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**Violence Policy Center**

# **Gun Deaths Outpace Motor Vehicle Deaths in 34 States and the District of Columbia in 2023**

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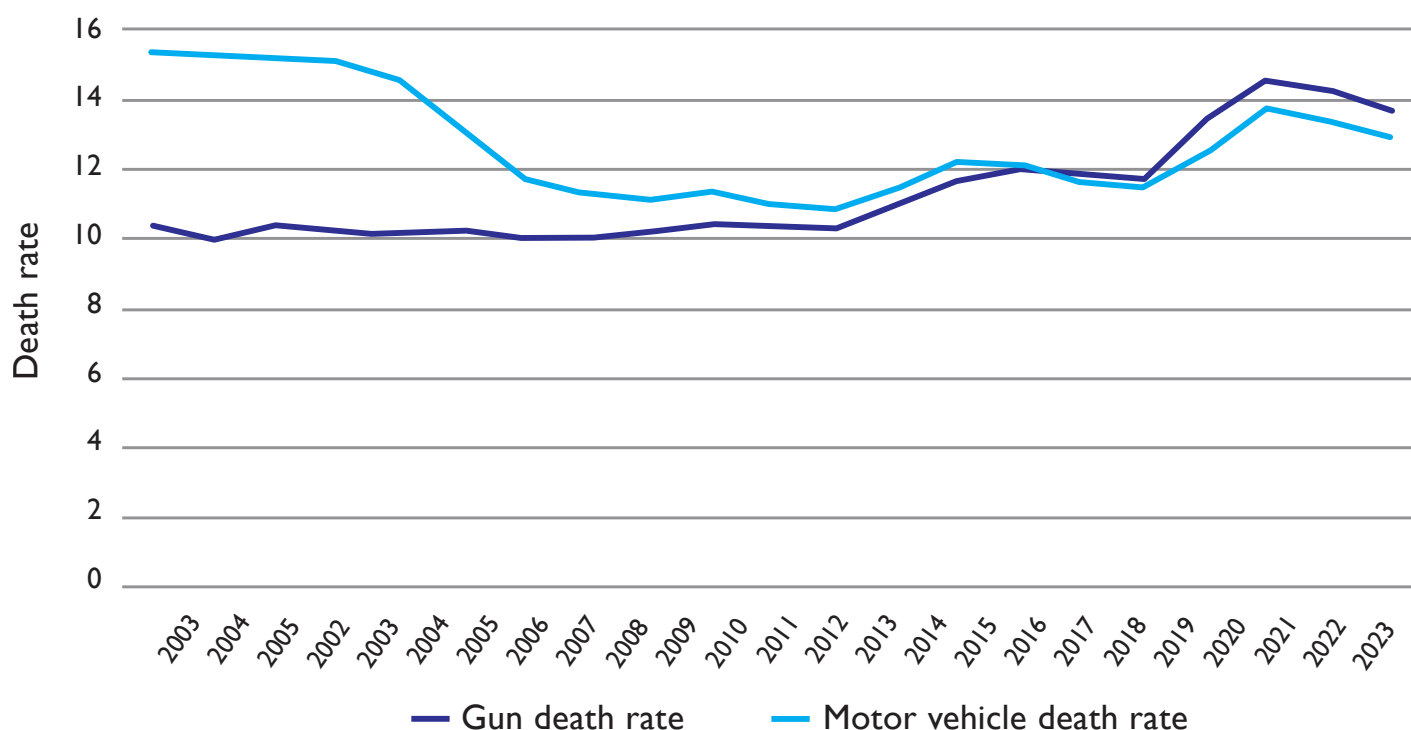
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## GUN DEATHS OUTPACED MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS IN 34 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA IN 2023

Firearm fatalities exceeded motor vehicle fatalities in 34 states and the District of Columbia in 2023 according to the most recent state-level data available from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>1</sup> That year, gun deaths (including gun suicide, homicide, and fatal unintentional shootings) outpaced motor vehicle deaths in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (Table 1).

