MDOT
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Interim Report Task 05

# Existing Conditions of Safety

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HNTB


Mississippi Department of Transportation

# MULTIPLAN 2050

**This Plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), and local governments in partial fulfillment of requirements in Title 23 USC 134 and 135, amended by the IIJA, Sections 11201 and 11525, October 1, 2021. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDOT.**

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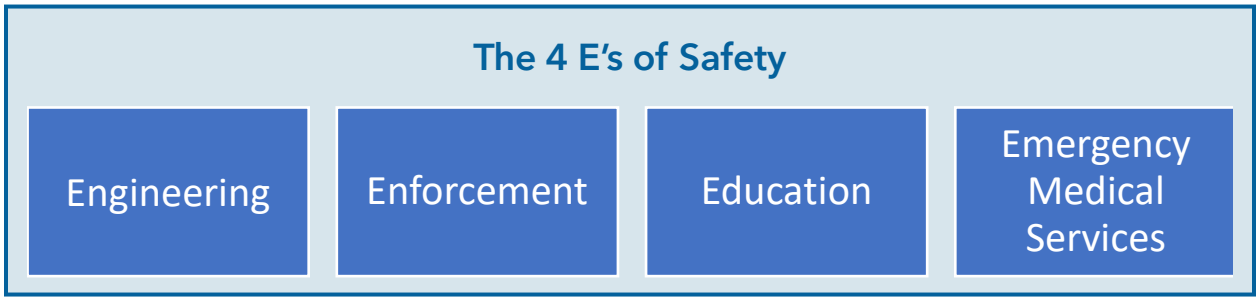
# 1.0 Introduction

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals utilizing the transportation system in the state of Mississippi is a top priority for the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). MDOT recognizes that reducing fatality and injury rates on its roadways requires approaches that incorporates both immediate and long-term solutions. These approaches fall within four distinct areas, known as the "4 E's": engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency medical services (EMS).[1]

### Figure 1: The Four E's of Safety




Source: Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan, 2024

**Engineering:** By investing in infrastructure safety improvements and applying recognized design standards, MDOT aims to improve the design, layout, and construction of roads and highways, considering factors such as visibility, traffic flow, and potential hazards. This includes implementing safety features such as guardrails, rumble strips, and improved lighting to reduce the risk of severe injury and fatal crashes.

**Enforcement:** Enforcement is a tool to promote compliance with traffic rules and regulations. This includes regular speed limit monitoring and enforcing laws related to drunk and distracted driving to reduce reckless or negligent behaviors that can lead to accidents.

**Education:** Education takes place in local communities, schools, and with other organizations to develop programs that promote safe driving practices. These include initiatives targeting specific demographics such as new drivers or commercial vehicle operators. MDOT also collaborates with law enforcement agencies to provide educational resources on road safety for both drivers and pedestrians.

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[1] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Retrieved September 2024, from https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Highway%20Safety/Plan/2024%20Mississippi%20Strategic%20Highway%20Safety%20Plan.pdf

**EMS:** In cases of emergencies or accidents on the roadways, timely response can help in minimizing damage and injuries. Through its investment in EMS services, MDOT supports trained personnel who are equipped to respond quickly and efficiently to any emergencies that may arise. This includes providing first aid training for highway workers as well as maintaining constant communication with other emergency response agencies.

This report presents an analysis of highway safety in Mississippi, emphasizing the critical factors contributing to fatal and suspected serious injury crashes on state roadways. It includes an existing conditions inventory of safety on state roads through a detailed overview of crash data categorized by emphasis area.

# 2.0 Agency Involvement

## 2.1 Role of MDOT and Others

MDOT's mission is to provide a safe and effective transportation system for all road users in Mississippi.[2] To do so, MDOT has plans and programs that serve as roadmaps for addressing key safety issues and coordinating efforts among various stakeholders.

Additionally, the state has a commission that oversees transportation coordination and the MPOs responsible for transportation planning and funding.

## 2.2 Mississippi Transportation Commission

In addition to MDOT, the State of Mississippi has an elected Mississippi Transportation Commission (MTC) that oversees transportation resources and operations in the state.[3] The MTC has three members, each representing different geographic areas: Northern, Central, and Southern, as defined by the Supreme Court Districts. The Commissioners have the authority and responsibility for supervising all modes of transportation, including aeronautics, highways, ports, public transit, and railroads.

## 2.3 Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are responsible for transportation

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[2] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Retrieved September 2024, from https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Highway%20Safety/Plan/2024%20Mississippi%20VRU%20Safety%20Assessment.pdf

[3] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Mississippi Transportation Commission. Retrieved September 2024, from Mississippi Department of Transportation: https://mdot.ms.gov/portal/commission

planning and funding within their respective metropolitan areas. Each MPO identifies specific safety concerns that may be unique to its setting. This regional focus allows them to address local challenges more effectively than a statewide approach might. The MPO plans complement statewide safety initiatives and can provide more granular details on how to implement safety strategies effectively in the local context.

## 2.4 Funding

### Highway Safety Improvement Program

While MDOT strives to implement safety through all its projects agency-wide, funding for safety improvements on the state-maintained road network in Mississippi often comes through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP),[4] a federal initiative to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the roads throughout the nation and a key component of the data-driven strategies to enhance roadway safety in Mississippi. One of the main focuses of the HSIP is identifying and addressing safety issues on public roads by funding infrastructure improvements and safety projects on roads with crash histories or crash risk. The main goal of this plan is to reduce the number of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in support of the goals in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

HSIP staff comprises full-time engineers, data analysts, and administrative support within MDOT's Highway Safety Division. They work closely with other MDOT divisions, local agencies, and districts to improve safety on Mississippi roadways through data analysis, discussions on safety measures, and regular safety meetings with districts and the Safety Countermeasure Selection Team.

The Safety Countermeasure Selection Team was established as part of internal policy to assure involvement of the necessary MDOT divisions and personnel in the process of selecting safety measures for HSIP projects. Before pursuing funding for specific locations, the team discusses all potential safety measures in formal meetings to ensure comprehensive involvement and consideration. In addition to the HSIP, there are several other funding opportunities for road safety programs and projects shown in Table 1.

*Carbon Reduction Program*

[4] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Highway Safety Improvement Program 2023 Annual Report. Retrieved September 2024, from https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2024-04/HSIP%28Mississippi%29%202023%20Report.pdf

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, aims to align federal goals with each state's unique context to fund CO2-reducing infrastructure projects. The FHWA, responsible for distributing CRP funds over five years, encourages using these funds for projects that not only cut emissions but also promote one or more of the federal goals of safety, equity, climate resiliency, a robust workforce, and an efficient freight network.[5]

## Table 1. Overall Safety Funding Opportunities

| Program | Description |
|---|---|
| **National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)[6]** | Funding for the National Highway System (NHS)[7] |
| **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)[8]** | Flexible funding for a wide variety of project types. |
| **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Grant Program[9]** | Supports the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). |
| **Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP)[10]** | Joint FHWA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula funds for metropolitan areas. |
| **Safe Streets for All (SS4A)[11]** | Discretionary grants for regional, local, and Tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. |

[5] Mississippi Department of Transportation (203). Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Planning/Plan/2023%20MS%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Plan.pdf

[6] Federal Highway Administration. (2024). National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). Retrieved October 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/nhpp/

[7] Federal Highway Administration. (2017). Office of Planning, Environment, & Realty (HEP). Retrieved September 2024, from National Highway System: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/national_highway_system/

[8] Federal Highway Administration. (2024). Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). Retrieved October 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/

[9] Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. (2024). Resource Center. Retrieved September 2024, from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/ResourceCenter

[10] Federal Highway Administration. (2022). Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP). Retrieved September 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/metro_planning.cfm

