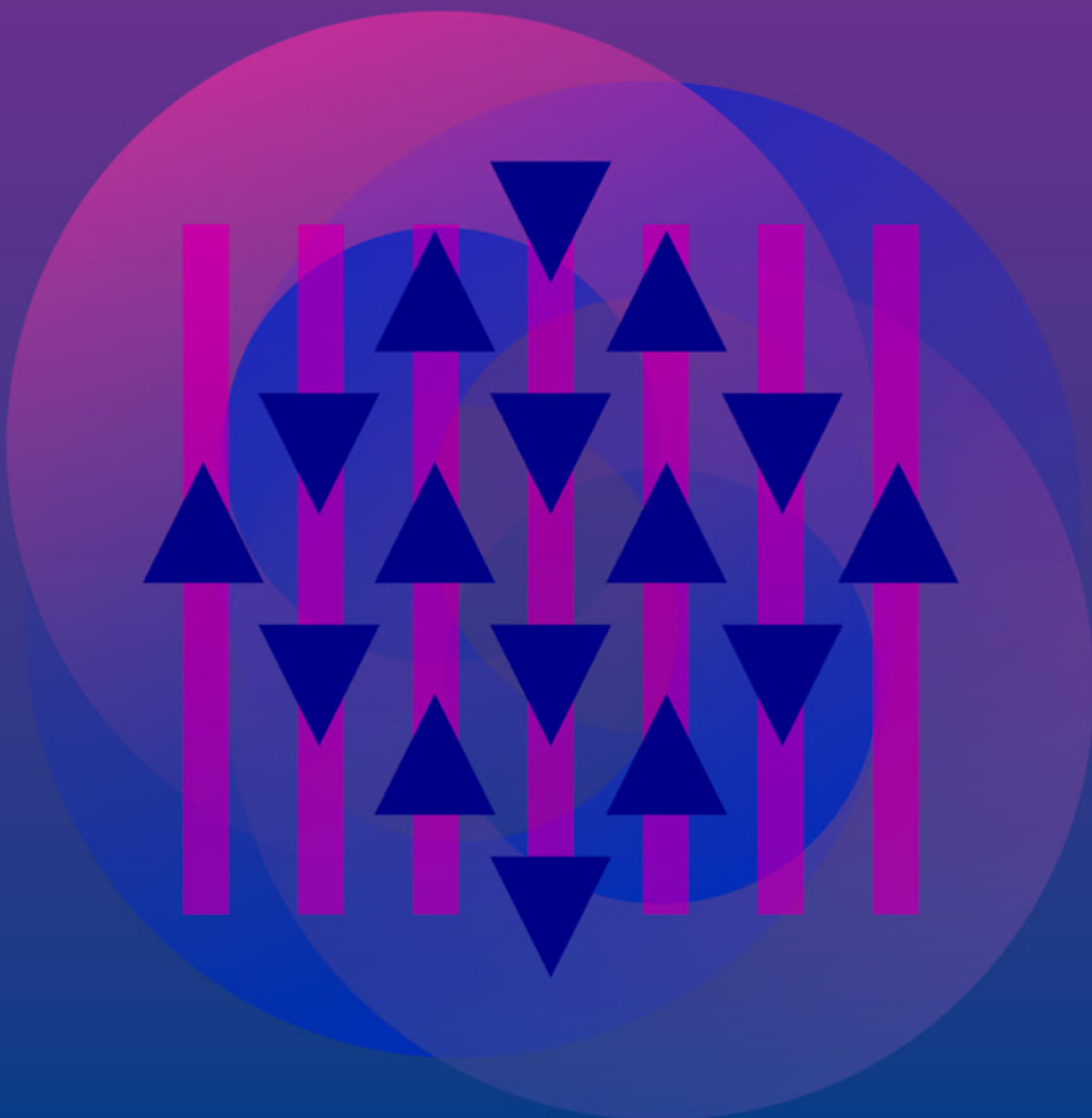


Road Safety Country Profile

Colombia 2023



Overview

Colombia recorded its highest number of road deaths in 2022, driven by the inexorable rise in the number of motorcyclist fatalities. Motorcyclists account for 60% of all road deaths. The new 2022-2031 strategy was adopted in July 2022 by the National Road Safety Agency and the Ministry of Transport. Its main target is to reduce road mortality rate from 14.2 road deaths per 100 000 population in 2021 to 7.1 in 2031.

In 2023, Colombia acceded to the UN 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles.

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

Population	51.7 million				
GDP per capita	USD 6 665				
Total number of motor vehicles	17.8 million				
	Cars	Motorcycles	Goods vehicles		Buses
	35%	62%	2%		1%
Speed limits	Urban roads		Rural roads		Motorways
	50 km/h		90 km/h		120 km/h
Limits on blood alcohol content	0.2 grams/litre				
Road fatalities	8 146				
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Car occupants	Motorcyclists	Other and unknown
	21%	5%	8%	60%	6%
Road fatalities per 100 000 population	15.8				
Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles	4.5				

Short-term trends

Mobility and road safety in Colombia 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 very much 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 with the average for 2017-19.

