



POLAND

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In 2020, 2 491 people were killed in road crashes in Poland, a decrease of 14.4% compared to 2019. Pedestrians still represent a relatively high share (25%) of road deaths. The safety of elderly citizens is of growing concern. The 65-74 age group is the one that has seen the smallest decrease with only a 6% reduction in the number of fatalities between 2010 and 2020. The 2013-2020 National Road Safety Programme targets included a 50% reduction in road deaths and a 40% reduction in people seriously injured by 2020 (compared to 2010 levels). These targets were not achieved. In 2020, the decline in traffic volumes due to the lockdowns related to the Covid-19 pandemic significantly reduced the number of crashes, especially from March to June and from October to December. The most significant reduction in crashes (-52%) was registered in April 2020. However, while in 2020 the number of crashes decreased by 22% compared to 2019, road fatalities and seriously injured only reduced by 14% and 17%, respectively. This means that crashes were more dangerous, mainly due to excessive speed. The new 2021-2030 National Road Safety Programme aims to reduce fatalities and seriously injured by 50% by 2030 (maximum of 1 455 deaths and 5 317 seriously injured by 2030). This target is on the way to achieving vision zero.

Road safety management and strategy

Since 1991, when the peak in the number of fatalities was reached, the following legislation and policies were implemented in Poland:

- compulsory seat belt wearing for all car occupants (1991)
- demerit point system (1998)
- compulsory use of child restraints (1998)
- appointment of the National Road Safety Council (2002)
- 50 km/h speed limit in built-up areas (2004)
- daytime running lights (2007)
- speed enforcement (including automatic speed enforcement) (2011)
- implementation of the EU directive on road safety management (2012)

Poland: Quick facts

Population: 38 million

GDP per capita: USD 15 653

Road network: 430 267 km

- urban roads: 16%
- rural roads: 83%
- motorways: 0.4%

Registered motor vehicles: 32.9 million

- cars: 80%
- goods vehicles: 11%
- motorcycles: 5%

Speed limits:

- urban roads: 50 km/h
- rural roads: 90/100/120 km/h
- motorways: 140 km/h

Limits on Blood Alcohol Content: 0.2 g/l

Road fatalities: 2 491

- pedestrians: 25%
- cyclists: 10%
- car occupants: 47%
- moped riders and motorcyclists: 13%
- other: 5%

Road fatalities per 100 000 population: 6.6

Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles: 0.8

Cost of road crashes: 2.1% of GDP

All data 2020 unless otherwise stated.

- changes in the driver education system (2013)
- increased severity of penalties for speeding (2015)
- severe penalties for drunk driving (2015)
- development of the National Road Safety Programme 2013-2020.

Responsibility for the organisation of road safety in Poland lies with the National Road Safety Council (NRSC, *Krajowa Rada Bezpieczeństwa Ruchu Drogowego*). It was established on 1 January 2002 under the Act of Road Traffic Law as an auxiliary interministerial body for the Polish Council of Ministers for road safety issues. The NRSC is chaired by the minister responsible for transport. The members of the NRSC are high-level representatives of several ministries and governmental institutions. The executive unit is the NRSC Secretariat, based in the Ministry of Infrastructure. The NRSC establishes targets and coordinates the activities of government administrations in the area of road safety.

In January 2013, the NRSC adopted a National Road Safety Programme for 2013-20, developed by the NRSC Secretariat and experts from government bodies. It is based on the Vision Zero approach.

The 2013-20 programme targets included a 50% reduction in road deaths and a 40% reduction in people seriously injured by 2020 compared to 2010 levels. The targets were not met. The new 2021-2030 National Road Safety Programme aims to reduce fatalities and seriously injured by 50% by 2030 (maximum of 1 455 fatalities and 5 317 seriously injured by 2030). This is a target on the way to achieving vision zero. There are specific targets for vulnerable road users and crashes under the influence of alcohol.

There is no specific funding for the strategy. However, one of the objectives of the National Road Safety Programme 2021-2030 is to create a funding system for road safety activities. Currently, each stakeholder finances the actions they implement from their financial funds, which usually come from the state budget.