Between 2013 and 2023, the motor vehicle death rate increased by 17 percent nationally, while the gun death rate increased by 32 percent. Figure 1 shows that the rate of gun deaths began outpacing the rate of motor vehicle deaths in 2018.

**FIGURE 1. MOTOR VEHICLE AND GUN VIOLENCE DEATH RATES, 2003 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



In little more than a decade, the number of states plus the District of Columbia where gun deaths exceed motor vehicle deaths has nearly doubled: from just 18 in 2013 (Table 2) to 35 in 2023 (Table 1, Figure 2).

## IN 2023, GUN DEATHS EXCEEDED MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS IN 34 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**TABLE 1. 2023 GUN DEATHS AND MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS BY STATE<sup>1</sup>**

State	Gun Deaths	Gun Death Rate <sup>a</sup>	Motor Vehicle Deaths	Motor Vehicle Death Rate <sup>a</sup>
Alabama	1,292	25.6	1,088	20.9
Alaska	176	23.5	89	12.1
Arizona	1,419	18.5	1,349	17.4
Arkansas	671	21.9	655	20.9
California	3,209	8.0	4,777	11.7
Colorado	1,019	16.7	818	13.3
Connecticut	225	6.2	336	9.2
Delaware	124	11.9	153	15.0
District of Columbia	225	31.0	56	7.6
Florida	3,253	13.7	3,641	15.4
Georgia	2,070	18.6	1,830	16.2
Hawaii	73	4.9	102	6.5
Idaho	356	18.0	329	16.3
Illinois	1,691	13.6	1,356	10.3
Indiana	1,258	18.3	985	14.0
Iowa	341	10.6	418	12.5
Kansas	475	16.2	417	13.5
Kentucky	841	18.4	883	19.0
Louisiana	1,261	28.3	859	18.7
Maine	200	13.9	154	11.0
Maryland	737	12.3	651	10.2
Massachusetts	270	3.7	435	5.7
Michigan	1,384	13.9	1,246	11.9
Minnesota	525	8.9	495	8.2
Mississippi	844	29.5	835	27.8
Missouri	1,324	21.3	1,049	16.3
Montana	247	21.5	220	18.6
Nebraska	213	10.7	280	13.8
Nevada	616	18.4	446	13.4
New Hampshire	143	9.6	140	9.0
New Jersey	430	4.6	661	6.8
New Mexico	530	25.3	481	22.6
New York	943	4.7	1,291	6.2
North Carolina	1,803	16.4	1,807	16.2
North Dakota	103	12.8	115	14.2
Ohio	1,768	15.0	1,409	11.6
Oklahoma	814	19.9	747	18.0

**TABLE 1. 2023 GUN DEATHS AND MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS BY STATE<sup>1</sup>**

State	Gun Deaths	Gun Death Rate <sup>a</sup>	Motor Vehicle Deaths	Motor Vehicle Death Rate <sup>a</sup>
Oregon	642	14.2	572	12.9
Pennsylvania	1,807	13.6	1,355	9.9
Rhode Island	58	4.8	73	6.0
South Carolina	1,019	19.1	1,103	20.1
South Dakota	112	12.3	152	16.5
Tennessee	1,587	22.0	1,368	18.7
Texas	4,561	14.8	4,501	14.5
Utah	489	14.8	303	9.0
Vermont	83	12.1	80	10.8
Virginia	1,237	13.8	970	10.5
Washington	1,053	13.0	909	11.2
West Virginia	315	16.7	293	15.4
Wisconsin	762	12.6	668	11.0
Wyoming	130	21.8	100	17.0
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>46,728</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>45,050</b>	<b>12.9</b>

<sup>a</sup> All rates presented in this report are age-adjusted and per 100,000.

