



REASONABLE SAFETY ON ROADS IN THE USA? Â THINK AGAIN! Americans are over 2000 times more likely to die in a road accident than win the lottery!

Why is it that officialdom in the USA won't be completely honest with drivers? Figures that are constantly released, here, suggest that safety isn't too bad on America's roads yet in many states the death rate is far worse than in any of the thirty countries listed in international crash-fatality databases.

NY ([PRWEB](#)) January 29, 2004 --Only one method of measuring highway safety performance is commonly used in the USA Â the deaths-per-mile system, where the total, estimated mileages traveled by all vehicles in this country each year are added together and the result is linked to the number of people killed as a result of crashes.

The Brussels-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), of which the USA is a member, maintains the International Road Traffic and Accident Database (IRTAD), and the IRTAD shows highway safety performance for thirty OECD member-countries.

The IRTAD, too, uses a distance-based calculation for death rates -- deaths per one billion vehicle kilometers -- but "by distance" is seemingly an unpopular parameter as only nine of the thirty countries have submitted a figure. The USA is in fifth place out of those nine.

All thirty countries, however, have an entry in the very first column of data, the "deaths per 100,000 population," which would certainly appear to give a much clearer view of the relative fatality rates. After all, in huge countries with vast expanses of lightly-populated highways Â such as Australia, for example Â is it not reasonable to expect that crash rates and death rates may be lower than in densely populated countries with a much higher proportion of heavily congested roads?

On the arguably more meaningful population-based scale, the USA currently has an annual rate of 14.8 road deaths per 100,000 people, which perhaps doesn't sound a lot. But it puts this great nation in a shameful 24th place out of the 30 countries listed. It also represents over 42,000 dead Americans each year and is a rate almost two and a half times worse than the leading countries' results, which are around the 6 mark.

At the other end of the scale, with a death rate of 21, lies Portugal. But here is the problem: Worse even than Portugal are Missouri (21.9), Kentucky (22.32), Alabama (22.46), South Dakota (23.68), Arkansas (23.7), New Mexico (23.88), West Virginia (24.39), South Carolina (25.68), Montana (29.35), Mississippi (30.73) and Wyoming (35.2).

Sixteen other US states lie in between the American result and the Portuguese. Only 23 states, plus DC, have death rates lower than America's overall 14.8.

The safest states are Massachusetts (7.17), Rhode Island (7.77), and New York (7.93).

Perhaps it's time that drivers in America were shown the full picture and not drip-fed with only half of the



information. The deaths-by-mileage method not only begs a question about accuracy but also fails to deliver a figure that people can realistically comprehend. Yet if you tell an American that he is over two thousand times more likely to be killed on the roads than to win a lottery jackpot we might all get the picture.

Eddie Wren, Executive Director of the New York state based not-for-profit organization, Drive And Stay Alive, Inc., commented "The USA rightly leads the world in so many fields yet highway safety definitely isn't one of them, so why is it that only half of the information is commonly available?"

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Notes for Editors:

1. This piece was written by Eddie Wren, a U.S. resident and executive director of Drive And Stay Alive, Inc., based in Western New York. His extensive driver-safety bio and credentials are online at: www.driveandstayalive.com/info%20section/bios/about-the-editor.htm
2. The full chart of results, for deaths-per-100,000-population on a state-by-state basis, is available online at: www.driveandstayalive.com/info%20section/statistics/usa-alternative-measure-2002.htm
3. Drive And Stay Alive, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization targeted on reducing the unnecessarily high rate of road deaths in the USA, particularly for younger drivers. If you were able to mention us in any re-write of this piece we would be very grateful.
4. The International Road Traffic and Accident Database may be found online at: www.bast.de/htdocs/fachthemen/irtad/english/we2.html
5. The lottery analogy was calculated on the basis of a jackpot-winning likelihood of 1:14,000,000 (i.e. 14,000,000 divided by 100,000, then multiplied by 14.8).



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