The National Road Safety Council is in charge of monitoring road safety performance. Collective documents will describe the progress of the programme implementation and the level of the achieved results. There will be annual reports and three-year interim reports.

Latest road safety measures

In 2021, new provisions of the highway code came into force, standardising the speed limit in built-up areas to 50 km/h and increasing the scope of protection for pedestrians in pedestrian crossing areas. The new regulation also prohibits pedestrians from using mobile phones and other electronic devices that can cause a distraction while crossing roads.

In 2021, legal regulation of the safe distance between vehicles on motorways and expressways was introduced.

Regulations were introduced in 2021 concerning the legal status of electrically powered personal devices and personal transport devices (other than bicycles) intended for use on public roads. The law establishes pedestrians' priority over the driver of an e-scooters or personal transport device moving on the footpath. Drivers of these vehicles must give way to pedestrians and not obstruct their movement.

Costs of road crashes

Costs of traffic crashes are calculated based on the capital approach. Traffic crashes represent a high cost for society, estimated at around EUR 9.8 billion (2.1% of GDP) in 2018.

Safety performance indicators

Speed

Inappropriate speed is one of the leading causes of road crashes. In the last ten years, the number of fatal crashes involving speeding has decreased by 50%. However, speed remains one of the leading causes of crashes in Poland and contributes to 42% of fatalities, based on data from 2020.

Speed enforcement efforts are constantly increasing and new regulations regarding automatic speed enforcement are being introduced into Polish law. Drivers who exceed the speed limit by 50 km/h in a built-up area have their driving licence automatically withdrawn for three months. Poland continues to equip its roadways with automatic speed cameras.

Drink-driving

The maximum authorised blood alcohol content (BAC) in Poland is 0.2 g/l for all drivers. Crashes are classified as alcohol-related if one of the crash participants has a BAC of 0.2 g/l or more.

Over the last ten years, the number of crashes caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol has decreased by 33%. According to police data, in 2020, 13.1% of traffic fatalities were alcohol-related. In 2020, the number of alcohol-related crashes decreased by 6.5% over 2019.

Drugs and driving

In Poland, driving under the influence of psychoactive substances is forbidden.

According to the European DRUID (Driving under the Influence of Drugs, Alcohol and Medicines) research project, the prevalence of alcohol in the driving population of Poland

(1.9%) is lower than the EU average of 3.5%. The research indicated that the prevalence of illegal drugs in the EU is 1.9%, while it is 0.7% in Poland.

Use of mobile phones while driving

The use of hand-held mobile phones while driving is forbidden in Poland, while hands-free phones are allowed. According to a national survey undertaken in 2016, around 4% of drivers in passenger cars use hand-held mobile phones.

Seat belt and helmet use

Seat belt use has been compulsory in front seats since 1983 and rear seats since 1991.

According to the law in force since 2015, a child up to 150 cm in height must be transported in a child seat (age is irrelevant in this case). Children taller than 135 cm and weighing more than 36 kg (the maximum weight permitted by the seats currently on offer) can travel in the rear seat and must be fastened with seat belts. If only two child seats fit in the rear seat, the regulations allow a third child aged three years or more to be carried between them. They must be fastened with seat belts. You can also have a child in a rearward-facing front seat if the passenger airbag is deactivated in the car.

Helmet wearing has been compulsory on motorcycles and mopeds since 1997. The helmet-wearing rate by riders of powered two-wheelers is nearly 100%.

Helmet use is not compulsory for bicycles.