[11] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2024). Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program. Retrieved September 2024, from U.S. Department of Transportation: https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A

| Program | Description |
|---|---|
| **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)[12]** | Funding for projects that are associated with federal lands that improve public safety and reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality. |
| **Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES)[13]** | Supports safety and economic competitiveness in rural areas. |
| **Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)[14]** | Provides funding for projects that reduce transportation emissions or the development of carbon reduction strategies |
| **Community Development Block Grant Program[15]** | Flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of community development needs. |
| **Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP)** | Funding for highway construction projects, as well infrastructure that eliminates hazards, and installing protective devices at railway-highway crossings. |
| **Highway Safety Improvement Program[16] (HSIP)** | Funding for projects that create a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. |
| **National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)[17]** | Funding that supports the condition, performance, and new construction to the NHS, and ensures Federal-Aid funds help achieve state performance targets. |
| **National Highway Freight Program (NHFP)[18]** | Funding for infrastructure and operational improvements that improve productivity and safety of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). |

[12] Federal Highway Administration. (2021). Mississippi Federal Lands Access Program. Retrieved October 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/flap/ms

[13] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2024). Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES). Retrieved September 2024, from U.S. Department of Transportation: https://www.transportation.gov/rural

[14] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act/crp_fact_sheet.cfm

[15] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2025). Community Development Block Grant Program. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg

[16] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Highway Safety Improvement Program (HISP). Retrieved February 2025, from: https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip

[17] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/nhpp/

[18] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). National Highway Freight Program (NHFP). Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act/nhfp.cfm

| Program | Description |
|---|---|
| **Transportation Alternatives (TA)**[19] | Provides funding for small-scale active transportation projects. |
| **Railway-Highway Crossings Program**[20] | Provides funds for safety improvements to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries, and crashes at public railway-highway grade crossings. |
| **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)**[21] | Flexible funding for state and local transportation needs. |
| **Capital Investment Grants**[22] | Discretionary grant program that funds capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit |
| **Highway Safety Grants Program**[23] | Discretionary grant that awards funding for various traffic safety initiatives |
| **Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant Program**[24] | Capital investments in surface transportation that have a demonstrable significant local or regional impact. Formerly known as Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE). |
| **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program**[25] | Provides grants for important freight and highway projects to enhance safety, efficiency, and reliability in both rural and urban areas. |

Source: All sources cited as footnotes.

[19] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Transportation Alternatives. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/

[20] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Railway Highway Crossing Program Overview. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip/xings/railway-highway-crossing-program-overview

[21] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/

[22] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Fact Sheet: Capital Investment Grants Program. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/fact-sheet-capital-investment-grants-program

[23] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2025). Highway Safety Grants Program. Retrieved February 2025, from: https://www.nhtsa.gov/highway-safety-grants-program

[24] U.S. Department of Transportation (2025). Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program. Retrieved February 2025 from https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants

[25] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2025). The INFRA Grant Program. Retrieved February 2025, from https://www.transportation.gov/grants/infra-grant-program

## 2.5 Planning Highlights

### The Safety Countermeasure Selection Team

The Safety Countermeasure Selection Team[26] is mandated by internal MDOT policy to involve relevant divisions within MDOT and personnel from District offices in the process of selecting countermeasures for HSIP projects. All potential countermeasures are discussed, and a formal report documenting the process is submitted for examination and approval by MDOT officials.

### The Circuit Rider Program

HSIP local road safety projects are administered through the Local Public Agency (LPA) Program.[27] In order to address safety needs on the local road network, MDOT created the Circuit Rider Program in 2012 to offer training and technical assistance to local road administrators and staff. Through the program, MDOT works with local officials to review crash data and conduct site visits for local roads to determine appropriate countermeasures. Projects identified via the Circuit Riders Program can be resolved by the local road authority or treated under Circuit Rider initiatives. Circuit Rider initiatives include:

- Sign Projects: where MDOT provides warning and advisory signage to local government agencies at no cost if crash trends have been identified.
- Design Projects: where eligible projects are pursued for funding through the HSIP and administered through the MDOT's LPA Program.

### Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The 2024 SHSP[28] for Mississippi focuses on five emphasis areas (Figure 1) that contribute to traffic fatalities and serious injuries, which account for 91.8% of such incidents in the state. These areas include young drivers, unbelted occupants, lane departures, intersections, and impaired driving. The plan outlines 19 specific

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[26] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Highway Safety Improvement Program 2023 Annual Report. Retrieved September 2024, from https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2024-04/HSIP%28Mississippi%29%202023%20Report.pdf

[27] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (n.d.). LTAP. Retrieved October 2024, from Mississippi Department of Transportation: https://mdot.ms.gov/portal/ltap

[28] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Retrieved September 2024, from https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Highway%20Safety/Plan/2024%20Mississippi%20Strategic%20Highway%20Safety%20Plan.pdf

objectives to address these issues, including strengthening enforcement for safety belt use, improving road design to reduce crash risks, addressing impaired and drugged driving, and promoting safe driving practices for novice and older drivers.

### Figure 2. SHSP Critical Emphasis Areas


Source: Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan, 2024

The SHSP focuses on addressing emphasis areas using the national Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) strategy. TZD is a comprehensive approach to reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries via collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, traffic safety organizations, and members of the community. By adopting the TZD strategy, Mississippi is taking proactive steps toward achieving the ultimate goal of zero deaths on its highways.

Data analysis included in the most recent SHSP covered three years from 2020 to 2022. According to the SHSP, in 2005, there were 931 deaths from vehicle crashes, but this decreased to 582 in 2012, the lowest in 36 years. However, the numbers began to increase again in 2015, reaching 772 in 2021 and 703 in 2022. Table 2 shows fatal and serious injuries by emphasis area as included in the SHSP. The five most prevalent areas (highlighted in orange) make up the majority of crashes and are the five emphasis areas shown in Figure 1.

### Table 2. Mississippi Traffic Deaths and Serious Injuries by Emphasis Area

| Emphasis Area | | Fatal and Serious Injuries (Statewide 2020-2022) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | # |
| **Drivers** | Young Driver (20 and under)[1] | 19% | 2441 |
| | Unlicensed Driver[1] | 25% | 3244 |
| | Older Driver (65+)[1] | 16% | 2090 |
| | Aggressive Driver – Speed Related[1] | 16% | 1993 |
| | Impaired Driver[1] | 19% | 2463 |
| | Inattentive, Distracted, Asleep Driver[1] | 6% | 760 |

| Emphasis Area | | Fatal and Serious Injuries (Statewide 2020-2022) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | # |
| | Unbelted Occupants[2] | 58% | 7499 |
| **Special Users** | Pedestrians[2] | 6% | 772 |
| | Bicyclists[2] | 1% | 130 |
| **Vehicles** | Motorcyclists[2] | 6% | 785 |
| | Heavy Vehicle[1] | 8% | 1063 |
| **Highways** | Train-Vehicle[1] | <1% | 33 |
| | Lane Departure[1] | 53% | 6759 |
| | Intersection[1] | 30% | 3847 |
| | Work Zone[1] | 1% | 125 |

Notes:

1. Includes all persons killed or seriously injured in the crash.

2. Includes only persons killed or seriously injured from the listed group.

Source: Mississippi Strategic Highway Safety Plan, 2024

Because several factors may contribute to any single crash, the SHSP analysis considered overlapping reasons for the crashes. For example, the impaired driver involved in a serious injury crash may also be unbelted and run off the road. The analysis in the SHSP showed that 70% of aggressive driving crashes involved lane departures, 52% of crashes among older drivers occurred when they were not wearing seat belts, 51% of crashes among younger drivers also involved unbelted individuals, and 29% of bicycle crashes occurring at intersections. In addition, 41% of crashes involving older drivers were at intersections, and 38% involved lane departures.

## Vulnerable Road User Safety Special Rule

Part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is focused on Vulnerable Road User (VRU) safety by requiring states to conduct VRU safety assessments and allocate a portion of their budget toward VRU-specific measures.[29] States with 15% or more VRU fatalities in a given year are required to set aside 15% of their HSIP budget towards VRU-focused projects and strategies. This is called the VRU Safety Special Rule. Based

[29] Federal Highway Administration. (2022). Safety: Highway Safety Improvement Program Special Rules. Retrieved October 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/hsip_special_rules.cfm#vru

on VRU fatality data from 2019-2023, Mississippi typically meets the threshold for this requirement and has only fallen below the 15% VRU fatality rate once since this rule was introduced.

