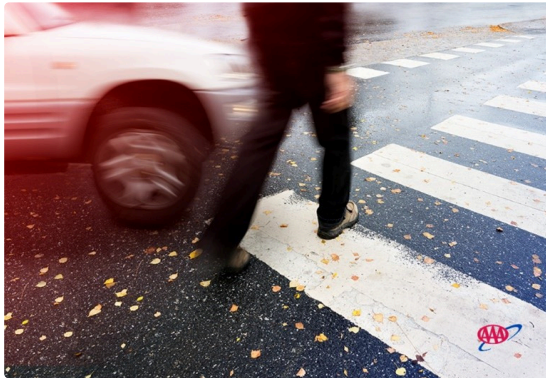




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AAA: Dark City Roads are Deadliest for Pedestrians at Night

New research finds fatalities occur disproportionately in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods



CHARLOTTE, NC., (Feb. 11, 2025) – New research from the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#) reveals a concerning trend in pedestrian fatalities in the United States. After reaching a historic low in 2009, pedestrian deaths have risen by over 80% in the past 15 years. Interestingly, almost the entire increase in pedestrian deaths has occurred after dark on urban arterial roads.

Common characteristics of urban arterial roads:

- **Lots of traffic** – these roads handle more cars and buses than smaller neighborhood streets.
- **Fewer stops** – they typically have traffic lights at widely-spaced intersections instead of stop signs to keep traffic flowing, limiting the availability of safe, accessible options for crossing safely as a pedestrian.
- **Multiple lanes** – usually have more than one lane in each direction.
- **Access to key areas** – they connect to highways, downtown areas, shopping centers, and other important spots.

Additional findings from the study:

- Most pedestrian fatalities occurred well outside of downtown: more than half happened more than 4 miles from the city center.
- Pedestrian crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities disproportionately occurred in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. These are neighborhoods with older housing and greater diversity of land use. Many who live or work in these neighborhoods rely on walking for daily transportation or access to transit but are forced to walk in poorly lit areas with poor or no sidewalks and long distances between safe places to cross.

“The problem is not easily solved by simply urging drivers and pedestrians to watch out for each other,” said Tiffany Wright, spokesperson for AAA-The Auto Club Group in the Carolinas. “Reducing the spike in pedestrian deaths depends on state and local leaders working together to design and upgrade roads for vehicle and pedestrian safety.”

To enhance pedestrian safety and reduce fatalities, AAA suggests several key steps:

- **Follow the Data:** Let the data be the guide — invest in the areas and solutions that will make the biggest impact. That means targeting unsafe locations outside downtown areas, often in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- **Coordinate for Impact:** State and local governments can work more closely to invest resources to save lives where needed most, regardless of who owns that roadway.
- **Demand a Safer System:** A [Safe System](#) approach anticipates human mistakes and reduces crash severity by addressing safety holistically through safer roads, vehicles, speeds, and road users.

Drivers can do their part by:

- **Minimize risky driving behaviors** such as speeding, texting, driving while drowsy or distracted, or driving under the influence of cannabis or alcohol. This significantly increases the risk of a collision. Remember to stay alert! Follow



not a replacement for an engaged driver.

- **Drive with extra caution at night**, as this is the riskiest time for pedestrians and when [vehicle safety systems struggle](#) the most.

Pedestrians should:

- **Be visible.** Wear brightly colored or reflective clothing and stay in well-lit areas.
- **Use sidewalks and using crosswalks** as often as possible. If there's no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- **Always obey traffic signals**, look both ways before crossing the street, and do not walk and text.

About AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Established in 1947 by AAA, the Foundation for Traffic Safety is a nonprofit, publicly funded 501(c)(3) charitable research and educational organization. The AAA Foundation's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries by researching their causes and by educating the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce injuries when they do occur. This research informs the development of educational materials for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users.

The Auto Club Group (ACG) is the second largest AAA club in North America with more than 13 million members across 14 U.S. states and two U.S. territories. ACG and its affiliates provide members with roadside assistance, insurance products, banking and financial services, travel offerings and more. ACG belongs to the national AAA federation with more than 64 million members in the United States and Canada. AAA's mission is to protect and advance freedom of mobility and improve traffic safety. For more information, get the [AAA Mobile app](#), visit [AAA.com](#), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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