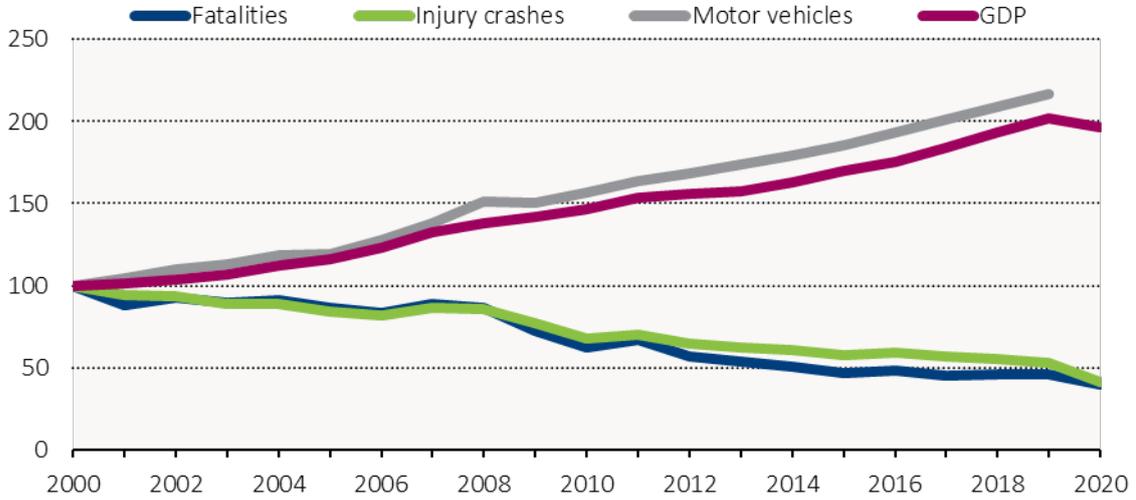
Road safety data for Poland at a glance

Long-term road safety trends for Poland

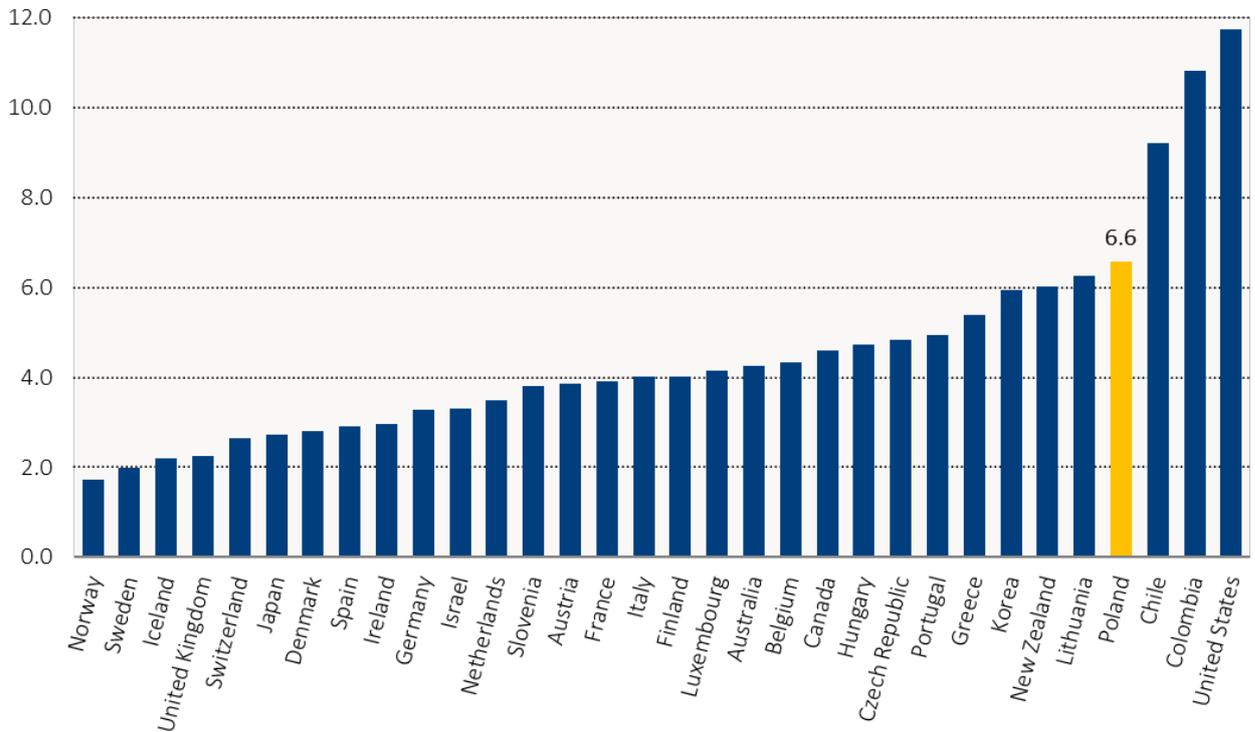
	1990	2000	2010	2018	2019	2020	2020 % change over			
							2019	2010	2000	1990
Reported safety data										
Fatalities	7 333	6 294	3 908	2 862	2 909	2 491	-14.4	-36.3	-60.4	-66.0
Injury crashes	50 532	57 331	38 832	31 674	30 288	23 540	-22.3	-39.4	-58.9	-53.4
Deaths per 100 000 population	19.3	16.4	10.2	7.5	7.7	6.6	-14.3	-35.9	-60.1	-66.0
Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles	8.1	4.5	1.8	1.0	1.0	0.8	-20.3	-57.2	-83.0	-90.7
Deaths per billion vehicle kilometres	..	..	19.6	11.7	11.7	..	..	..	..	..
Fatalities by road user										
Pedestrians	2 977	2 256	1 236	803	793	631	-20.4	-48.9	-72.0	-78.8
Cyclists	574	692	280	285	258	249	-3.5	-11.1	-64.0	-56.6
Moped riders	288	75	83	76	87	71	-18.4	-14.5	-5.3	-75.3
Motorcyclists	749	178	259	238	295	244	-17.3	-5.8	37.1	-67.4
Passenger car occupants	2 237	2 709	1 853	1 291	1 333	1 162	-12.8	-37.3	-57.1	-48.1