## Mississippi Vulnerable Road Use Safety Assessment

The BIL also mandates VRU Safety Assessments[30] in addition to the states' making regular SHSP updates. The VRU assessments build on the information and strategies identified in the SHSP to document and strategize approaches to challenges faced by those walking, biking, or using other forms of active or non-automotive transportation. Trends identified in the VRU Safety Assessment are included in detail in the bicycle and pedestrian section of this MULTIPLAN update.

## Mississippi Department of Transportation: 3-Year Plan FFY 2024-2026

The MDOT 3-Year Plan[31] outlines requirements and criteria for the maintenance, construction, reconstruction, and relocation of the State Highway System in Mississippi, as well as the impact of recent federal legislation and state investments on transportation infrastructure. The 3-Year Plan includes categories of projects such as pavement programs, bridge programs, safety programs, capacity programs, operational improvements, and planning. The MDOT safety program outlined in the 3-Year Plan involves multiple parties, including state and federal agencies, local governments, educational institutions, law enforcement, and emergency medical services.

## Local Road Safety Plans

Several regions in Mississippi have developed Local Road Safety Plans (LRSP).[32] These plans are developed in partnership with MDOT and focus on safety on local city and county roads that are outside of the state-maintained network.

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[30] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Retrieved September 2024, from https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Highway%20Safety/Plan/2024%20Mississippi%20VRU%20Safety%20Assessment.pdf

[31] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2023). Mississippi Department of Transportation: 3-Year Plan FFY 2024-2026. Retrieved September 2024, from https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Commission/Attachment%20A--092623.pdf

[32] Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). Local Road Safety Plans. Retrieved September 2024, from Federal Highway Administration: https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/local-road-safety-plans

## Key Planning Highlights

### *MDOT Safety Education Programs*

MDOT offers various safety education programs[33] to educate the public on reducing vehicle fatalities and injuries. These programs aim to raise awareness about seat belt usage, child passenger safety, and the dangers of impaired and distracted driving. Programs include demonstrations such as a rollover simulator, a mini version of the simulator, a seat belt convincer, a distracted/impaired driving simulator, fatal vision goggles, a drunk busters pedal kart, child passenger safety demonstrations, and safety videos. These demonstrations are available for schools and safety events, targeting different age groups. The programs are provided at no cost, with some limitations.

### *Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (2022)*

The Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program[34] (MCSAP) is a federal grant initiative that provides financial support to states to help lower the number and severity of accidents and hazardous materials incidents involving commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Its primary objective is the reduction of accidents, fatalities, and injuries linked to CMVs through consistent and effective safety programs. State-designated lead agencies can apply for funding by submitting a Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan (CVSP) in adherence to federal regulations. CVSPs are performance-based and include all required documents to secure funding.

In 2022, Mississippi was able to secure invaluable MCSAP grants for promoting positive developments in CMV safety. A range of essential initiatives included safety inspections that are conducted regularly on trucks and buses and investigations on motor carriers in response to safety concerns and complaints to ensure that any issues related to the safety of the public are addressed promptly. In addition, new trucking and bus companies are now subject to audits to verify that they operate in a responsible and safe manner.

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[33] Mississippi Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Safety Education Programs. Retrieved October 2024, from Mississippi Department of Transportation: https://mdot.ms.gov/safetyeducation/programs/

[34] Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. (n.d.). Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program Grant. Retrieved October 2024, from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/MCSAP.aspx

*Safe Streets for All (2022-2024)*

From 2022 to 2024, eight entities within Mississippi, including the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD), were granted awards totaling $1.468 billion dollars through the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program to develop comprehensive Safety Action Plans (SAP).[35] In 2022, this included the Cities of Hattiesburg and Starkville and the CMPDD; in 2023 the Cities of Columbus and Europa; and in 2024, the Cities of Laurel and Meridian and the Town of Anguilla. The purpose of the SAP is to develop a well-defined strategy to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries in the regions addressed in each plan. The SAPs include analyses of crash data, identification of high-risk crash locations, factors contributing to crashes, and strategies and projects to address the safety concerns that were identified in the plan. The following Table 3 shows the total funds for SAPs received for each year since the program's inception.

### Table 3: Total SAP Funds Received Through the SS4A Program, 2022-2024

| Year | Total Funding* |
|---|---|
| **2022** | $832,000.00 |
| **2023** | $256,000.00 |
| **2024** | $380,000.00 |
| **Total** | **$1,468,000.00** |

*Not adjusted for inflation

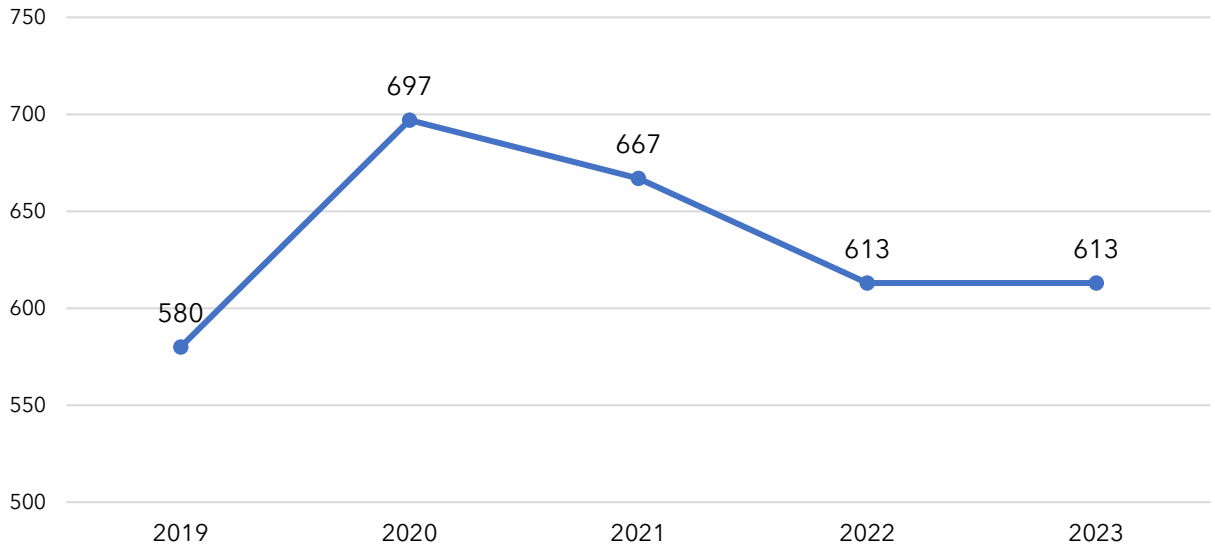
Source: US DOT, 2025

# 3.0 Statewide Significance

Road safety contributes to the overall effectiveness, efficiency, and reliability of the Mississippi transportation system. According to crash data provided by MDOT, between 2019 and 2023, there were a total of 3,170 fatal crashes on Mississippi roadways (Figure 2). While there has been a decrease in the number of crash fatalities in the state, from 667 in 2021 to 613 in 2022, these numbers are still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

### Figure 3. Mississippi Fatal Crashes, 2019-2023

[35] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2025). All Years' SS4A Grant Awards. Retrieved February 2025, from U.S. Department of Transportation: https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/cumulative-awards



