



UNRESTRAINED FACTSHEET

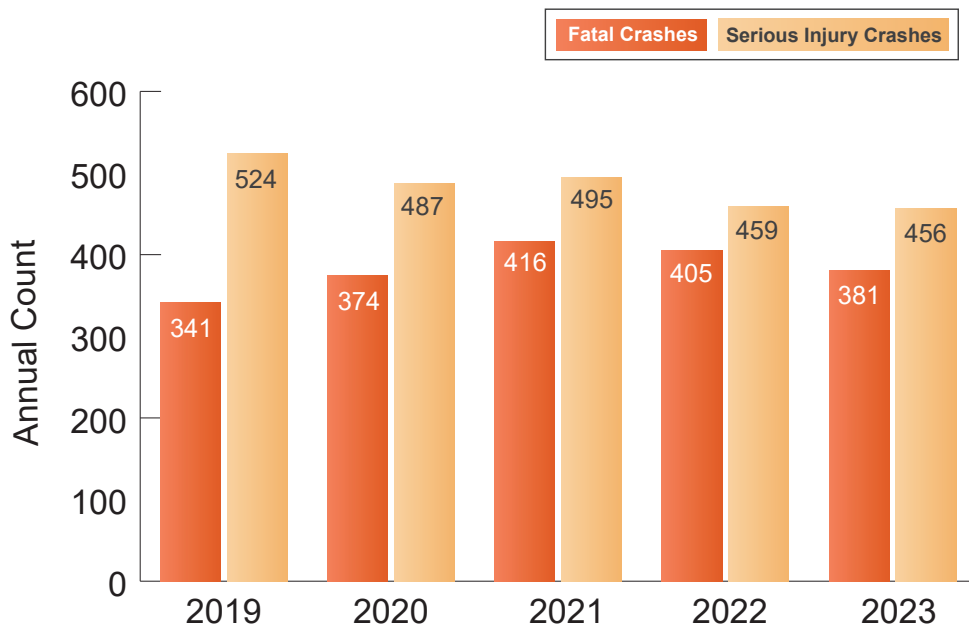
F&SI Crashes = Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

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 Unrestrained occupants.

UNRESTRAINED OVERVIEW

The Unrestrained emphasis area refers to passenger vehicle occupants who did not use or misused seat belts. In a crash, proper seat belt usage can often be the difference between life and death. Between 2019 and 2023, there were 1,917 crashes resulting in the deaths of 2,182 unrestrained occupants. **More than 38% of all fatal crashes and 21% of all serious injury crashes in South Carolina involve unrestrained occupants.**



Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 484 serious injury and 383 fatal unrestrained occupant crashes occurred each year. Over this time period, serious injury crashes have declined while fatal crashes have fluctuated, peaking in 2021.



Unrestrained F&SI crashes most commonly occur with the following four emphasis areas: Lane Departure (71.4%), Speeding (49.3%), Young Drivers (30.0%), and Impaired Users (27.6%).



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Crash Statistics (2019–2023)

- Annual average: 383 fatal and 484 serious injury unrestrained crashes
- Serious injury crashes have declined over this period, while fatal crashes have fluctuated
- 57% of unrestrained F&SI crashes occurred at night, when reduced visibility increases crash severity
- 58% of unrestrained F&SI crashes occurred on rural roadways
- More than half (52%) of unrestrained F&SI crashes occurred on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday
- Top Contributing Factors:
 - » Driving Too Fast for Conditions (29.6%)
 - » Under the Influence (27.6%)
 - » Failure to Yield (8.3%)
 - » Wrong Side/Wrong Way (6.1%)
 - » Aggressive Operation (4.7%)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES



Enforcement



Education

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Unrestrained occupants represent more than 38% of all fatal crashes statewide
- 43% of occupants fatally or severely injured were unrestrained during the day compared to 57% at night
- Rural roadways experience the highest concentration of unrestrained F&SI crashes, particularly rural major collectors
- Nearly one-third (31%) of unrestrained F&SI crashes involve tree impacts, followed by ditches and utility structures
- Unrestrained crashes often include other factors such as lane departure and risky behaviors such as speeding and impairment
- Alcohol impairment is a major factor, present in 28% of unrestrained F&SI crashes