding is responsible for around 30% of fatal crashes. In the last decade, speeding has been the leading cause of death, with 4 559 road fatalities attributed to it.

In August 2018, the Chilean Congress approved a bill to reduce the urban speed limit from 60 to 50 km/h – an initiative the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications had pursued for many years. A year after the speed limit reduction, there has been a slight decrease in crashes, fatalities and injured people reported by the police. There will be a more thorough evaluation of the new regulation once more data are validated and available.

**Drink-driving**

A traffic crash is defined as alcohol-related when either a driver or another person involved in the crash (including motorcyclists, cyclists or pedestrians) has a measurable or estimated BAC of 0.3 g/l or above.

In 2012, the government of Chile introduced a new law to support a zero-tolerance policy for drunk driving. It sets the maximum permissible BAC at 0.3 g/l. The law defines driving under the influence of alcohol as driving with a BAC between 0.3 g/l and 0.8 g/l. Driving while intoxicated is defined as driving with a BAC of 0.8 g/l or higher and entails much tougher sanctions.

Sanctions associated with this law are related to licence suspension or annulment.

The number of fatalities due to drunk driving declined almost 30% with the introduction of the zero-tolerance law: from 267 in 2011 to 192 in 2012. The share of alcohol-related fatalities has stabilised at around 10% of total fatalities in recent years. In 2020, 112 road deaths (6.2% of total road deaths) were related to alcohol and driving.
In 2014, the so-called Emilia’s Law was implemented to punish drunk drivers responsible for serious injury or fatal crashes more severely. This new law complements the zero-tolerance law enacted in 2012 and increases sanctions for drunk driving, including disqualifying the driver for life. The driver is also subject to at least one year of imprisonment. In addition, fleeing the scene or refusing an alcohol test is now a criminal offence. The law has strengthened the effect of the zero-tolerance law.

Drugs and driving

Currently, there is no systematic drug test process following a crash. This procedure is carried out ad hoc at the judge’s request in charge of the investigation. Therefore, the estimate that only 0.1% of deaths are attributed to driving under the influence of drugs is largely underestimated. Also, a road crash is defined as being caused by drugs only when the police see the act of consuming or any physical evidence of drug consumption that can lead to a judicial drug test order.

In April 2019, a new drug test device that uses saliva was launched for testing drivers. The substances detected by this device include cocaine, marijuana, opiates, methamphetamines and amphetamines.

Use of mobile phones while driving

In 2020, distracted driving was recorded in police data as the main contributing factor for 223 road fatalities (12.5% of total fatalities) and 1,744 serious injuries, representing an increase of 33% in fatalities and a decrease of 5% in serious injuries, compared to 2019 data. Chilean traffic law considers driving while using a mobile phone a severe traffic violation unless using a hands-free device.

An observational study undertaken in 16 regions of the country in 2021 revealed that 19% of light vehicle drivers use their cell phones while driving.

According to police data, around 2% of traffic deaths in 2019 and 2020 were related to fatigue. This figure is probably underreported because it is difficult for the police to discern the physical condition of drivers when crashes occur.

Seat belt and helmet use

Seat belt use has been compulsory for front seats since 1985 and rear seats since 2005. A survey undertaken in 2021 showed that the wearing rate was 86% for drivers, 72% for front-seat passengers and around 21% for rear-seat passengers. The survey also revealed disparities between regions.
Until 2015, children under nine years of age had to be seated in the rear seat and be adequately restrained. Since March 2016, children up to 12 years of age have to be seated in the rear seat. Since 2017, the obligation to use child restraints has been applied to children from 0 to 9 years of age or those under 135 cm tall and weighing less than 33 kg.

Helmet use by all riders of motorised two-wheelers has been compulsory since 1985, when the transit law was published. The helmet wearing rate is 95% for all riders, 99% for drivers and 87% for passengers in the last study in 2021. These rates are lower than the rates reported in the previous study in 2017.

For cyclists, wearing helmets has been required since 2005 but only in urban areas.