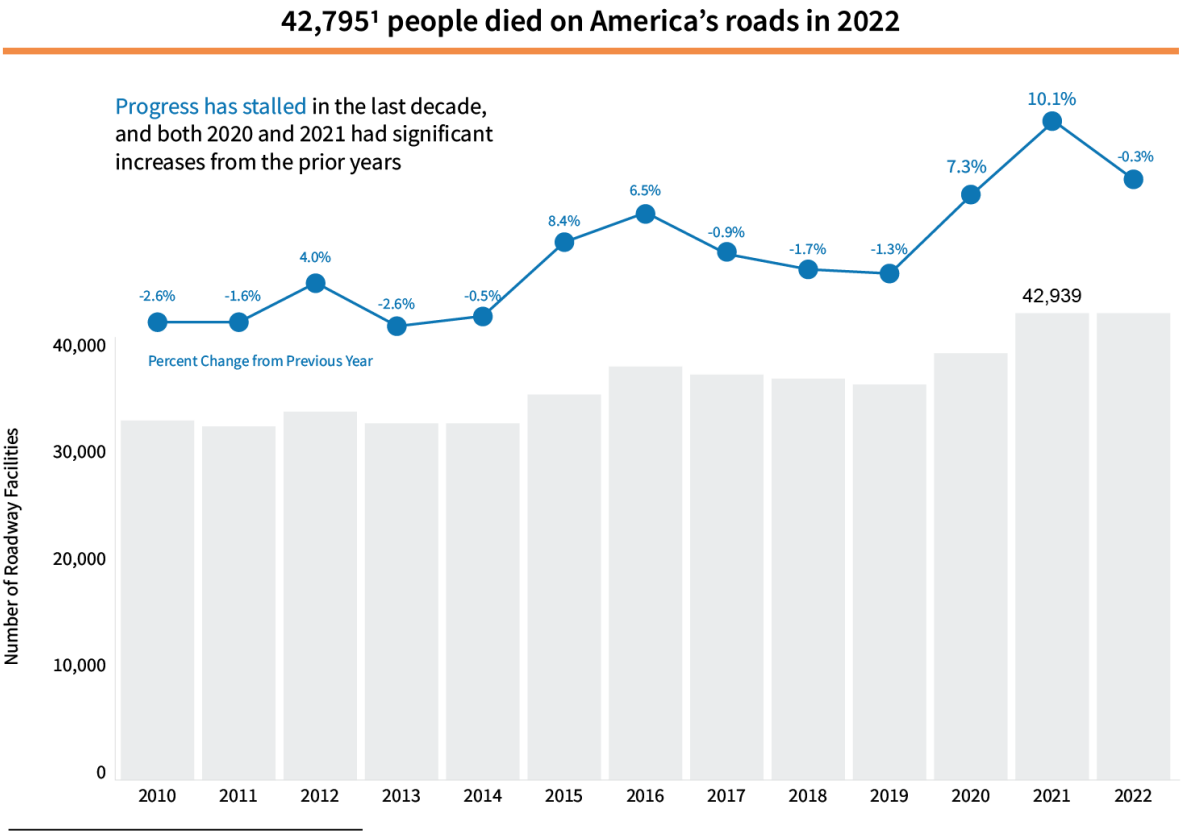

Source: MDOT, 2024

## 3.1 National Comparison

Fatal crashes in Mississippi reflect national trends in that fatalities increased nationwide in 2020 before beginning a downward trajectory in recent years. The 2024 Progress Report on the NRSS[36] cites a 10% increase in deaths in 2022 compared to 2020, a 0.3% decrease in 2022 compared to 2021, and an estimated 4.5% decline in the first nine months of 2023. According to the progress report, there is currently a downward trend in road fatalities as shown in Figure 3. US DOT set an interim goal of a 66% reduction in motor-vehicle related fatalities by 2040 as a step toward the long-term goal of zero deaths.

[36] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2024). 2024 Progress Report on the National Roadway Safety Strategy. Retrieved October 2024, from https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2024-02/2024%20NRSS%20Progress%20Report.pdf

## Figure 4. U.S. Roadway Fatalities, 2010-2022




[1]Note: this figure is an estimated of motor vehicle traffic fatalities in 2022: https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813428

Source: US DOT, 2024

According to the NRSS progress report, the loss of life on our nation's highways, streets, and roads is a deeply concerning and persistent problem that has unfortunately become perceived by some as both natural and acceptable. To begin to change the nation's views on roadway safety, US DOT has begun promoting a fundamental shift in the way we approach roadway safety by recognizing and addressing the interconnected factors that contribute to the occurrence of traffic fatalities and injuries, rather than viewing them as isolated incidents.

## Safe System Approach

US DOT's 2022 National Roadway Safety Strategy[37] (NRSS) adopts the Safe System Approach to safety planning on the nation's roads. This approach addresses

[37] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2022, 01). National Roadway Safety Strategy. Retrieved October 2024, from https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-02/USDOT-National-Roadway-Safety-Strategy.pdf

increasing roadway fatalities and injuries through multi-layered proven countermeasures aligned with Complete Streets[38] designs that work to prevent, mitigate, and reduce the severity of crashes. As described in US DOT documentation,[39] the six key principles of the Safe System Approach are described in Table 4 and Figure 4.

### Table 4. Principles of a Safe System Approach

| Principle | Description |
|---|---|
| **Death and Serious Injuries are Unacceptable** | A Safe System Approach prioritizes the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries |
| **Humans Make Mistakes** | People will inevitably make mistakes and decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs. |
| **Humans Are Vulnerable** | Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs; therefore, it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates physical human vulnerabilities. |
| **Responsibility is Shared** | All stakeholders—including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the general public—are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. |
| **Safety is Proactive** | Proactive tools should be used to identify and address safety issues in the transportation system, rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting afterwards. |

[38] Federal Highway Administration. (2023, 07 21). Make Complete Streets the Default Approach. Retrieved October 2024, from https://highways.dot.gov/complete-streets

[39] U.S. Department of Transportation. (2022). What Is a Safe System Approach? Retrieved October 2024, from https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem#:~:text=1,transportation%20industry%2C%20and%20emergency%20response.

| Principle | Description |
|---|---|
| **Redundancy is Crucial** | Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people. |

Source: US DOT, 2022

### Figure 5. Principles of a Safe System Approach


Source: US DOT, 2022

# 4.0 Existing Conditions

Mississippi has a well-developed roadway network spanning over 162,000 lane-miles (78,000 centerline miles) in 2023, according to FHWA.[40] MDOT has set the goal of reducing fatalities and suspected serious injuries on all roads, ultimately aiming for zero deaths and injuries as outlined in the SHSP described above. This existing conditions report discusses trends in fatal and serious injury crashes on the state's roadways since the last MULTIPLAN update.

[40] FHWA. (2023). Highway Statistics Series. Retrieved October 2024, from Policy and Governmental Affairs Office of Highway Policy Information: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2021/hm20.cfm

## Crash Overview

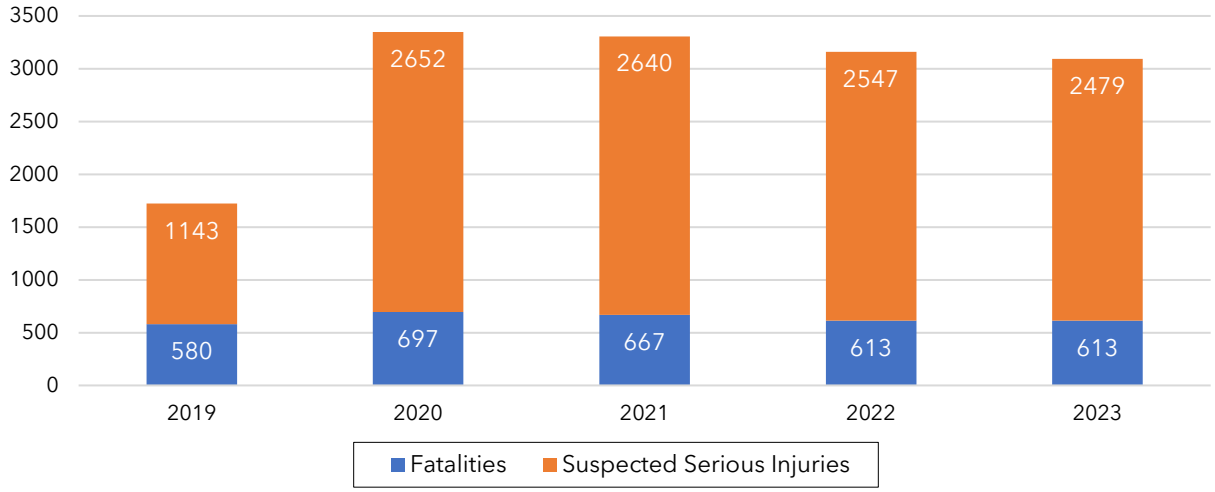
Crash data provided by MDOT was analyzed by emphasis area, with a focus on the two issues that are most related to state-owned infrastructure: intersection and lane departure crashes.

## Fatal and Suspected Serious Injuries

### *Statewide*

Special attention is given to fatal and serious injury crashes, which represent the highest impact for loss of life or serious injuries and associated societal costs. The results of the crash data analysis are shown and described in Figure 5.