For the first time since systematic recording began in 1998, the number of fatalities exceeded 8 000. In 2022, 8 146 persons lost their lives on Colombian roads, a 24% increase compared to the average from 2017 to 2019 and a 12.5% rise from 2021.

Table 1. Road fatalities in Colombia, 2017-2022

	2017	2018	2019	Average 2017-19	2020	2021	2022	2022 compared with average 2017-19
January	567	567	464	533	542	575	683	28.2%
February	521	559	486	522	523	585	547	4.8%
March	522	554	532	536	430	543	676	26.1%
April	472	477	499	483	188	523	654	35.5%
May	523	519	517	520	291	511	645	24.1%
June	535	546	600	560	317	603	617	10.1%
July	582	560	574	572	370	664	758	32.5%
August	549	530	552	544	432	628	634	16.6%
September	481	580	526	529	499	654	731	38.2%
October	551	539	569	553	593	621	772	39.6%
November	522	500	563	528	572	623	588	11.3%
December	680	698	695	691	690	708	841	21.7%
Total	6 505	6 629	6 577	6 570	5 447	7 238	8 146	24.0%

This upward trend in road deaths continued after the Covid-19 pandemic. The primary contributing factor is the continuous growth of motorcycles in Colombia. In 2022, Colombia registered 800 000 new units, the highest number of new motorbike registrations within a year over the last decade. Consequently, motorcyclists represented 60% of all road deaths in 2022 (Figure 5).

Compared to the average for the years 2017-19, the number of road deaths increased for all categories of road users and exploded for motorcyclists. The number of motorcyclists killed increased by 43.9%, cyclists by 12.1%, car occupants by 11.1% and pedestrians by 4.1%.

The increase concerned all age groups, except children (0-14), for whom road deaths fell by 5.5%, and for people over 75 (-3.1%). It increased by 28.3% for people aged 65-74 and more than 29% for the 21-24 and 25-64.

The number of road deaths increased by 41.4% on urban roads.

The mortality rate reached 15.8 road deaths per 100 000 population in 2022, the highest rate observed in the past 15 years. In 2022, Colombia had a fatality risk of 4.6 road deaths for 10 000 motor vehicles (Figures 3 and 4). These are the highest rates among IRTAD countries with validated data.

The age groups the most at risk in traffic are the young people (18-24) and the senior population. Young people are particularly at risk in traffic as users of motorised two-wheelers, while senior citizens are the most vulnerable as pedestrians (Figure 6).

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

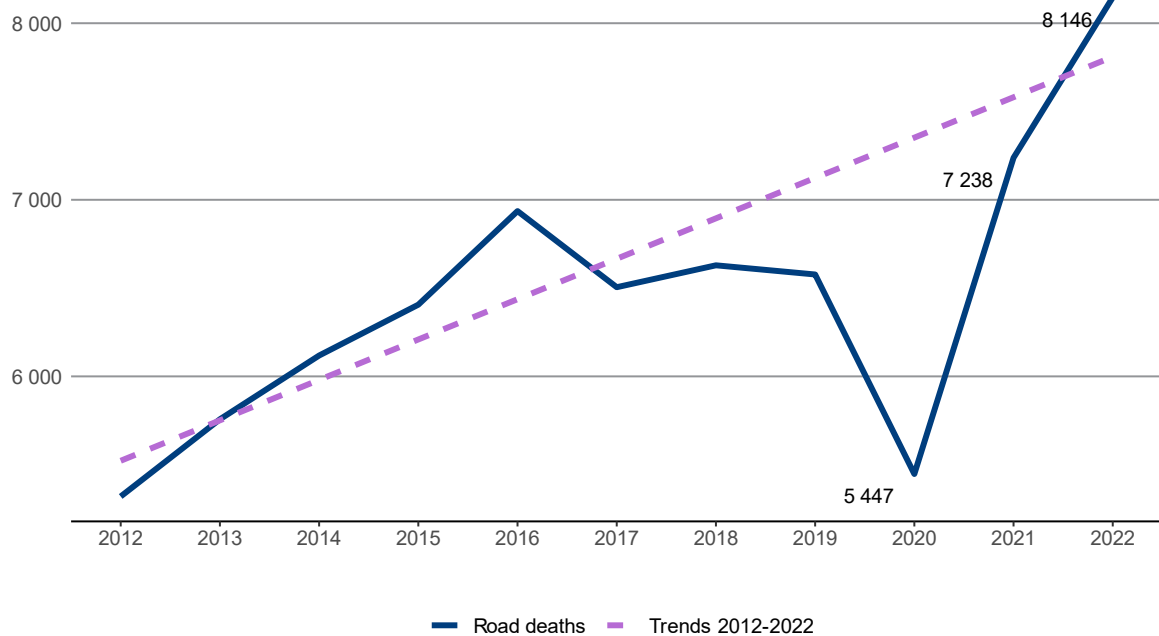


Figure 2. Evolution of road fatalities in Colombia by user category and age group, 2022 compared to the average 2017-19