### Road safety data for Chile at a glance

#### Table 1. Long-term road safety trends for Chile

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<td>Fatalities</td>
<td>2,063</td>
<td>2,207</td>
<td>2,070</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>1,794</td>
<td>-9.1</td>
<td>-13.3</td>
<td>-18.7</td>
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<td>Injury crashes</td>
<td>30,772</td>
<td>34,331</td>
<td>39,194</td>
<td>39,246</td>
<td>28,870</td>
<td>-26.4</td>
<td>-15.9</td>
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<td>Deaths per 100 000 people</td>
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<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>-10.7</td>
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<td>Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>-47.8</td>
<td>-69.2</td>
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<td><strong>Fatalities by road user</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>811</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>-25.9</td>
<td>-39.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>-30.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riders of motorised two-wheelers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>127.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passenger car occupants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>477</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>27.3</td>
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<td>Other road users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>482</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-28.4</td>
<td>-35.7</td>
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<td><strong>Fatalities by age group</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-24.6</td>
<td>-52.4</td>
<td>-74.2</td>
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<td>15-17 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-16.3</td>
<td>-14.3</td>
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<td>18-20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-7.8</td>
<td>-19.4</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-24 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-64 years</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
<td>-9.3</td>
<td>-17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-74 years</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-29.7</td>
<td>-26.6</td>
<td>-26.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 75 years</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-28.2</td>
<td>-32.8</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fatalities by road type</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban roads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>932</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-19.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motorways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>1,229</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>-15.4</td>
<td>-8.6</td>
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<td><strong>Traffic data</strong></td>
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<td>Registered vehicles (thousands)</td>
<td>2,079</td>
<td>3,299</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>5,479</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>163.6</td>
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<td>Registered vehicles per 1,000 population</td>
<td>193.4</td>
<td>287.1</td>
<td>293.1</td>
<td>281.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>45.6</td>
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</table>
Figure 1. Evolution of road fatalities, injury crashes, motorisation and GDP in Chile, 2000-20
Index 2000 = 100

Figure 2. Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in Chile in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020

- Norway: 3.8
- Sweden: 4.2
- Netherlands: 4.2
- Sweden: 4.2
- United Kingdom: 4.2
- Switzerland: 4.2
- Japan: 4.2
- Denmark: 4.2
- Spain: 4.2
- Ireland: 4.2
- Germany: 4.2
- Israel: 4.2
- Slovenia: 4.2
- Austria: 4.2
- France: 4.2
- Italy: 4.2
- Finland: 4.2
- Luxembourg: 4.2
- Australia: 4.2
- Belgium: 4.2
- Canada: 4.2
- Hungary: 4.2
- Czech Republic: 4.2
- Portugal: 4.2
- Greece: 4.2
- Korea: 4.2
- New Zealand: 4.2
- Lithuania: 4.2
- Poland: 4.2
- Chile: 9.2
- Colombia: 9.2
- United States: 12.0
Figure 3. Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles in Chile in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020

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

Figure 4. Evolution of road fatalities in Chile by user category, age group and road type, 2010-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User category</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Road type</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>Urban roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>Outside urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars</td>
<td>18-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTW</td>
<td>21-24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25-64</td>
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<td></td>
<td>65-74</td>
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<td></td>
<td>75+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total number of road deaths
Figure 5. Road fatalities in Chile by user category, 2020

- Pedestrians: 28%
- Motorised two-wheelers: 14%
- Cyclists: 7%
- Passenger car occupants: 34%
- Others incl. unknown: 17%

Figure 6. Road fatalities in Chile by road type, 2020

- Outside urban areas: 58%
- Inside urban areas: 42%
Figure 7. Road fatality rate in Chile by user category and age group, 2020
Rate per 100 000 population in the same age group

Table 2. Seat belt and helmet wearing rates
Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Front seats</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rear seats</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children (use of child restraint)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helmet</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Riders of motorcycles</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passengers of motorcycles</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>87</td>
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</table>

Research and resources

Publications


CONASET (2021), Observational study of different vehicle drivers to generate road safety policy recommendations - Seat belts results and child restraint systems, https://www.conaset.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Presentaci%C3%B3n-Resultados-2021-Cintur%C3%B3n-y-SRI.pdf.

CONASET (2021), Observational study of different vehicle drivers to generate road safety policy recommendations - Motorcycle results, https://www.conaset.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Presentaci%C3%B3n-Resultados-2021-Cintur%C3%B3n-y-SRI.pdf.

Websites

CONASET: https://www.conaset.cl/.

Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications: https://www.mtt.cl/.

**Definition, methodology, data collection**

A road fatality is a person who dies from injuries within 48 hours of the crash. To conform to the international definition – a death occurring within 30 days of a road crash – CONASET applies a correction factor of 1.2. Fatality data in this report correspond to the corrected data.

A seriously injured person is someone who is hospitalised for more than 24 hours.

According to the Chilean Penal Code, a serious injury occurs when a person has a disease or cannot work (disabled) for over 30 days due to a crash.

Following a traffic crash, the police (Carabineros de Chile) at the crash site are required to use the Data Collection Form of Road Traffic Accidents (SIEC 2). The information is later entered and stored in the police road traffic crash database. In crashes involving deaths or serious injuries, the crash report is sent by the police to the relevant judges.