### Figure 6. Fatalities and Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 - 2023




Source: MDOT, 2024

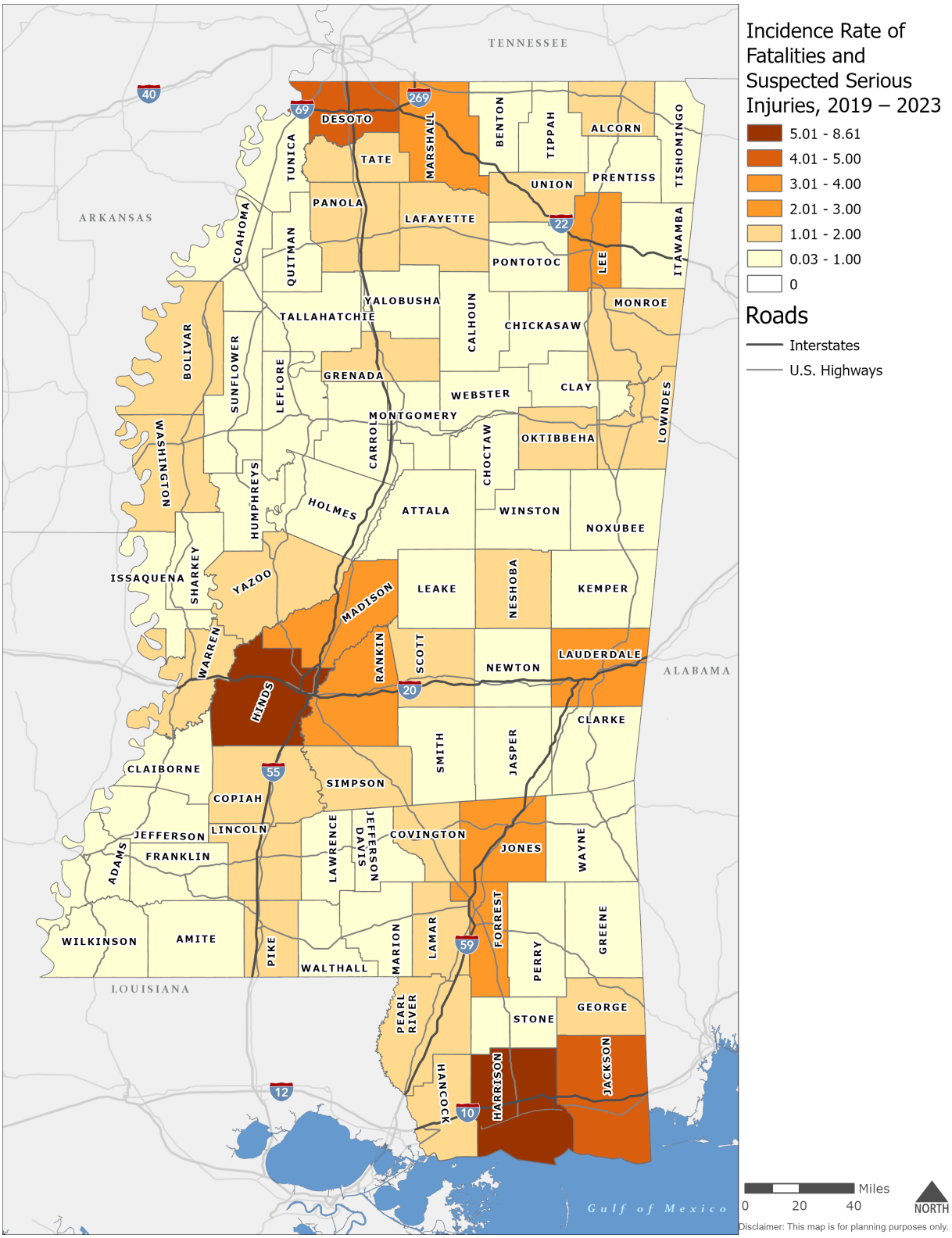
Like the national trend, the data on fatal and serious injury crashes in Mississippi from 2019 to 2023 shows a significant increase in 2020, followed by a gradual decline in subsequent years: yet the number remains above pre-pandemic levels as of 2023.

### *County-Level Data*

Fatal and serious injury crash counts fluctuate across different counties. Mississippi's population varies widely across counties: urban counties number in the hundreds of thousands, while rural counties in the low thousands. The counties with the highest rate of fatal and serious injury crashes from 2019 through 2023 were Hinds, Harrison, Jackson, and DeSoto, respectively (Figure 6). From 2019 and 2023, Hinds County's population reported fatal or serious crashes at a rate of 8.61 per 1,000. Harrison County had a rate of 5.8 per 1,000, Jackson County at a rate of 4.24, and DeSoto at a rate of 4.24. Fatal and serious injury crashes in each county from 2019 through 2023

are shown in Figure 6. The complete table of crashes by county is shown in the Appendix.

## Figure 7. Fatal and Suspected Serious Injury Crashes Rates by County, 2019 - 2023




Source: MDOT, 2024

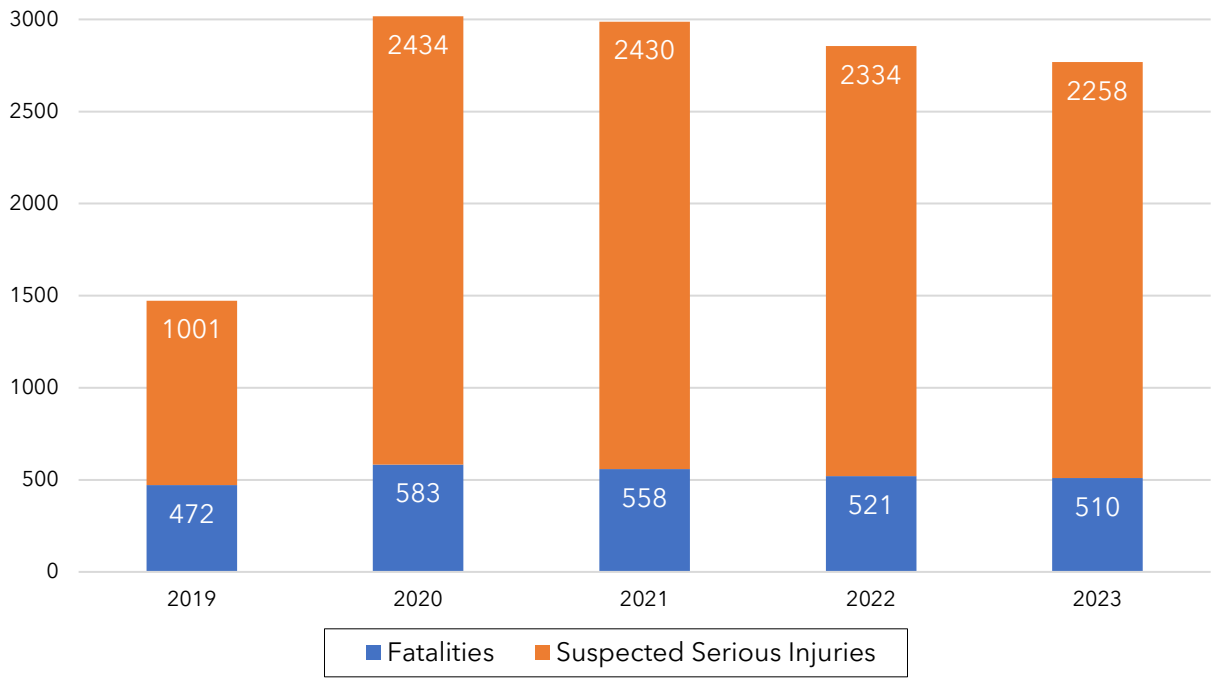
## Critical Emphasis Areas

Of the five safety emphasis areas listed in the SHSP background above, intersection crashes and lane departures are most pertinent to the state-owned network because they are scenarios where strategic road design can have a significant impact on enhancing overall traffic safety.