Other road users	508	384	197	169	143	134	-6.3	-32.0	-65.1	-73.6
Fatalities by age group										
0-14 years	471	267	112	56	68	44	-35.3	-60.7	-83.5	-90.7
15-17 years	223	245	122	64	50	52	4.0	-57.4	-78.8	-76.7
18-20 years	455	443	280	172	167	154	-7.8	-45.0	-65.2	-66.2
21-24 years	636	583	392	203	216	220	1.9	-43.9	-62.3	-65.4
25-64 years	4 493	3 751	2 293	1 657	1 732	1 472	-15.0	-35.8	-60.8	-67.2
65-74 years	..	575	331	350	337	311	-7.7	-6.0	-45.9	..
≥ 75 years	..	420	345	349	327	234	-28.4	-32.2	-44.3	..
Fatalities by road type										
Urban roads	4 348	2 880	1 813	1 251	1 177	1 084	-7.9	-40.2	-62.4	-75.1
Rural roads	2 960	3 369	2 058	1 559	1 662	1 351	-18.7	-34.4	-59.9	-54.4
Motorways	25	45	37	52	70	56	-20.0	51.4	24.4	124.0
Traffic data										
Vehicle kilometres (millions)	..	..	199 303	244 702	249 620	..	..	..	..	..
Registered vehicles (thousands)	..	..	23 037	30 801	31 989	32 900	2.8	42.8	..	..
Registered vehicles per 1 000 population	..	..	603.6	811.1	842.4	866.7	2.9	43.6	..	..

Evolution of road fatalities, injury crashes, motorisation and GDP in Poland, 2000-20