## IN 2013, GUN DEATHS EXCEEDED MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS IN ONLY 17 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**TABLE 2. 2013 GUN DEATHS AND MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS BY STATE<sup>1</sup>**

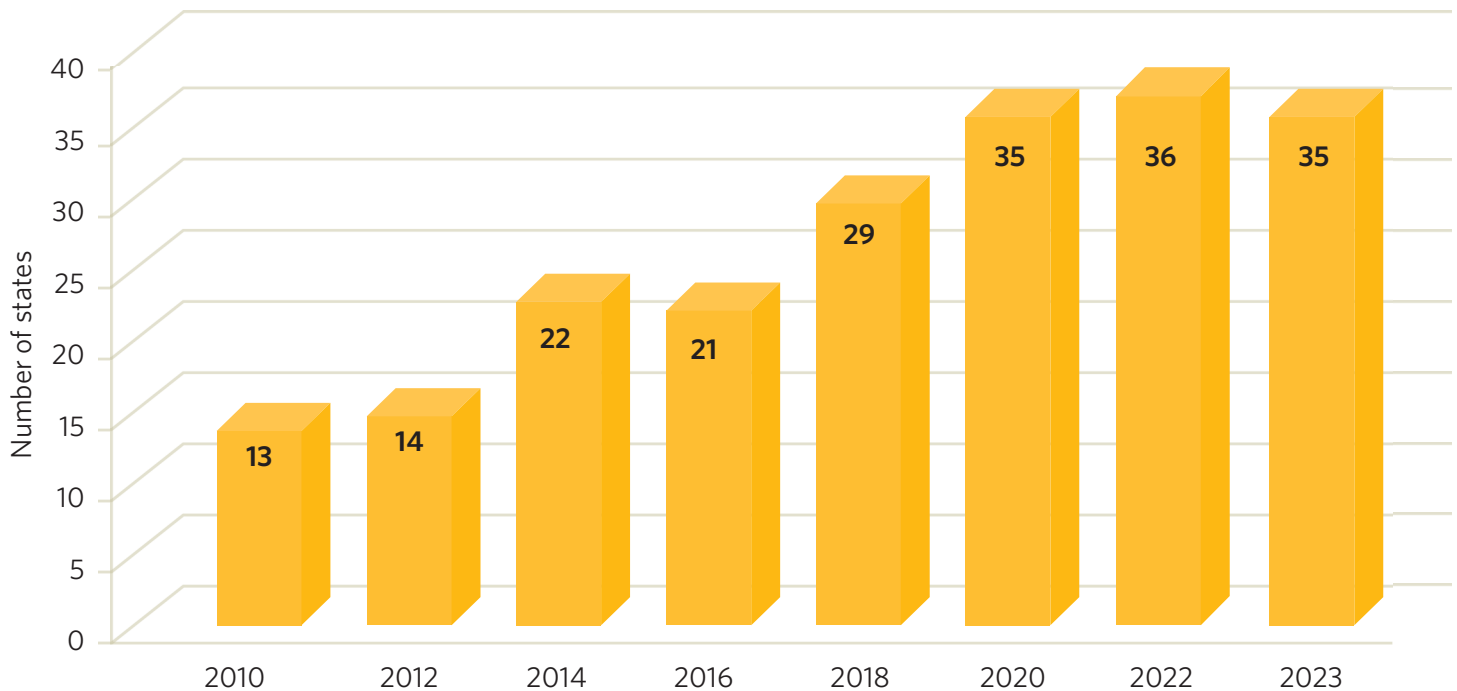
State	Gun Deaths	Gun Death Rate <sup>a</sup>	Motor Vehicle Deaths	Motor Vehicle Death Rate <sup>a</sup>
Alabama	860	17.5	910	18.8
Alaska	144	19.5	66	8.4
Arizona	941	14.0	863	12.7
Arkansas	501	16.7	541	18.4
California	3,026	7.7	3,417	8.7
Colorado	619	11.5	514	9.6
Connecticut	161	4.5	300	8.2
Delaware	100	10.4	115	12.2
District of Columbia	71	8.5	30	4.7
Florida	2,442	11.8	2,449	12.0
Georgia	1,262	12.6	1,273	12.7
Hawaii	38	2.6	112	7.8
Idaho	227	14.1	262	16.0
Illinois	1,117	8.5	1,127	8.6
Indiana	857	13.0	840	12.6
Iowa	253	8.0	354	11.0
Kansas	331	11.2	382	12.9
Kentucky	622	13.5	702	15.4