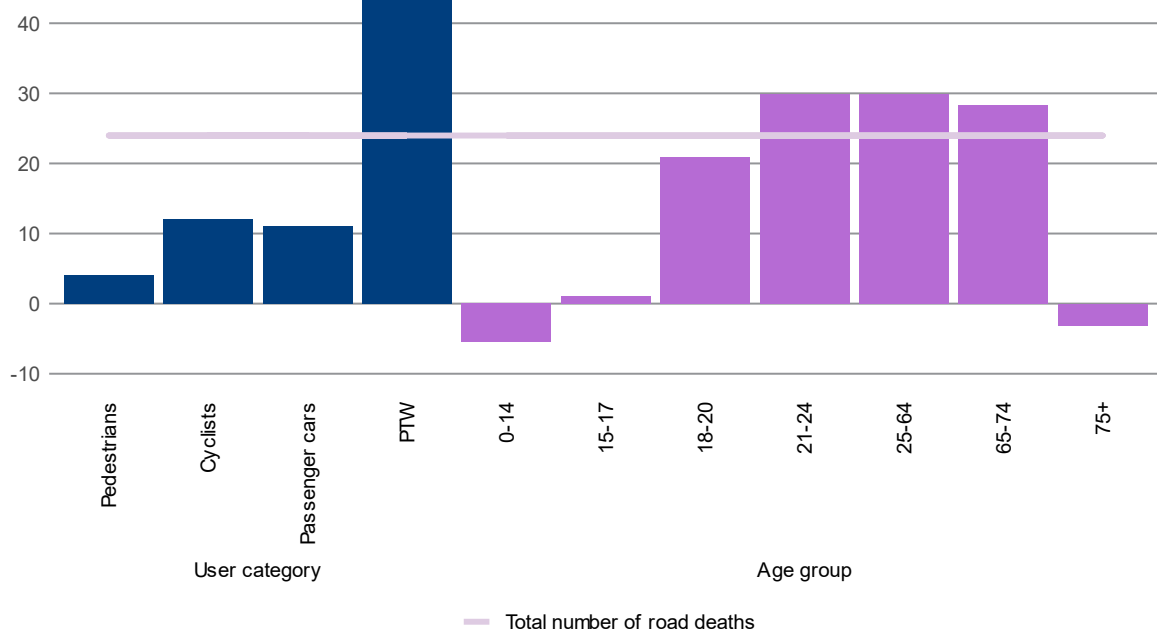


Figure 3. Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in Colombia compared to other IRTAD countries, 2022