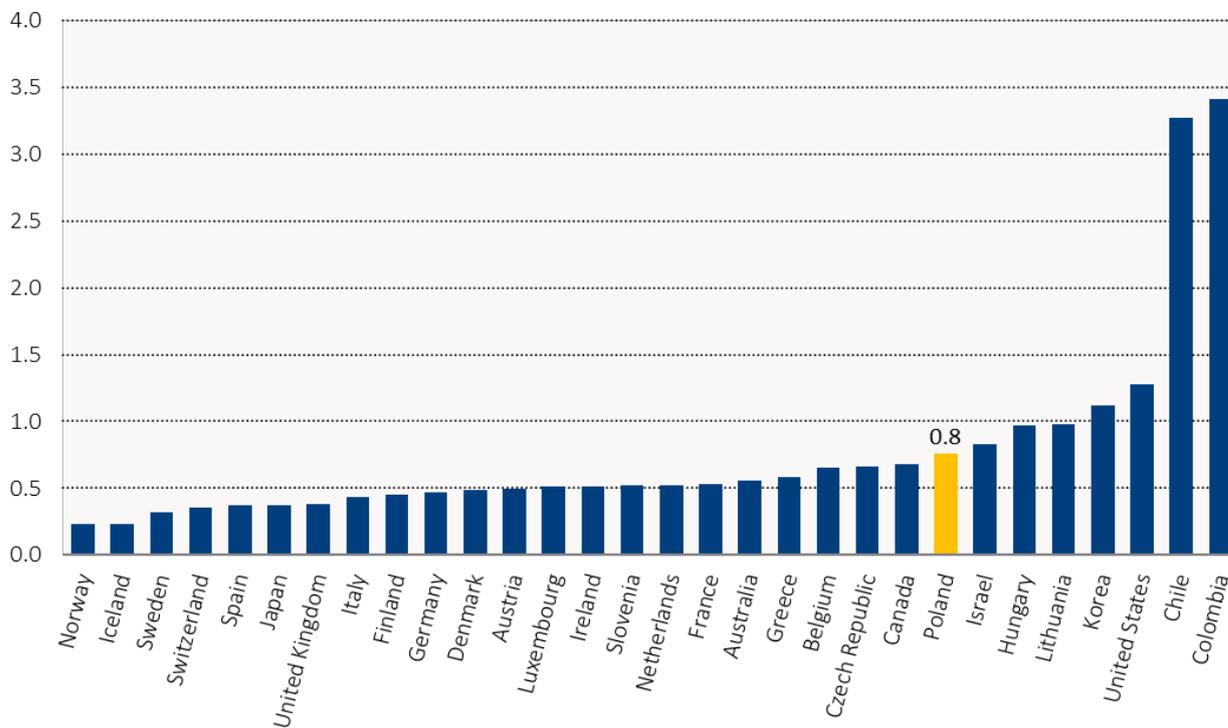
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Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in Poland in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020