### *Lane Departure Crashes*

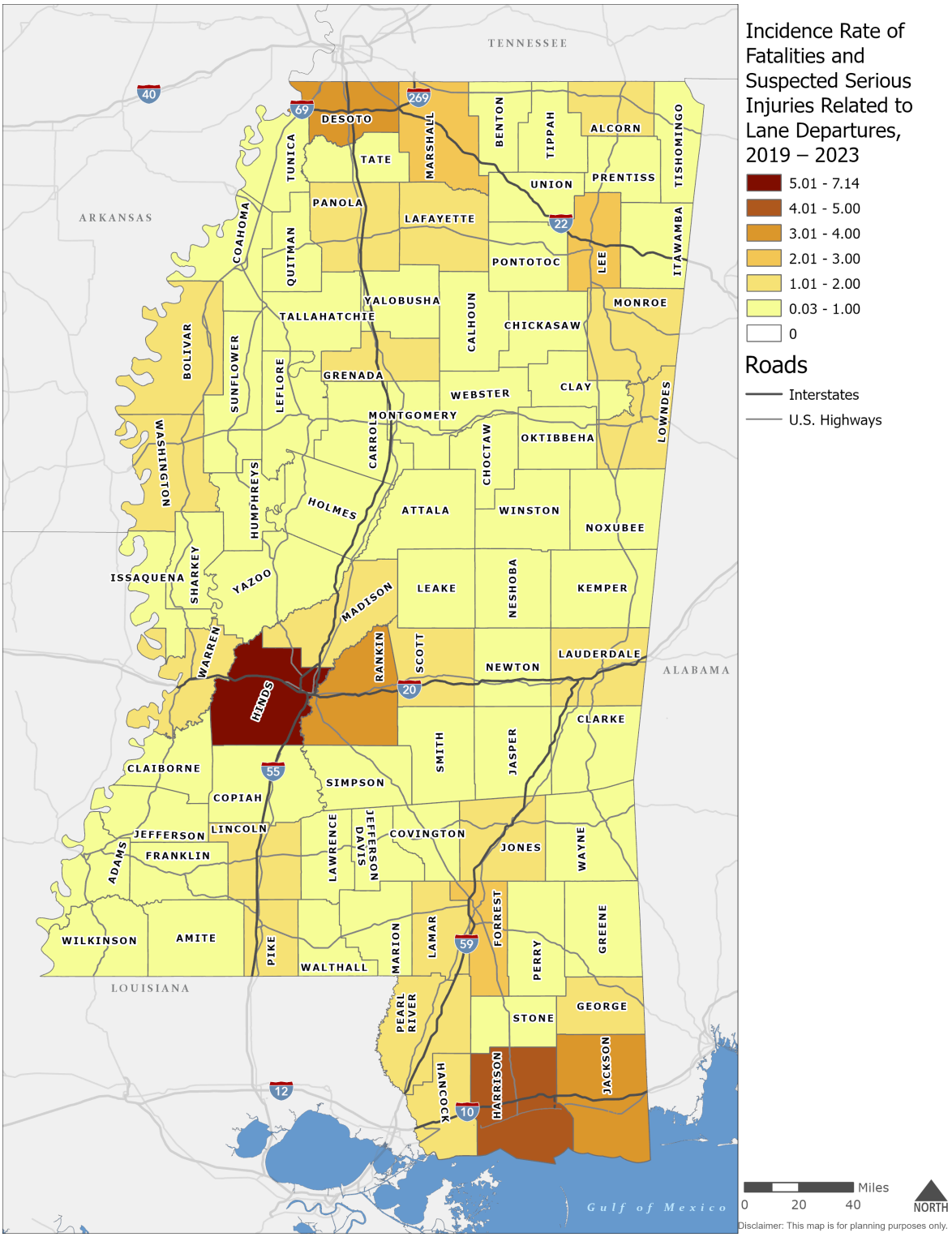
A lane departure occurs when a vehicle unintentionally veers out of its designated lane or roadway. This can happen due to a variety of factors such as driver distraction, fatigue, or poor weather conditions. Measures such as wide shoulders and rumble strips to prevent vehicles from drifting off course on highways, as well as clear signage and proper lane markings that guide drivers along their intended path can mitigate this risk. Figure 7 shows lane departure fatalities and suspected serious injuries for each year from 2019 to 2023. Figure 8 maps the incidence rate of lane departure fatalities and suspected serious injuries that occurred within each county from 2019 to 2023.

