

Washington Cities With the Most Drunk Driving Accidents

The rising occurrence of DUI drivers is becoming a notable safety issue, with substantial rates of alcohol, cannabinoids, and opioids found in those involved in fatal accidents. As substance use increases, so does the risk on our roads. By examining these trends, we can develop better prevention strategies and policies to address this concern and improve roadway safety for everyone.

The northwest coast of the United States is a region with very diverse routes: populous cities, small towns, industrial and university areas, and many coastal and port communities. As a result, its routes can be quite varied: from the sunny Pacific highways to the snowy inland roads, from the vast interstates to the rural roads that connect us. This is further compounded by the two state borders and the international crossing to Canada.

In 2021, a staggering 30% of all traffic accident fatalities in Washington were tied to alcohol consumption. This marks a troubling rise from 28% in 2020. Efforts to reduce the legal blood alcohol limit for driving in Washington are intensifying as fatal accidents involving alcohol-impaired drivers increased once more in 2023.

Here are the 10 cities in Washington that had the highest incidence of alcohol-related accidents in 2023:

10) [Bellingham](#) - 73 drunk driving accidents, 1 fatality

Although the figures have been trending down since 2019, the rates still result in numerous fatalities each year. It's crucial to note that, after I-5, the adjacent streets of Downtown are a major hotspot for drug and alcohol related accidents. Remember, in the state of Washington, the legal blood alcohol limit can potentially be exceeded by consuming just one or two drinks with a meal.

9) Yakima - 78 drunk driving accidents, 1 fatality

Between 2019 and 2020, traffic-related deaths in Yakima [rose from 32 to 37](#), marking a 15.6% increase. This upward trend continued into 2021, with the number of fatalities reaching 47, representing a 27% rise from the previous year. The sharp increase in traffic fatalities highlights a growing concern for road safety in the region.

Yakima ranks among the highest in traffic fatalities within Washington State over the past decade. From 2011 to 2020, there were a total of 330 traffic deaths, equating to a rate of 13.15 fatalities per 100,000 people.

During the Memorial Day celebrations, [17 individuals were detained](#) on suspicion of driving under the influence between Yakima and [Walla Walla](#).

8) Pasco - 81 drunk driving accidents

Following the increasing number of alcohol-related accidents in Pasco, the local police had to reinforce a communication campaign reminding the entire population that it is illegal to operate any type of vehicle or motorized tool while intoxicated: including golf carts, electric scooters, and lawn mowers.

As of the end of July 2024, a higher incidence of these types of accidents has been observed, and it is projected that the number will not surpass that of the previous year. However, in this same period, nearly a dozen fatalities have already been recorded.

7) Spokane Valley - 81 drunk driving accidents, 1 fatality

This year, Spokane Valley has experienced 20 alcohol-related or DUI accidents, most of which have occurred on E Sprague Ave and its intersections. Notably, a [deputy sheriff was injured](#) in one of these incidents due to an irresponsible driver, resulting in an estimated \$35,000 in damage to the patrol car.

6) Federal Way - 82 drunk driving accidents, 2 fatalities

We've previously written about I-5's ranking as the [third most dangerous route](#) in the country. The section that passes through Federal Way, in particular, has a high incidence of DUI accidents. However, the city's urban areas also have hotspots, such as 21st Ave SW and winding roads like SW Dash Point Rd and SW Campus Dr.

5) [Renton](#) - 85 drunk driving accidents, 2 fatalities

In just six months of the current year, Renton has already matched its unfortunate total of fatal traffic accidents from the previous years.

4) Everett - 93 drunk driving accidents, 1 fatality

As of July 2024, Everett has already doubled its total of fatal traffic accidents victims since 2023. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of these reports indicate that the highway with the highest rate of DUI related accidents is I-5.

3) Kent - 128 drunk driving accidents, 10 fatalities

A growing concern is the recent incidence of underage victims in alcohol-related accidents. Tragically, children as young as [5](#) and [12](#) years old have lost their lives due to the recklessness of drivers under the influence of alcohol.

2) [Spokane](#) - 204 drunk driving accidents, 2 fatalities

Adolescents are widely recognized for their propensity to engage in risky behaviors. Regrettably, this frequently includes drinking and driving. According to WSDOT,

there were 10 alcohol-related vehicular accidents involving teenagers in Spokane in 2023, a decrease from 12 in 2021.

This age group alone has represented an average of 5 to 10 percent of all alcohol-related accidents over the past five years.

1) Seattle - 602 drunk driving accidents, 6 fatalities

It is natural to consider that in larger cities, problems are more numerous simply due to having a higher population density. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that there are social factors that can alter these figures. Not only can a greater number of nightlife venues lead to a higher incidence of these incidents, but also the unique characteristics of each population, age groups, tourism, etc.

All traffic statistics provided by the WSDOT the and Washington Traffic Safety Commission