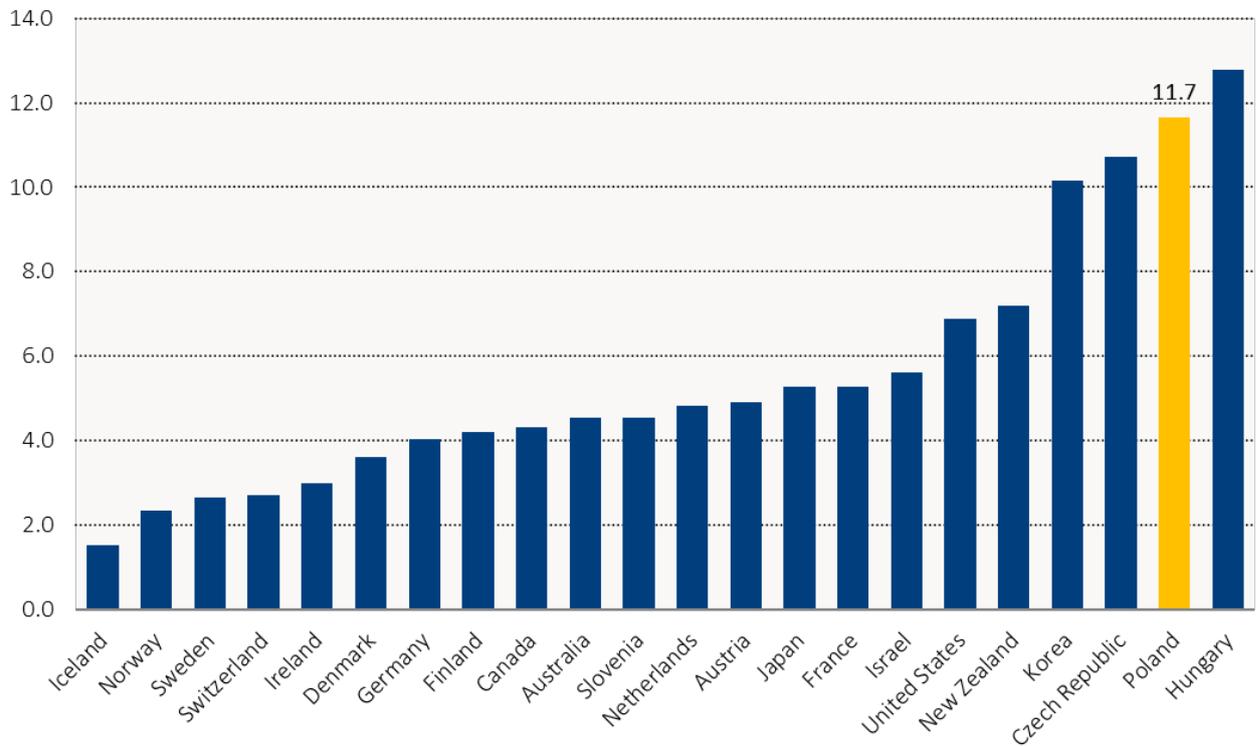


Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles in Poland in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020

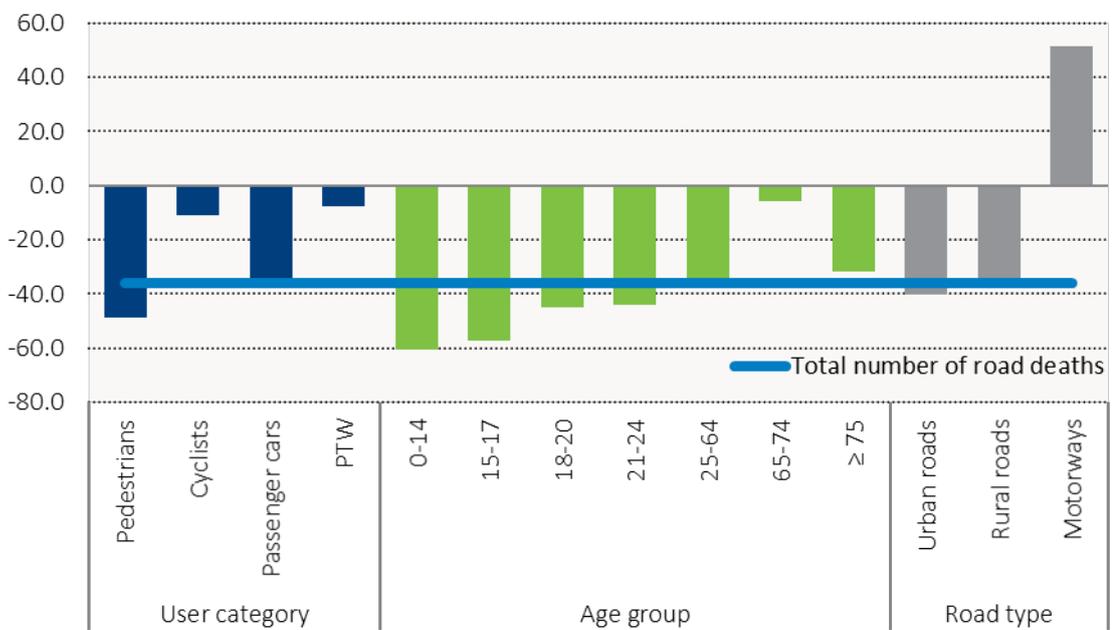


Note: in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Hungary registered vehicles do not include mopeds.

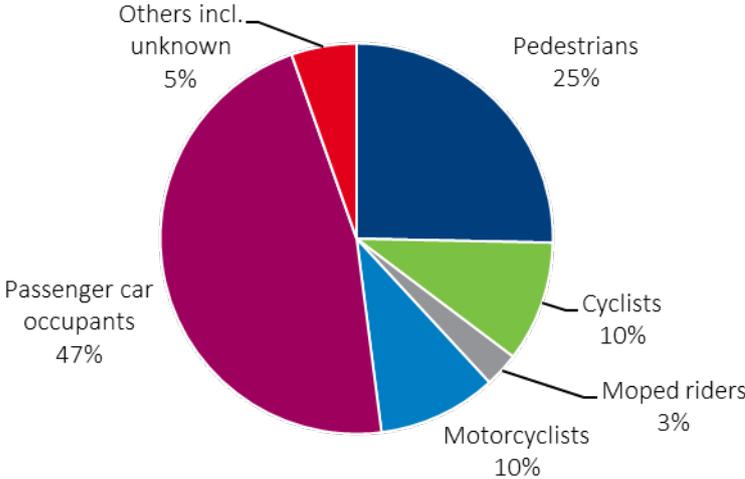
Road fatalities per billion vehicle-kilometres in Poland in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2019