**TABLE 2. 2013 GUN DEATHS AND MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS BY STATE<sup>1</sup>**

State	Gun Deaths	Gun Death Rate <sup>a</sup>	Motor Vehicle Deaths	Motor Vehicle Death Rate <sup>a</sup>
Louisiana	886	19.1	767	16.5
Maine	158	10.8	168	12.1
Maryland	578	9.6	531	8.7
Massachusetts	213	3.1	381	5.2
Michigan	1,190	11.9	1,063	10.4
Minnesota	427	7.7	473	8.4
Mississippi	525	17.7	682	22.6
Missouri	880	14.3	781	12.7
Montana	172	16.8	239	23.4
Nebraska	168	9.1	238	12.6
Nevada	395	13.8	281	10.1
New Hampshire	93	6.5	138	10.0
New Jersey	506	5.8	566	6.2
New Mexico	326	15.4	327	15.6
New York	863	4.2	1,329	6.4
North Carolina	1,223	12.1	1,363	13.5
North Dakota	86	11.7	124	17.8
Ohio	1,289	11.0	1,144	9.6
Oklahoma	632	16.5	727	18.7
Oregon	462	11.0	363	8.8
Pennsylvania	1,451	11.1	1,340	10.0
Rhode Island	56	5.2	77	6.6
South Carolina	745	15.2	789	16.2
South Dakota	80	10.0	145	16.8
Tennessee	1,030	15.4	1,027	15.5
Texas	2,778	10.6	3,631	13.8
Utah	339	12.6	234	8.8
Vermont	65	9.5	76	11.6
Virginia	864	10.1	780	9.1
Washington	632	8.7	540	7.5
West Virginia	280	14.3	332	17.5
Wisconsin	570	9.7	607	10.3
Wyoming	102	16.5	92	16.1
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>33,636</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>35,612</b>	<b>11.0</b>



**FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF STATES PLUS THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WITH MORE GUN DEATHS THAN MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS<sup>1</sup>**



These numbers are all the more shocking when one stops to think about the average American's exposure to motor vehicles as opposed to firearms. More than nine out of 10 American households have access to a motor vehicle<sup>2</sup> while approximately four out of 10 American households contain a gun.<sup>3</sup>

As Dr. David Hemenway, director of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, noted in his 2004 book *Private Guns, Public Health*: "[T]he time Americans spend using their cars is orders of magnitudes greater than the time spent using their guns. It is probable that per hour of exposure, guns are far more dangerous. Moreover, we have lots of safety regulations concerning the manufacture of motor vehicles; there are virtually no safety regulations for domestic firearms manufacture."<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia already experience gun death counts that exceed their motor vehicle death counts. Gun death and injury is an accelerating public health crisis fueled by an unregulated industry (guns are the only consumer product that are not regulated by a federal agency for health and safety<sup>b</sup>) that works to develop increasingly lethal firearms and ammunition. The industry then touts this firepower in its marketing efforts. As with motor vehicles, until the gun industry is held accountable for the harm caused by its products only limited progress can be made to reduce firearms death and injury. Such measures would include comprehensive health and safety regulation of the firearms industry and repeal of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA).

## REFERENCES

1. CDC WISQARS Fatal and Nonfatal Injury Reports. Accessed September 17, 2025. Available at: <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/reports/>. Note: Motor vehicle deaths were identified by the death mechanism “Motor vehicle, overall.” This definition includes motor vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and other motor vehicle decedents.
2. Household Size by Vehicles Available, U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed September 18, 2025. Available at: <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2023.B08201?q=B08201++Household+Size+by+Vehicles+Available>.
3. According to the Pew Research Center, “About four-in-ten U.S. adults say they live in a household with a gun, including 32% who say they personally own one.” Key facts about Americans and guns, Pew Research Center, July 24, 2024 (<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/24/key-facts-about-americans-and-guns/>).
4. David Hemenway, *Private Guns, Public Health*, University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 182.

<sup>b</sup> For more information about the many ways the industry exploits its unique lack of health and safety regulation, see the website for the Violence Policy Center’s ongoing Campaign for Gun Industry Accountability, available at: <https://gunindustryaccountability.org/>.







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