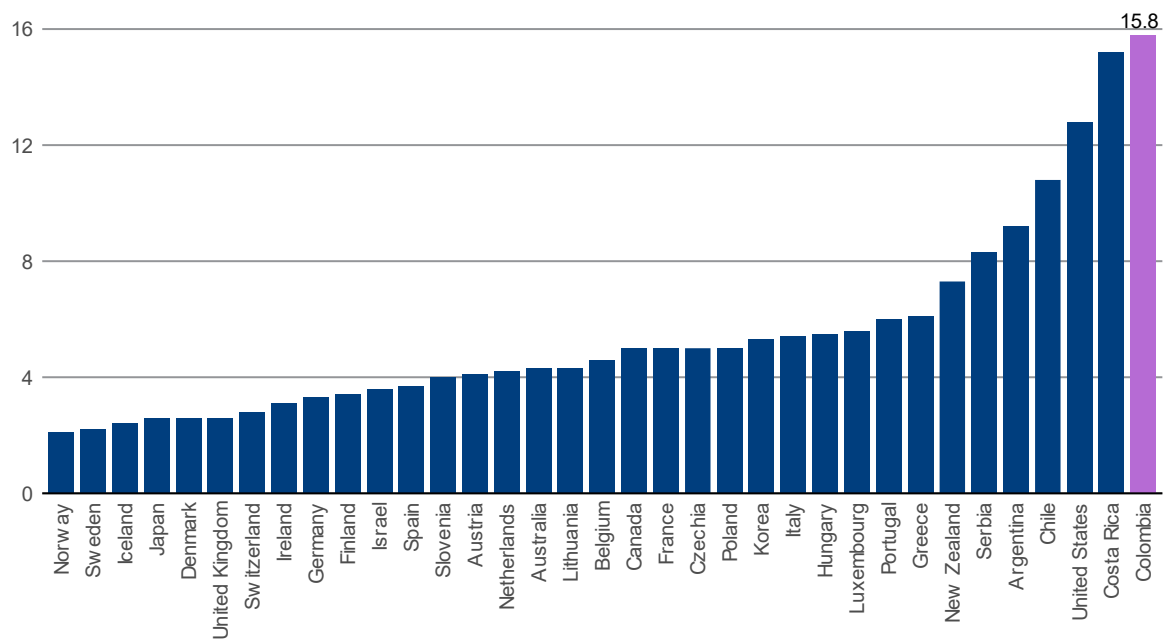
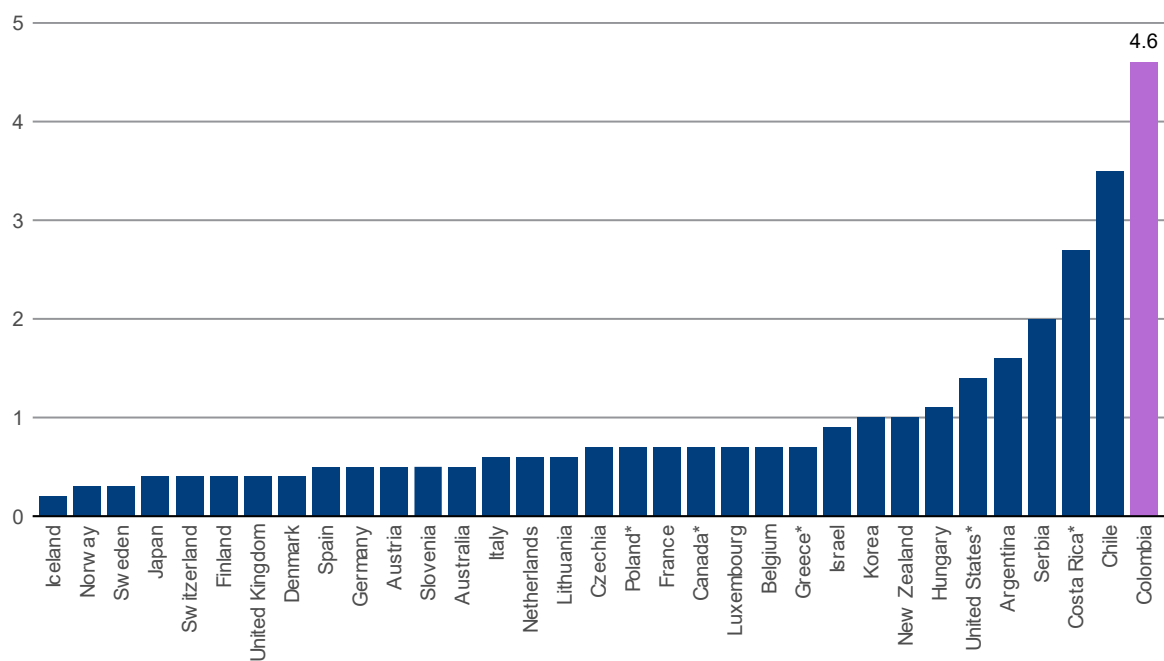


Figure 4. Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles in Colombia compared to other IRTAD countries, 2022