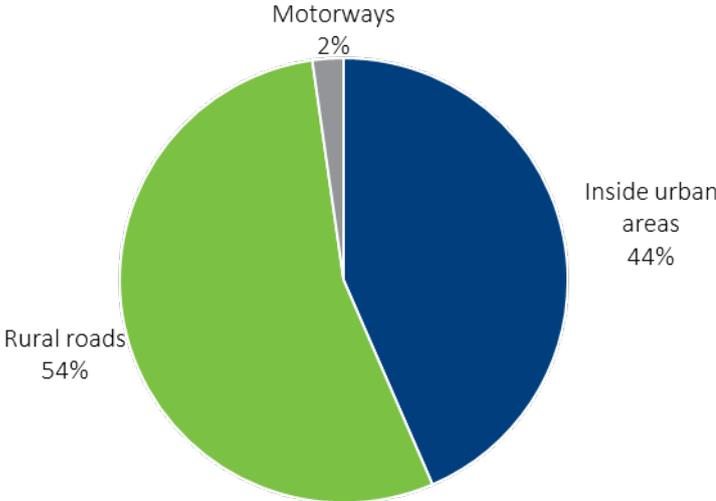
Evolution of road fatalities in Poland by user category, age group and road type, 2010-20



Road fatalities in Poland by user category, 2020

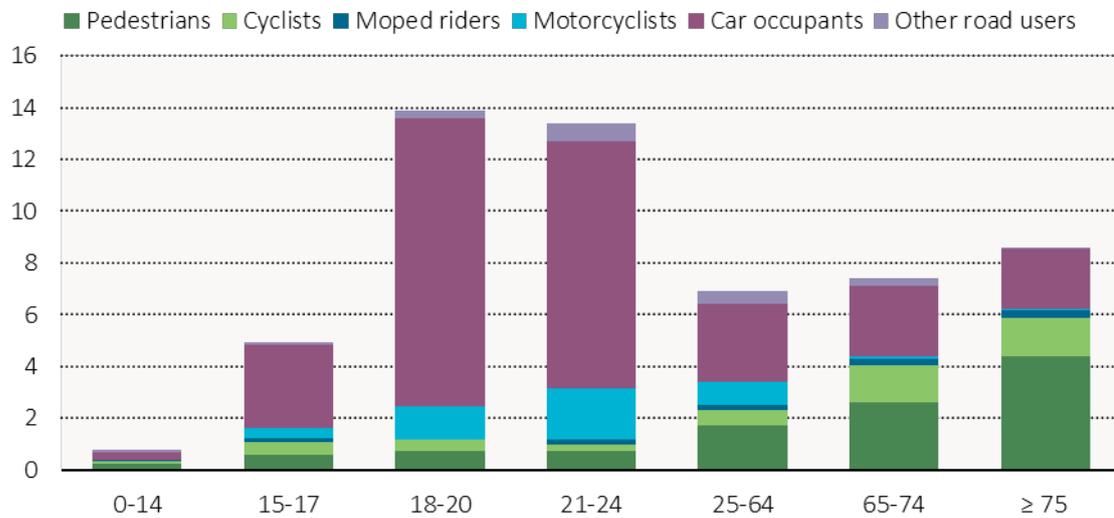


Road fatalities in Poland by road type, 2020



Road fatality rate in Poland by user category and age group, 2020

Rate per 100 000 population in the same age group

**Cost of road crashes in Poland, 2018**

	Unit Cost (PLN)	Total (PLN)
Fatalities	2.4 million	6.85 million
Injured		37.48 billion
Serious injuries	3.31 million	
Slight injuries	48 165	
Property damage costs	26 736	
Total		44.9 billion
Total as % of GDP		2.1

Seat belt wearing rates

Percentages

	2014	2017	2020
Front seats			
Driver	93	94	97
Passenger	94	95	98
Urban roads (driver)	92	..	97
Rural roads (driver)	92	..	96
Motorways (driver)	96	..	..
Rear seats			
General	71	79	85
Children (use of child restraint)	89	93	..

