



DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTSHEET

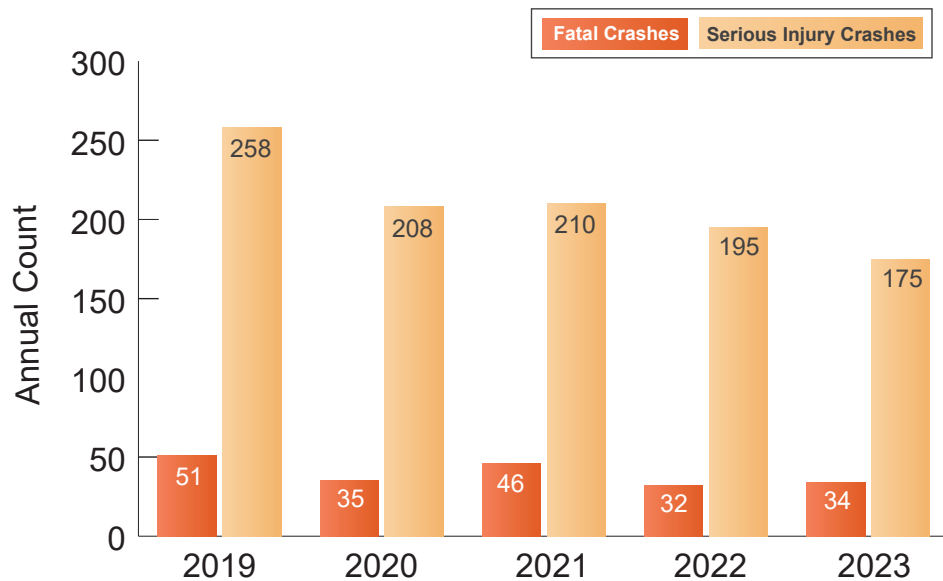
F&SI Crashes = Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

WHAT IS THE SHSP?

South Carolina's 2025-2029 SHSP is a statewide, comprehensive safety plan that provides guidance for all statewide transportation safety professionals to coordinate efforts toward a common goal of reducing traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on South Carolina roadways. The SHSP includes information on ongoing state and national safety programs and highlights achievements of SCDOT and SCDPS to improve roadway safety. Thirteen emphasis areas have been identified as the primary focus of the 2025-2029 SHSP, including Distracted Driving.

DISTRACTED DRIVING OVERVIEW

The roadway can present many unexpected dangers for drivers, requiring driver alertness, fast reaction times, and defensive driving techniques to navigate safely and avoid incidents. When drivers are distracted by their phones or other external distractors, it can decrease their ability to react to unexpected dangers. Between 2019 and 2023, there have been 1,244 distracted driving-related crashes that resulted in serious injury or fatality. **Almost 4% of all fatal crashes and 10% of all serious injury crashes in South Carolina are related to distracted driving.** These statistics likely underestimate the situation, as distracted driving has historically been difficult to enforce by law enforcement under the previous texting law. South Carolina passed the more robust Hands-Free and Distracted Driving Act in 2025, with citations beginning February 28, 2026.



Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 209 serious injury and 40 fatal distracted driving crashes occurred each year. Over this time period, reported fatal and serious injury crashes have declined.



Distracted Driving F&SI crashes most commonly occur with the following four emphasis areas: Lane Departure (31.0%), Intersection (29.9%), Young Drivers (27.9%), and Speeding (23.7%).



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Crash Statistics (2019–2023)

- Annual average: 40 fatal and 209 serious injury distracted-driving crashes
- Reported fatal and serious injury crashes have declined over this time period
- More than 80% of distracted-driving F&SI crashes occurred on secondary (48.1%) and local (35.8%) roads
- 45% of distracted-driving F&SI crashes were single-vehicle collisions
- Pedestrians (102) and bicyclists (32) were involved in distracted-driving F&SI crashes between 2019 and 2023
- Top Contributing Factors:
 - » Driving Too Fast for Conditions (38.6%)
 - » Failure to Yield (8.6%)
 - » Wrong Side/Wrong Way (3.9%)
 - » Disregarded Signs/Signals (3.9%)
 - » Ran off Road (2.5%)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Distracted driving is a widespread and underreported high-risk behavior, contributing to fatal and serious injury crashes statewide
- More than 80% of distracted-driving F&SI crashes occur on local and secondary roads, where unexpected hazards remain common
- Single-vehicle crashes account for nearly half (45%) of distracted-driving F&SI crashes, reflecting delayed reaction and reduced driver awareness
- Pedestrians and bicyclists are regularly impacted, with 134 vulnerable-road-user-involved distracted crashes between 2019 and 2023
- South Carolina ranks third nationally in distracted-driving rate (16.5%), reinforcing the importance of the recent enactment of the South Carolina Hands-Free and Distracted Driving Act