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

Figure 5. Road fatalities in Colombia by user category, 2022

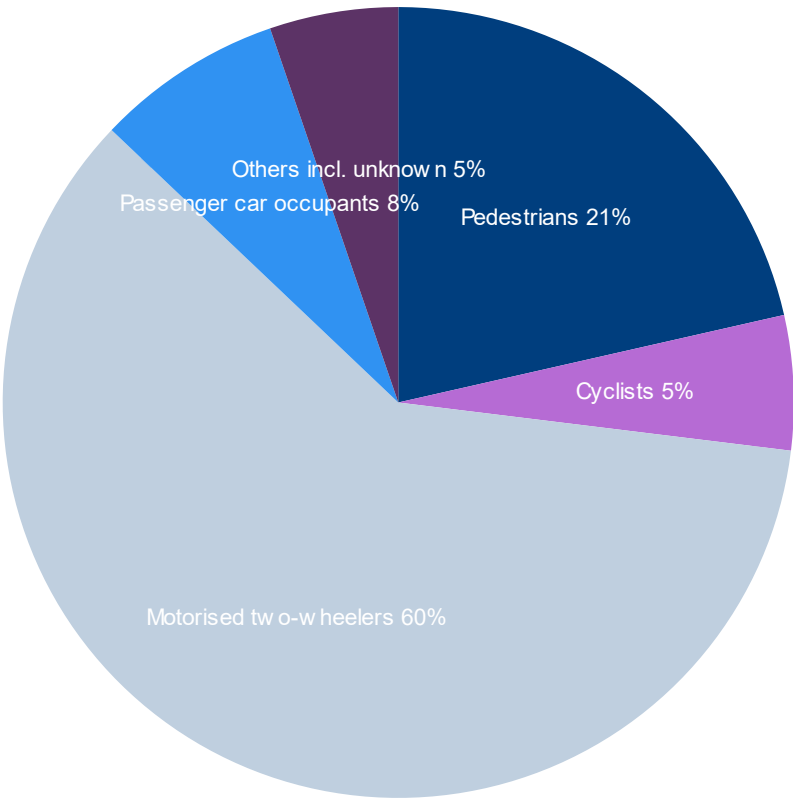
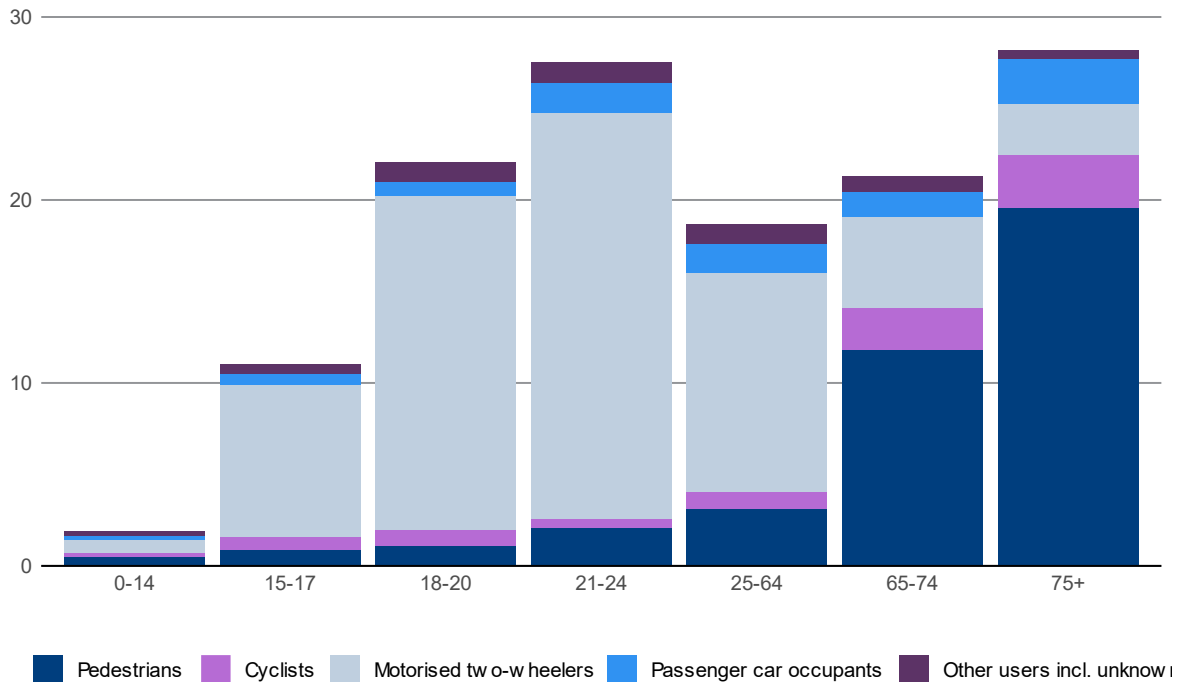


Figure 6. Road fatality rate in Colombia by user category and age group, 2022

Rate per 100 000 population in the same age group



Road safety data 2012-22

Between 2012 and 2022, road deaths increased by 53.1% overall (Table 2 and Figure 7). During the same period, the number of registered motor vehicles almost doubled. In particular, registered powered two-wheelers nearly tripled from 3.7 million in 2010 to 11 million in 2022.

Motorcyclists and cyclists mainly bore the increase in road deaths. Between 2012 and 2022, the number of motorcyclists killed on the road doubled from 2 322 deaths to 4 900 deaths. The number of cyclists killed increased by 54.5%. There was also an increase in the number of car occupants killed (23.9%) and among pedestrians (8.7%) (Figure 8).

The number of children (0-14) killed on the roads decreased by 12.8%. All other age groups saw an increase in the number of road deaths.

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

	2012	2020	2021	2022	Evolution 2012-22
Reported safety data					
Fatalities	5 320	5 447	7 238	8 146	53.1%
Injury crashes	90 226	57 565	73 650	71 524	-20.7%
Deaths per 100 000 population	11.8	10.8	14.2	15.8	33.3%
Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles	5.7	3.4	4.3	4.6	-19.8%
Fatalities by road user					
Pedestrians	1 607	1 149	1 552	1 747	8.7%
Cyclists	290	445	466	448	54.5%
Motorised two-wheelers	2 332	3 050	4 324	4 900	110.1%
Passenger car occupants	503	414	565	623	23.9%
Other road users	588	389	331	428	-27.2%
Fatalities by age group					
0-14 years	250	157	219	218	-12.8%
15-17 years	207	186	259	266	28.5%
18-20 years	382	401	533	549	43.7%
21-24 years	590	618	784	963	63.2%
25-64 years	3 048	3 372	4 468	4 959	62.7%
65-74 years	409	403	542	661	61.6%
≥ 75 years	434	310	433	530	22.1%
Fatalities by road type					
Inside urban areas	3 321	2 963	3 895	5 036	51.6%
Outside urban areas	1 860	2 315	3 177	3 017	62.2%
Traffic data					
Registered vehicles (thousands)	9 343	15 977	16 712	17 840	90.9%
Registered vehicles per 1 000 population	207.6	317.0	326.9	345.2	66.3%

Figure 7. Evolution of road fatalities, motorisation, traffic and GDP in Colombia, 2012-22
 Index 2012 = 100

