

E. Units

The consequences of traffic collisions are affected by the types of 'units' that are involved. A collision between a relatively large unit, such as a truck or train, and a smaller unit, such as a motorcycle, transmit a substantially greater force to the smaller vehicle, and hence to its occupants or riders, than a collision between two vehicles of comparable size. This irrefutable law of physics probably accounts for the over representation of certain 'unit types' in traffic collisions. Some of the key findings in the 1999 data are as follows:

- ◆ The most common unit involved in traffic crashes in 1999 was the automobile. Out of 196,580 units involved in traffic collisions during the year, 134,839 were automobiles. This represents 68.6% of the total units.
- ◆ For fatal collisions, a much smaller percentage of units were automobiles. Of the 1,581 units involved in fatal collisions, 853 or 54.0% were automobiles.
- ◆ A total of 118 pedestrians were involved in fatal collisions in 1999. This represents 11.8% of all pedestrians involved in traffic crashes during the year, a proportion more than 18 times greater than for automobiles.
- ◆ Three railway trains were involved in traffic crashes resulting in fatalities. These represent 5.2% of the 58 trains involved in crashes during 1999, a percentage 8 times greater than for automobiles.
- ◆ Sixty-six motorcycles were involved in fatal crashes in 1999. This represents 4.6% of all motorcycles involved in crashes, seven times the rate for automobiles.
- ◆ A total of 117 truck tractors were involved in fatal collisions in 1999. This represents 2.8% of the truck tractors involved in crashes during the year, over four times the rate for automobiles.
- ◆ In 1998, there were 107 truck tractors involved in fatal collisions versus the 117 in 1999. Though not as large a percentage increase as that between 1997 and 1998, this continues a recent upward trend in truck tractor involvement in fatal crashes.