**Figure 8. Lane Departure Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries, 2019 - 2023**




Source: MDOT, 2024

## Figure 9. Lane Departure Fatal and Suspected Serious Injury Crashes Rates by County, 2019 – 2023

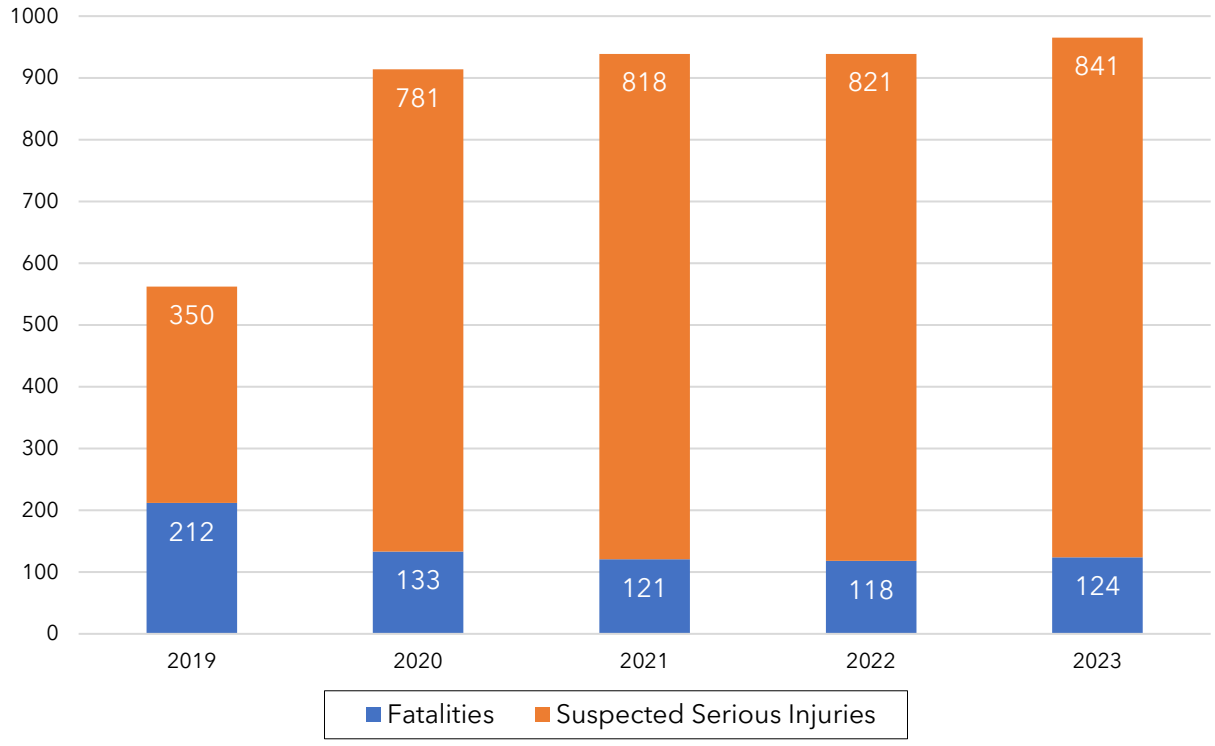



Source: MDOT, 2024

*Intersection Crashes*

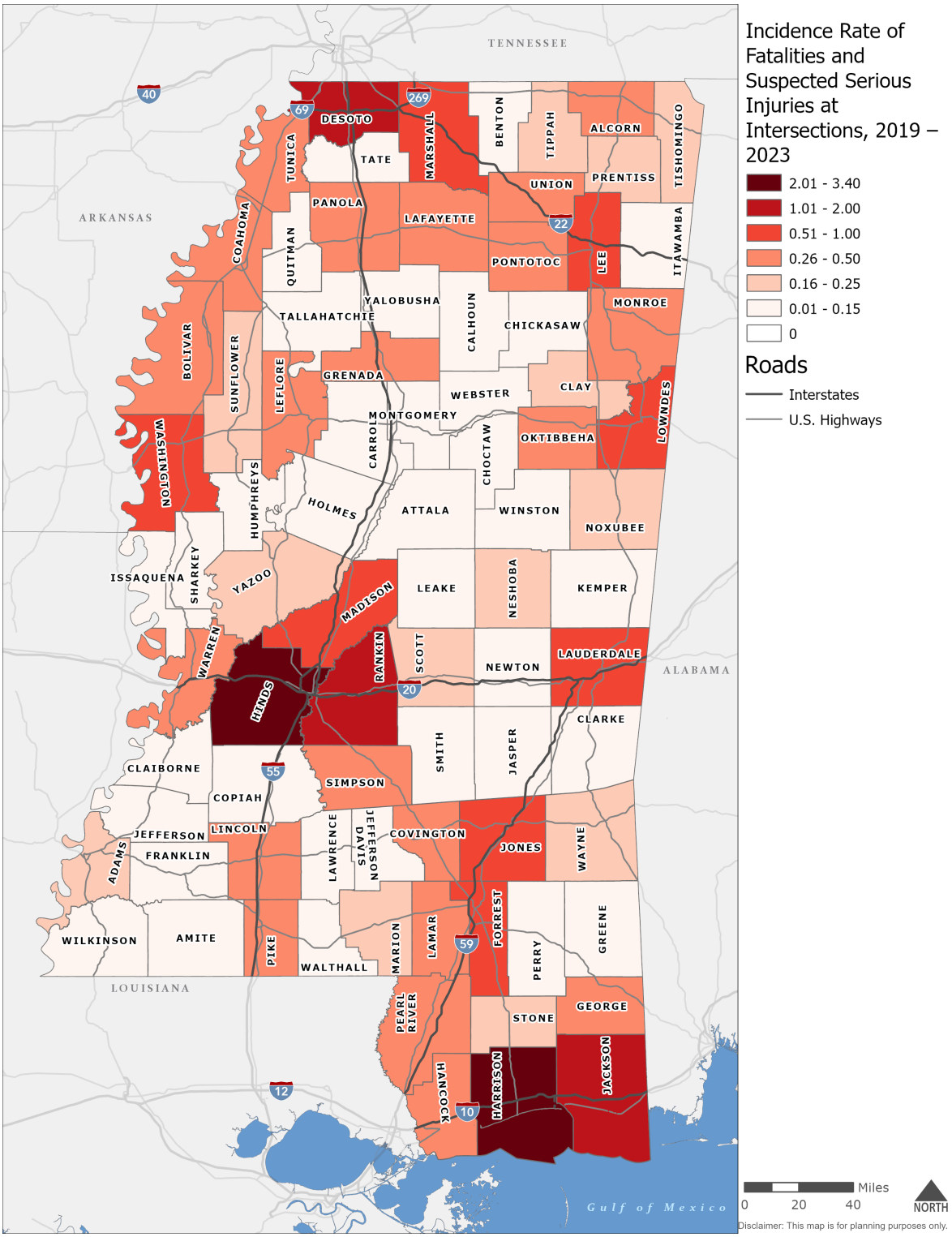
Intersections present a heightened risk of crashes because they are locations where the potential conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists are higher than other parts of the system. The safe systems approach calls for designing intersections that prioritize safety through various measures such as dedicated turning lanes, signal timings, and traffic calming features that can lead to a safer environment for all road users. Figure 9 shows intersection fatalities and suspected serious injuries for each year from 2019 to 2023. Figure 10 maps the incidence rate of intersection fatalities and suspected serious injuries that occurred within each county from 2019 to 2023.

### Figure 10. Intersection Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 – 2023




Source: MDOT, 2024

## Figure 11. Intersection Fatal and Suspected Serious Injury Crashes Rates by County, 2019 – 2023




Source: MDOT, 2024

## Objectives and Strategies

The state has implemented various strategies to improve road safety, such as improving road design, pedestrian safety, and enhancing intersection design. The strategies also focus on increasing enforcement involvement to ensure compliance with road laws, including traffic control during special events and stop sign enforcement. Summaries of the objectives and strategies as outlined in the SHSP are found in Table 5.

### Table 5. Safety Objectives and Strategies

| Emphasis Area | Objective | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **Lane Departure** | Improve road design to reduce the risk of lane departure crashes | • Pavement Markings<br>• Rumble Strips and Centerline Audible Stripes<br>• Widen Shoulders<br>• Establish Shielded Clear Zones<br>• Cable Barriers<br>• Lighting<br>• Alignment Improvements<br>• Improve Sight Distances<br>• Protected Infrastructure for VRUs<br>• Road Diets |
| | Address curve-related lane departure crashes | • Improve Curve Design<br>• Apply High-Friction Surface Treatment<br>• Improve Signage/Markings |
| | Address speed-related lane departure crashes | • Evaluate Speed Limits<br>• Apply Traffic Calming Measures<br>• More Speed Limit Signs<br>• Increase Transition Zone |
| | Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving | • Increase Enforcement Presence<br>• Improve Enforcement Infrastructure (such as pull-off sites)<br>• Implement Radar/Automated Enforcement |

| Emphasis Area | Objective | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **Intersection** | Use intersection design to reduce the risk of crashes | • Roundabouts<br>• Improve Turn Lane Design<br>• Restricted Movement Intersections<br>• Reduce Conflict Points<br>• Improve Sight Distances<br>• Signal Timing<br>• Dynamic All-Red Extension (DARE)<br>• Improve Signage/Markings<br>• Prioritize Pedestrian Movement<br>• Lighting<br>• Traffic Calming Measures |
| | Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving | • Increase Enforcement Presence<br>• Implement Radar/Automated Enforcement |

Source: Mississippi Statewide Highway Safety Plan, 2024

## Performance

The existing conditions of safety on the road network in Mississippi highlight the safety challenges faced on the state's roadways. The goal set by MDOT to achieve zero deaths and injuries takes a focused approach on emphasis areas such as intersection and lane departure crashes via a combination of strategies, including improvements in road design and enhanced enforcement. Interim performance measures toward this goal include reductions in crashes per capita as shown in Table 6. As Mississippi progresses toward its safety vision, ongoing collaboration with local agencies, community stakeholders, and MPOs will continue to be necessary.

### Table 6. Mississippi Highway Safety Plan Performance Targets

| Performance Measure | 2024 Target | 2026 Target |
|---|---|---|
| **Traffic Fatalities** | Maintain five-year (2018-2022) average of **711** by December 31, 2024 | 711 |
| **Serious Injury** | Maintain five-year (2018-2022) average of **2,520** by December 31, 2024 | 2520 |
| **Serious Injury Rate** | Maintain five-year (2018-2022) average of **6.26** by December 31, 2023 | 6.26 |

| Performance Measure | 2024 Target | 2026 Target |
|---|---|---|
| **Fatality Rate** | Maintain five-year (2018-2022) average of **1.76** by December 31, 2024 | 1.76 |
| **Unrestrained Passengers** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **266** | 266 |
| **Alcohol and Other Drugs** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **158** | 158 |
| **Speed** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **96** | 96 |
| **Motorcycles** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **44** | 44 |
| **Un-helmeted Motorcyclists** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **7** | 7 |
| **Under 21** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **89** | 89 |
| **Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **247** | 247 |
| **Pedestrians** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **85** | 85 |
| **Bicyclists** | Maintain five-year (2017-2021) average of **9** | 9 |
| **Observed Seat Belt Use** | 80.60% | 79.78% |

Source: State of Mississippi Triennial Highway Safety Plan, Federal Fiscal Years 2024-2026, 2023