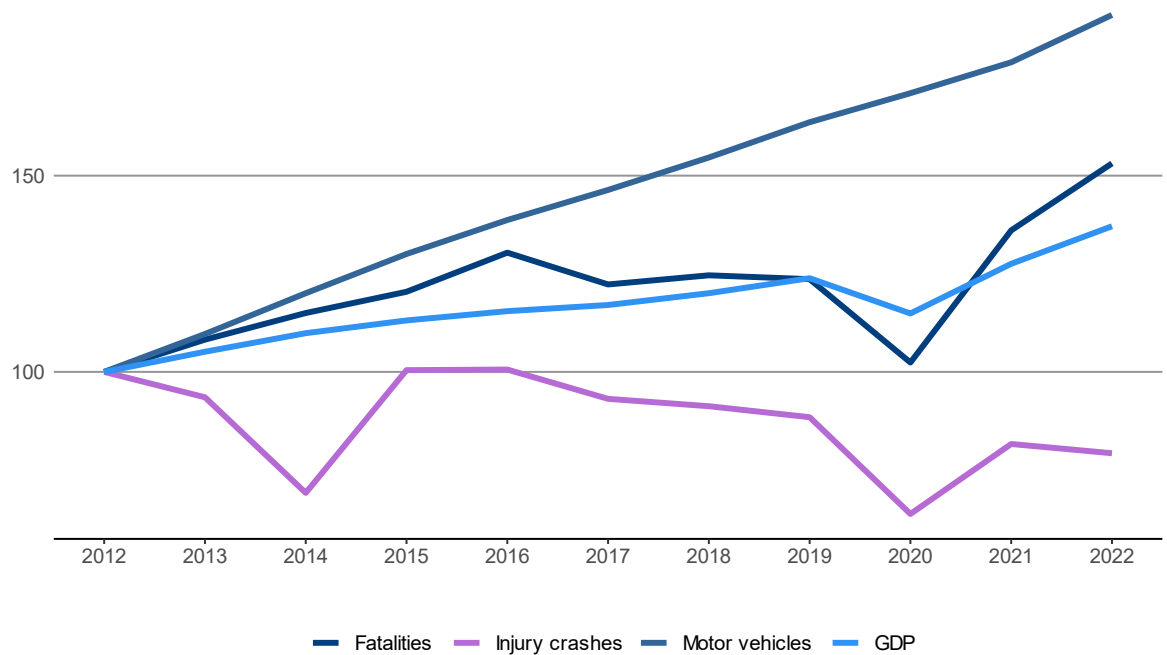
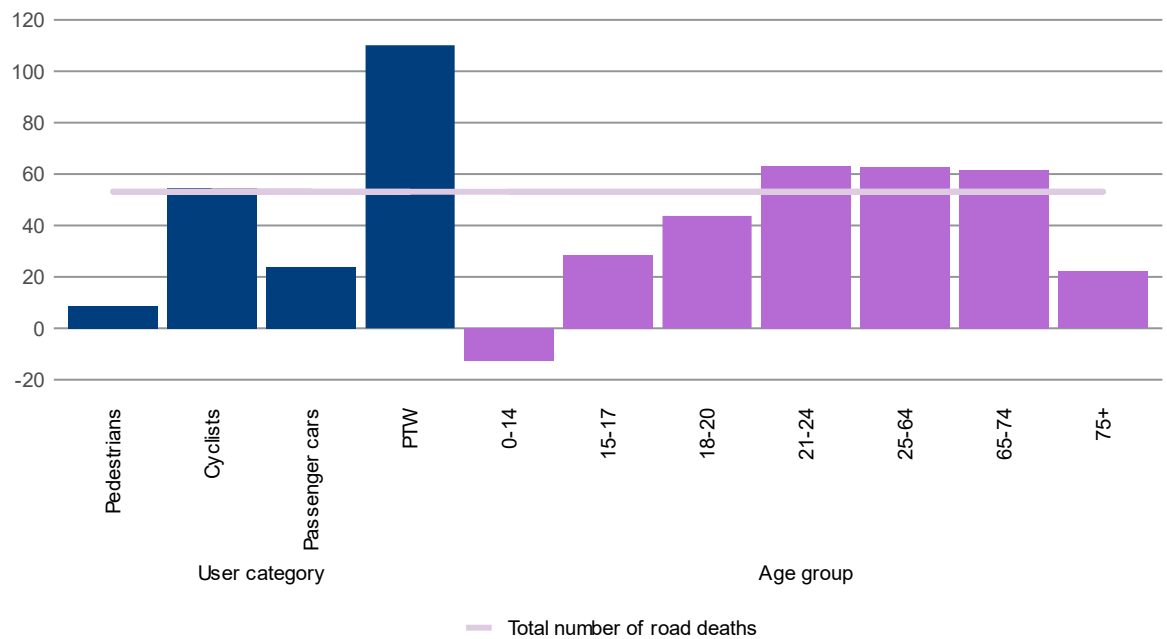


Figure 8. Evolution of road fatalities in Colombia by user category and age group, 2012-2022



Safety performance indicators

Speed

Inappropriate speed is one of the leading causes of road crashes. In Colombia, inappropriate speed contributed to 37% of all road fatalities in 2022. However, it should be noted that for 68% of road fatalities, the cause of the crash is not identified.

