

# Traffic Injury Prevention Overview: Target Zero

## King County, Washington

### King County Target Zero Coalition:

The [King County Target Zero Traffic Safety Coalition](#) is a group of organizations and community partners who work together to plan and implement programs to reduce injuries and deaths and increase safety. It was formed by Public Health—Seattle & King County (PHSKC) in 1998, is now co-led by the City of Kent and PHSKC, and is part of the state-wide Target Zero program.

This program, administered by the [Washington Traffic Safety Commission](#), aims to reduce the number of serious injuries and fatalities on Washington roadways to zero by 2030 for all walkers, rollers, drivers, and all road users.

The King County Target Zero program uses several methods to promote community safety:

- **Coordinate Traffic Safety Planning:** Develop and implement traffic safety programs across the county based on a community-developed strategic plan that follows the [Safe System Approach-USDOT](#). This highlights collaboration efforts and federal, state, and local funding utilization.
- **Education and Communication:** Promote positive traffic safety behaviors through multilingual education campaigns using a [positive culture framework](#).
- **Data Analysis:** Collect and analyze data to guide traffic safety programs.
- **Public Policy Support:** Review and discuss local, regional, and national traffic safety initiatives.
- **Signage Installation:** Place signs along key roadways to support walker and roller safety.
- **Innovative Technology:** Test new technology that gives drivers immediate feedback to encourage focused driving, seatbelt use, and reduced speeds.
- **High-Visibility Enforcement & Education:** Work with over 30 law enforcement agencies and communities to reduce impaired driving, distracted driving, speeding, unrestrained driving, and to promote motorcycle safety through an equity-informed framework.

### Fatalities and Serious Injuries, King County 2024

Fatalities and serious injuries in King County and Washington State reached their highest levels in 2023 and while starting to trend downward, are not at pre-pandemic levels. [Data from [Washington Traffic Safety Commission \(WTSC\)](#) & [Washington State Department of Transportation \(WSDOT\)](#)]

#### 2024 Data for King County:

- 153 fatalities; 141 fatal motor vehicle crashes (42% increase since 2015)
- 876 suspected serious injuries; 752 suspected serious injury collisions (51% increase since 2015)

#### Most Alarming Increases in Fatalities Involving (between 2015 and 2024):

- Walkers and bicyclists (68% increase)
- Alcohol and/or drug impairment (55% increase)
- Speeding (35% increase)



### Top 5 Contributing Factors of Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injury Crashes, King County 2024

Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities	Serious Motor Vehicle Injuries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impaired Driving</li><li>• Walkers and Bicyclists</li><li>• Lane Departures</li><li>• Speeding</li><li>• Young Drivers 15-24 yrs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intersection Related</li><li>• Motor Vehicle Drivers Age 16-25 yrs</li><li>• Lane Departure</li><li>• Distracted Drivers</li><li>• Speeding Drivers</li></ul>

Source: [King County Target Zero Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)

The rate of traffic-related fatalities in King County remains elevated, increasing from 5.1 per 100,000 in 2015 to 5.7 per 100,000 in 2024. Additionally, the economic burden of fatalities, injuries, and congestion in King County is up to \$6.4 billion annually. [WSDOT, estimate for 2024 in current dollars]

## Race and Ethnicity

Traffic-related impacts are not equitable across race and ethnicity in our county. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, and Hispanic populations are overrepresented in traffic fatalities. [\[WTSC\]](#)

**In a 2024 Self-Reported Survey of 1,755 King County Residents:** [\[WTSC Statewide Survey of Washington Drivers\]](#)

### Contributing Behavioral Causes to Unsafe Driving:

- 80% of drivers report speeding 10+ MPH over the speed limit
- 5% of drivers drive after consuming alcohol
- 3% of drivers drive after cannabis use
- 38% reported holding and talking on a phone while driving
- 6% reported receiving at least one citation in the past year for not using a seatbelt

### Top 5 Roadways in King County with the Most Fatal Crashes:

Rank	Roadways in King County with the most fatal crashes	Roadways in King County with the most pedestrian fatal crashes
1	I-5	SR-99
2	SR-99	I-5
3	SR-167/Rainier Ave S	SR-167/Rainier Ave S
4	I-90	SR-509
5	SR-18	SR-900/MLK Jr. Way S

### Bike and Scooter Helmet Use in King County:

Helmet use among King County riders was assessed in 2023 through an observational survey:

- 87% of bicycle riders wore a helmet (compared to 85% in 2022).
- Helmet use was much lower among riders of ride-share bicycles (7%) and ride-share scooters (6%) compared to riders of personal bikes (91%) and scooters (54%).
- There was a significant observed decrease in the number of individuals wearing a helmet on a ride-share bicycle between 2022 and 2023 (45% and 7%).

## Contact

Violence & Injury Prevention Unit, Public Health – Seattle & King County at [trafficsafety@kingcounty.gov](mailto:trafficsafety@kingcounty.gov)