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# 6.0 Appendix

## Table 7: Fatal and Suspected Serious Injury Crashes by County, 2019-2023

| County | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Total Crashes | Rolling Average | Incidence Rate (per 1000 residents) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adams** | 15 | 28 | 35 | 27 | 16 | 121 | 24.2 | 0.81 |
| **Alcorn** | 15 | 47 | 51 | 46 | 41 | 200 | 40 | 1.34 |
| **Amite** | 6 | 20 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 85 | 17 | 0.57 |
| **Attala** | 14 | 21 | 23 | 23 | 19 | 100 | 20 | 0.67 |
| **Benton** | 15 | 17 | 4 | 14 | 15 | 65 | 13 | 0.43 |
| **Bolivar** | 21 | 43 | 42 | 40 | 34 | 180 | 36 | 1.20 |
| **Calhoun** | 10 | 20 | 22 | 10 | 19 | 81 | 16.2 | 0.54 |
| **Carroll** | 3 | 17 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 41 | 8.2 | 0.27 |
| **Chickasaw** | 10 | 16 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 98 | 19.6 | 0.65 |
| **Choctaw** | 4 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 42 | 8.4 | 0.28 |
| **Claiborne** | 8 | 19 | 18 | 15 | 9 | 69 | 13.8 | 0.46 |
| **Clarke** | 13 | 13 | 22 | 20 | 18 | 86 | 17.2 | 0.57 |
| **Clay** | 10 | 21 | 31 | 22 | 26 | 110 | 22 | 0.74 |
| **Coahoma** | 8 | 27 | 33 | 31 | 25 | 124 | 24.8 | 0.83 |
| **Copiah** | 21 | 28 | 30 | 38 | 38 | 155 | 31 | 1.04 |
| **Covington** | 23 | 29 | 28 | 31 | 41 | 152 | 30.4 | 1.02 |
| **DeSoto** | 74 | 138 | 157 | 129 | 128 | 626 | 125.2 | 4.18 |
| **Forrest** | 41 | 83 | 93 | 74 | 91 | 382 | 76.4 | 2.55 |
| **Franklin** | 4 | 8 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 40 | 8 | 0.27 |
| **George** | 24 | 45 | 42 | 39 | 28 | 178 | 35.6 | 1.19 |
| **Greene** | 6 | 13 | 11 | 15 | 13 | 58 | 11.6 | 0.39 |
| **Grenada** | 19 | 65 | 31 | 34 | 35 | 184 | 36.8 | 1.23 |
| **Hancock** | 22 | 51 | 35 | 58 | 48 | 214 | 42.8 | 1.43 |
| **Harrison** | 93 | 194 | 207 | 188 | 186 | 868 | 173.6 | 5.80 |
| **Hinds** | 154 | 305 | 294 | 261 | 274 | 1288 | 257.6 | 8.61 |
| **Holmes** | 11 | 21 | 20 | 27 | 36 | 115 | 23 | 0.77 |
| **Humphreys** | 8 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 44 | 8.8 | 0.29 |
| **Issaquena** | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0.03 |
| **Itawamba** | 17 | 27 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 106 | 21.2 | 0.71 |
| **Jackson** | 80 | 148 | 135 | 147 | 124 | 634 | 126.8 | 4.24 |
| **Jasper** | 15 | 30 | 30 | 23 | 28 | 126 | 25.2 | 0.84 |
| **Jefferson** | 7 | 18 | 18 | 13 | 9 | 65 | 13 | 0.43 |

| County | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Total Crashes | Rolling Average | Incidence Rate (per 1000 residents) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jefferson Davis | 5 | 10 | 28 | 9 | 10 | 62 | 12.4 | 0.41 |
| Jones | 34 | 61 | 67 | 80 | 66 | 308 | 61.6 | 2.06 |
| Kemper | 5 | 19 | 8 | 10 | 14 | 56 | 11.2 | 0.37 |
| Lafayette | 30 | 39 | 54 | 45 | 37 | 205 | 41 | 1.37 |
| Lamar | 34 | 41 | 50 | 46 | 49 | 220 | 44 | 1.47 |
| Lauderdale | 52 | 84 | 59 | 79 | 80 | 354 | 70.8 | 2.37 |
| Lawrence | 10 | 13 | 20 | 18 | 9 | 70 | 14 | 0.47 |
| Leake | 15 | 23 | 24 | 23 | 28 | 113 | 22.6 | 0.76 |
| Lee | 41 | 121 | 111 | 70 | 63 | 406 | 81.2 | 2.71 |
| Leflore | 15 | 21 | 26 | 26 | 30 | 118 | 23.6 | 0.79 |
| Lincoln | 27 | 47 | 38 | 32 | 42 | 186 | 37.2 | 1.24 |
| Lowndes | 42 | 61 | 68 | 66 | 63 | 300 | 60 | 2.00 |
| Madison | 34 | 64 | 62 | 73 | 72 | 305 | 61 | 2.04 |
| Marion | 15 | 20 | 25 | 26 | 28 | 114 | 22.8 | 0.76 |
| Marshall | 39 | 51 | 70 | 91 | 71 | 322 | 64.4 | 2.15 |
| Monroe | 20 | 48 | 45 | 37 | 38 | 188 | 37.6 | 1.26 |
| Montgomery | 12 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 15 | 66 | 13.2 | 0.44 |
| Neshoba | 18 | 36 | 39 | 27 | 35 | 155 | 31 | 1.04 |
| Newton | 9 | 22 | 24 | 16 | 24 | 95 | 19 | 0.63 |
| Noxubee | 5 | 32 | 16 | 13 | 7 | 73 | 14.6 | 0.49 |
| Oktibbeha | 23 | 38 | 40 | 33 | 30 | 164 | 32.8 | 1.10 |
| Panola | 35 | 75 | 57 | 56 | 61 | 284 | 56.8 | 1.90 |
| Pearl River | 40 | 66 | 65 | 62 | 59 | 292 | 58.4 | 1.95 |
| Perry | 12 | 15 | 13 | 19 | 15 | 74 | 14.8 | 0.49 |
| Pike | 32 | 73 | 43 | 48 | 47 | 243 | 48.6 | 1.62 |
| Pontotoc | 12 | 37 | 41 | 28 | 29 | 147 | 29.4 | 0.98 |
| Prentiss | 13 | 25 | 19 | 22 | 26 | 105 | 21 | 0.70 |
| Quitman | 5 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 39 | 7.8 | 0.26 |
| Rankin | 54 | 122 | 127 | 117 | 121 | 541 | 108.2 | 3.62 |
| Scott | 21 | 45 | 39 | 32 | 36 | 173 | 34.6 | 1.16 |
| Sharkey | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 2.6 | 0.09 |
| Simpson | 21 | 40 | 34 | 30 | 29 | 154 | 30.8 | 1.03 |
| Smith | 7 | 8 | 16 | 21 | 17 | 69 | 13.8 | 0.46 |
| Stone | 11 | 25 | 17 | 17 | 26 | 96 | 19.2 | 0.64 |

| County | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Total Crashes | Rolling Average | Incidence Rate (per 1000 residents) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sunflower** | 12 | 40 | 32 | 28 | 21 | 133 | 26.6 | 0.89 |
| **Tallahatchie** | 8 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 11 | 58 | 11.6 | 0.39 |
| **Tate** | 24 | 33 | 36 | 33 | 32 | 158 | 31.6 | 1.06 |
| **Tippah** | 13 | 26 | 21 | 28 | 22 | 110 | 22 | 0.74 |
| **Tishomingo** | 8 | 33 | 32 | 32 | 22 | 127 | 25.4 | 0.85 |
| **Tunica** | 15 | 24 | 31 | 19 | 28 | 117 | 23.4 | 0.78 |
| **Union** | 18 | 34 | 39 | 37 | 34 | 162 | 32.4 | 1.08 |
| **Walthall** | 3 | 9 | 20 | 19 | 13 | 64 | 12.8 | 0.43 |
| **Warren** | 15 | 53 | 51 | 48 | 42 | 209 | 41.8 | 1.40 |
| **Washington** | 30 | 43 | 51 | 60 | 59 | 243 | 48.6 | 1.62 |
| **Wayne** | 11 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 19 | 87 | 17.4 | 0.58 |
| **Webster** | 6 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 36 | 7.2 | 0.24 |
| **Wilkinson** | 11 | 11 | 7 | 23 | 15 | 67 | 13.4 | 0.45 |
| **Winston** | 8 | 19 | 18 | 22 | 17 | 84 | 16.8 | 0.56 |
| **Yalobusha** | 2 | 12 | 24 | 10 | 20 | 68 | 13.6 | 0.45 |
| **Yazoo** | 17 | 33 | 37 | 33 | 31 | 151 | 30.2 | 1.01 |

Source: MDOT, 2024