A major law was adopted in 2022 to reduce the speed limit in the country's urban areas from 60 km/h to 50 km/h (Law 2251 of 2022).

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

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

General speed limit	
Urban roads	50 km/h
Rural roads	90 km/h
Motorways	120 km/h

Drink driving

Driving under the influence of alcohol is another major cause of road crashes in Colombia, as in most IRTAD countries. According to police reports, 167 persons were killed in an alcohol-related crash, representing 7.7% of all road deaths in 2022, with available information on the cause of the crash. This figure is probably largely underreported. In a 2017 report prepared by the IRTAD Group, it was found that, on average, in IRTAD countries, 21.6% of road deaths were alcohol-related¹.

The general maximum authorised blood alcohol content (BAC) in Colombia is 0.2 g/l for all drivers.

The most recent measure to combat impaired driving was introducing a new law in 2013. The primary purpose of this law was to increase the fine for drinking and driving. In practical terms, before 2013, the maximum fine was approximately USD 740. Today, the fine can be as high as USD 11 800.

Drugs and driving

Drugs and driving are a worrying concern in Colombia. However, there is not yet data on the prevalence of drugs in road crashes.

¹ ITF (2017), *Alcohol-Related Road Casualties in Official Crash Statistics*, <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/alcohol-related-road-casualties-official-crash-statistics.pdf>

Use of mobile phones while driving

An increasing problem for traffic safety in Colombia is distraction, for instance, through mobile phone use while driving or crossing a street. However, no official statistics exist on the prevalence of distraction in crashes. In 2022, the National Road Safety Agency survey showed that 8.1% of drivers use a mobile phone while driving.

Driving with a hand-held mobile phone is forbidden, but using hands-free mobile phones is tolerated.

Sleepiness and fatigue

There is no data on the prevalence of sleepiness and fatigue as causal factors in crashes. However, it is recognised as an important issue.

Seat belt and helmet use

Wearing a seat belt in front and rear seats has been compulsory in Colombia since 2002. Regarding rear seats, the law stipulates that seatbelt use is only mandatory for vehicles manufactured after 2004. Children under ten must be seated in the back and adequately restrained, considering their weight and height.

In 2022, an observation study showed that 67% of drivers and 49% of front seat passengers wore their seatbelt.

The wearing rate in rear seats is very low, estimated at 2% in 2016.

For motorcyclists, helmet wearing is the most effective passive safety habit. In Colombia, helmets have been compulsory on all powered two-wheelers since 2004. In 2022, 79% of motorcycle drivers and 53% of motorcycle passengers wore helmets.

Bicycle helmets are compulsory for children (under 18 years) and in case of sporting events or professional training on public roads. However, it is not enforced.

Table 4. Seat belt and helmet wearing rates in Colombia, 2022

Percentages

Front-seats		
	Drivers	67
	Passengers	49
Rear-seats		
	General	2
	Children (use of child restraint)	11
Helmets		
	Driver	79
	Passenger	53
	Pedal cyclists	22

Cost of road crashes

According to a study by the insurance sector², the cost of road crashes amounted to USD 767 million (0.2% of GDP) in 2016. This estimate is probably in a very low range, and Colombia is currently working on an updated estimate of the costs of road crashes.

Road safety management and strategy

History of road safety

The number of road deaths has been recorded systematically since 1998. Since then, the number of road deaths has increased almost every year, except in 2017 and 2020, when the number of road deaths fell significantly in the context of the covid 19 pandemic and its impacts on mobility. Road deaths peaked in 2022, with 8 030 reported road deaths. One of Colombia's main challenges is the explosion of the motor vehicle fleet, which concerns the passenger car fleet and, even more so, the motorcycle fleet. Between 2010 and 2022, the number of motorcycles has more than doubled, and the number of cars has increased by 58%. In urban areas, this is partly due to the lack of adequate and accessible public transport systems and heavy traffic in big cities, which tend to encourage private motorcycles, considered cheaper and faster. This raises considerable challenges in traffic management, infrastructure maintenance and road safety.

Key road safety measures include:

² Fasecolda (2018). Costos de la accidentalidad vial en Colombia. <https://www.fasecolda.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/costos-de-la-accidentalidad-vial-en-colombia-2018.pdf>

- 1993: creation of the "Fondo de Prevencion Vial" or Road Prevention Fund, the first governmental body dedicated to road safety.
- 1993: creation of the Seguro Obligatorio de Accidentes de Transito (SOAT) or Mandatory Traffic Accident Insurance, the primary source of funding for road safety;
- 2002: adoption of the National Transit Code (769 Law of 2002).
- 2012: adoption of the first national road safety plan, 2011-16 (PNSV).
- 2013: adoption of the second version of the National Road Safety Plan 2011-21.
- 2013: creation of the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV), which replaced the Road Prevention Fund.
- 2013: adoption of the Drink Driving Law 1696.
- 2022: adoption of 2251 Law – Guidelines to formulate, implement and evaluate National Road Safety Policy under the Safe System approach. It includes a reduction of the speed limit in urban areas from 60 km/h to 50 km/h.
- 2022: adoption of the second national road safety plan, 2022-2031.

