

Drivers

ROAD SAFETY FACTSHEETS / ALL ROAD USERS

Aug 2026



Why driver safety matters

Drivers account for almost half of all road deaths in Australia. The "Fatal Five" (speed, drink/drug driving, fatigue, distraction, and seatbelt/helmet) are contributing factors in the vast majority of serious and fatal crashes.

Drivers have a legal and moral duty of care to all other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

Who is a driver?

A driver is anyone operating a motor vehicle on a public road, including cars, vans, utes and four-wheel drives. Drivers account for the largest proportion of road users and have the greatest responsibility for managing speed, attention, and the safety of those around them.

Who is most at risk?



Young drivers (17–25)

Young males aged 17–25 have the highest per capita road death rate in Australia. Inexperience, risk-taking behaviour, and overconfidence are key factors.



Fatigued & impaired drivers

Fatigue is estimated to contribute to 20–30% of all crashes. Alcohol and drug impairment are among the most preventable causes of road death.

Driver safety tips

- 1 Obey speed limits and drive according to the conditions.** Speed is the number one cause of crashes. Reduce speed in wet weather, near schools, and in shared zones.
- 2 Never use your phone while driving.** Using a handheld phone increases crash risk by up to four times. Even hands-free use is a significant distraction.
- 3 Never drive fatigued.** Stop, rest, and take a break every two hours on long trips. Fatigue contributes to an estimated 20–30% of all road crashes in Australia.
- 4 Always wear your seatbelt** and ensure all passengers are buckled before moving, including rear seat passengers, who are often overlooked.
- 5 Never drive under the influence** of alcohol or drugs. Impairment significantly reduces reaction time, judgment, and vehicle control.
- 6 Slow down near schools, crossings and shared zones.** Reduced speed limits in these areas exist to protect children and vulnerable road users.
- 7 Check mirrors and blind spots** before changing lanes or turning. Always give cyclists and motorcyclists at least 1.5 metres when overtaking.

Risk factors for driver crashes



Vehicle speed



Distraction



Fatigue



Alcohol & drugs



Not wearing seatbelt



Road conditions

Driver safety statistics

In the 12 months to June 2026

- 1,325 people were killed on Australian roads
- The majority of fatal crashes occurred in 100 km/h zones: 327 deaths, 26.6% of all fatal crashes. Followed by 60–75 km/h zones: 277 deaths.
- The most concerning trend is in lower-speed zones. Deaths in 50 km/h zones increased by 25.6%, from 129 to 162, and deaths in zones of 40 km/h and under increased by 36.7%, from 30 to 41. This suggests that while high-speed road fatalities are declining, crashes in suburban and urban environments are becoming an increasing concern.