Research and resources

Publications

The staff of the Motor Transport Institute cooperated in the BASELINE project to develop methodological guidelines for key performance indicators (KPIs) in road safety on helmet use by cyclists and powered two-wheelers (PTW) and distraction. The BASELINE project aims to assist participating Member States' authorities in collecting and harmonising reporting of these KPIs. The outcomes of this project will be used to set future European targets and goals on road safety based on the KPIs. The guidelines and detailed information on the BASELINE project are available at <https://www.baseline.vias.be/en/publications/methodological-guidelines-kpi/>.

The following reports were prepared at the Motor Transport Institute as part of the ESRA initiative:

- *Pedestrians. ESRA2 Thematic report Nr. 10*: describes the frequency of walking, feeling of safety, the self-declared risky behaviour in traffic, self-declared accident involvement, and support for road safety policy measures. It includes comparisons amongst the participating countries and results about age and gender.
- *Cyclists. ESRA2 Thematic report Nr. 11*: describes the frequency with which people use a bicycle (electric or not), self-declared behaviours, safety perception while using a bicycle and support for policy measures aimed at cyclists. It includes comparisons across the participating countries and between age groups and genders at the regional level.

Both of the above reports are based on the second edition of the global survey, conducted in 2018. This survey collected data from more than 35 000 road users across 32 countries.

ESRA (E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes) is a joint initiative of road safety institutes worldwide. The aim is to collect and analyse comparable data on road safety performance. The ESRA data are used as a basis for a large set of road safety indicators. These provide scientific evidence for policy making at national and international levels. An overview of the ESRA initiative and the project results is available on: www.esranet.eu.

Websites

Ministry of Infrastructure: <https://www.gov.pl/web/infrastruktura>.

National Road Safety Council (KRBRD): <http://www.krbrd.gov.pl/>.

Motor Transport Institute: <https://www.its.waw.pl/en.html>.

Polish Road Safety Observatory: <http://www.obserwatoriumbrd.pl/en/>.

Definition, methodology, data collection

- Road fatality: a person who died immediately or within 30 days of the crash.
- Seriously injured person: a person who sustains a serious disability, an incurable disease or chronic life-threatening disease, a permanent mental disorder, complete or substantial permanent incapacity to work in their current occupation, or permanent or significant scarring or disfiguration of the body. The definition also includes persons who suffer other injuries that incapacitate them or cause health problems longer than seven days.

Poland does not yet rate serious injuries as having a score of three or more on the Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS3+).

- Slightly injured person: a person who experiences a loss of health at a lesser level than in the case of serious injuries and that continues for less than seven days.
- Injury crash: crash resulting in at least one injured or killed person.

The foundational source of road crash data is the police database, which was set up in 1975 under the responsibility of the police's Department of Road Traffic.

Police officers gather information according to categories included in the Road Accident Card (such as the description of the crash site, circumstances of the crash, the behaviour of participants, type of injuries, etc.). Guidelines and definitions are described in the Head Chief of Police Regulation No. 31 of 22 October 2015 (with the modifications included in Regulation No. 37 of 30 October 2015, Regulation No. 40 of 18 December 2017 and Regulation No. 38 of 15 December 2021).

In 2012, the Motor Transport Institute reviewed the police crash database and compared data from 2008-10 with public statistics from national health services and the national statistics office. The result was that the number of people killed in road crashes could be 3-25% higher than official police data. This pilot study showed the need for further investigation.

Since 2014, the Polish Road Safety Observatory has been established at the Motor Transport Institute, which collects, analyses and publicises data on road safety. The IT system of the Observatory has two parts: a data warehouse and an information portal <http://www.obserwatoriumbrd.pl/en/> with an interactive map with public access to some data <http://www.obserwatoriumbrd.pl/app/?lang=en>.