Governance of road safety

Colombia's responsibility for road safety lies with the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV). The Agency was officially created in 2013, but it became operational only in December 2016 due to the difficulty of providing the administrative, legal and fiscal procedures required for the entire operation of the Agency.

The Agency is attached to the Ministry of Transport but is financially autonomous. Its primary mission is to prevent and reduce traffic crashes (1702 Law of 2013, Article 2). The Agency coordinates public and private organisations committed to road safety and implements the government's road safety action plan.

National road safety strategy

Colombian national road safety strategy was laid down in the Road Safety Strategy 2011-21. The strategy was based on the main target to reduce by 26% the number of road deaths between 2011 and 2021, which was not met.

The new 2022-2031 strategy was adopted in July 2022 by the National Road Safety Agency and the Ministry of Transport. It officially adopted the Safe System approach. The strategy will focus on eight areas:

- Promote safe speeds,
- Move towards safe vehicle technologies for new vehicles and increase the safety conditions of vehicles currently in operation,
- Protect road users' lives through the design, construction, improvement, conservation, and operation of road infrastructure,

- Encourage safe behaviour by road users,
- Raise compliance with traffic regulations,
- Strengthen the public policy of comprehensive care, recovery, rehabilitation, and support for victims of road crashes,
- Implement governance principles and strengthen the implementation of territorial public policies for road safety management under the Safe System approach,
- Consolidate a knowledge management system on road crashes as the basis for defining, planning, and executing road safety policies and priorities.

Latest road safety measures

In 2023, Colombia acceded to the UN 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles.

In 2022, the speed limit in urban areas was reduced from 60 km/h to 50 km/h.

In 2022, a new regulation was adopted to improve safety in vehicles and motorcycles (braking system, tires, restraint system).

A national standard for motorcycle helmets was introduced in March 2019 to improve the quality of the helmet. The standard was further updated in November 2020 and February 2023.

A regulation on advertisement for vehicle sales was introduced in September 2019 to include icons concerning the safety features of the vehicles.

Since 2018, the National Road Safety Agency has been working on programmes to improve local infrastructure. The main objectives are to implement efficient interventions at critical points to reduce the number of crashes and to calm traffic down.

Local committees and territorial councils for road safety have been established through the National Road Safety Agency to implement the concept of shared responsibility and involve the local authorities.

A wide range of communications campaigns has been conducted focusing on drinking and driving, speeding, using helmets and road user interactions. Also, training programs that focus on vulnerable road users have been implemented.

Research and resources

Publications

ANSV (2023), Reincidencia en Siniestralidad Vial: análisis de factores asociados con la probabilidad de que un conductor reincida en Siniestros Viales (*Recidivism in road crashes: analysis of factors associated with recidivism*).

ANSV (2022), El control operativo y la fatalidad Vial en Colombia (*Enforcement and road deaths in Colombia*).

ANSV (2022), Siniestralidad vial en Colombia: Diferencias entre hombres y mujeres (*Road crashes in Colombia: differences between men and women*).

ANSV (2022), Informe novedades en Colombia incidencia en Siniestralidad Vial (*New report on the incidence of road crashes*).

ANSV (2022), Anuario Nacional de Siniestralidad Vial (*National report on road safety*).

These publications are available at <https://ansv.gov.co/observatorio/publicaciones>.

Fasecolda (2018), Costos de la accidentalidad vial en Colombia, <https://www.fasecolda.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/costos-de-la-accidentalidad-vial-en-colombia-2018.pdf>

Websites

National Road Safety Agency: <https://ansv.gov.co/>

National Road Safety Observatory: <https://ansv.gov.co/observatorio/?op=Home>

Ministry of Transport: <https://www.mintransporte.gov.co/>

Definition, methodology, data collection

Term	Definition
Road death	A person who dies 30 days following injuries caused by a road crash.
Person seriously injured	Serious injuries occur when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The victim stays at least 24 hours in a hospital under treatment or• The victim cannot work for three or more days or• As a result of the crash, the victim has a disability. There is, however, no data on serious injuries yet.

In Colombia, the National Road Safety Agency published national crash statistics through its National Road Safety Observatory.

The statistics from the Agency come from three administrative records:

- the violent death registry
- the injured person registry
- the traffic crash registry.

The first two registries are administered by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, and the third is administered separately by the Ministry of Transport.

The information contained in the violent death registry and the injured person registry is collected by the medical forensic personnel. The national and local traffic police collect data in the traffic crash registry throughout the country. All these data are sent to the National Road Safety Observatory for processing, analysis and publication.

Data from Colombia were reviewed by DGT/Spain in 2019 and validated for inclusion in the IRTAD database.

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

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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

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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.

Read more country profiles online:

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

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