VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Bicycle-Related Injuries

October 2019

In 2017 in the United States, almost 800 bicyclists were killed in traffic crashes.[1] Additionally, there were almost 160,800 hospitalizations and emergency department visits resulting from motor vehicle traffic-related bicycle injuries.[2]

Factors such as speeding, inattention and impairment among drivers can be fatal for bicyclists. A combination of education, advocacy programs, policy implementation and infrastructure improvements can help to improve the safety of bicyclists in Vermont communities.[3]

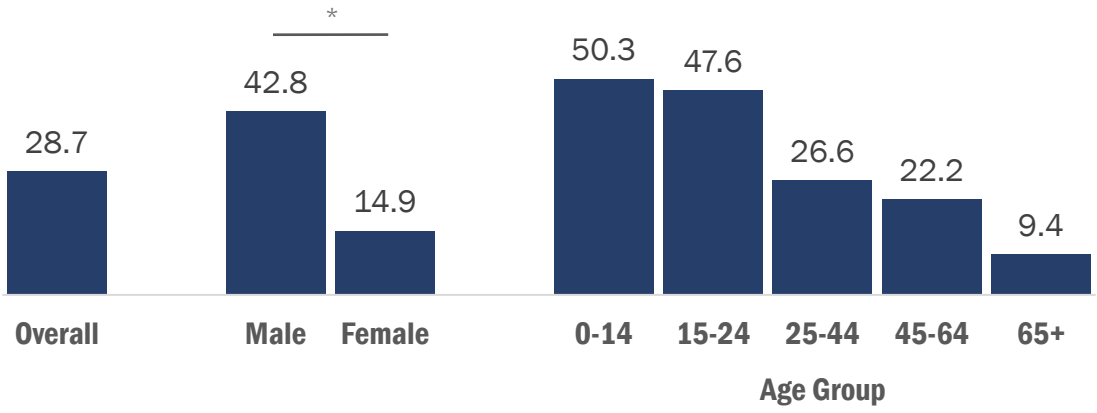
During 2017 in Vermont, there were 179 hospitalizations and emergency department visits related to bicycle injuries involving motor vehicles.

Bicycle-Related Injuries Involving Motor Vehicles

In 2017 in Vermont, there were 179 hospitalizations and emergency department (ED) visits, and zero deaths[4], resulting from bicyclists being struck by a motor vehicle. The rate of hospitalizations and ED visits decreased from 32.2 per 100,000 in 2016, to 28.7 per 100,000 in 2017. However, this change was not statistically significant. In terms of severity, 11 of the 179 visits for being struck by a motor vehicle in 2017 required hospitalization.

Males have a significantly higher rate of hospitalizations and ED visits compared to females. Those ages 24 and younger, as compared to those 25 years and older, are also more likely to be hospitalized or visit the emergency department for bicycle-related injuries. Alcohol and/or substance use by bicyclists are found among 4% of those hospitalized for injuries involving motor vehicles in Vermont.

Bicycle-Related Injuries Involving Motor Vehicles
Hospitalization/ED Visit Rates per 100,0000 Vermonters, 2017



* Notes statistical difference.
Source: Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set, 2017

County Level Bicycle-Related Injuries

The rates of hospitalizations and ED visits related to bicycle injuries involving motor vehicles vary across Vermont. Compared to the state overall, hospitalization and ED visit rates were **significantly higher** in Chittenden County and **significantly lower** in Bennington, Lamoille, Caledonia, Windham, Windsor, and Rutland Counties.

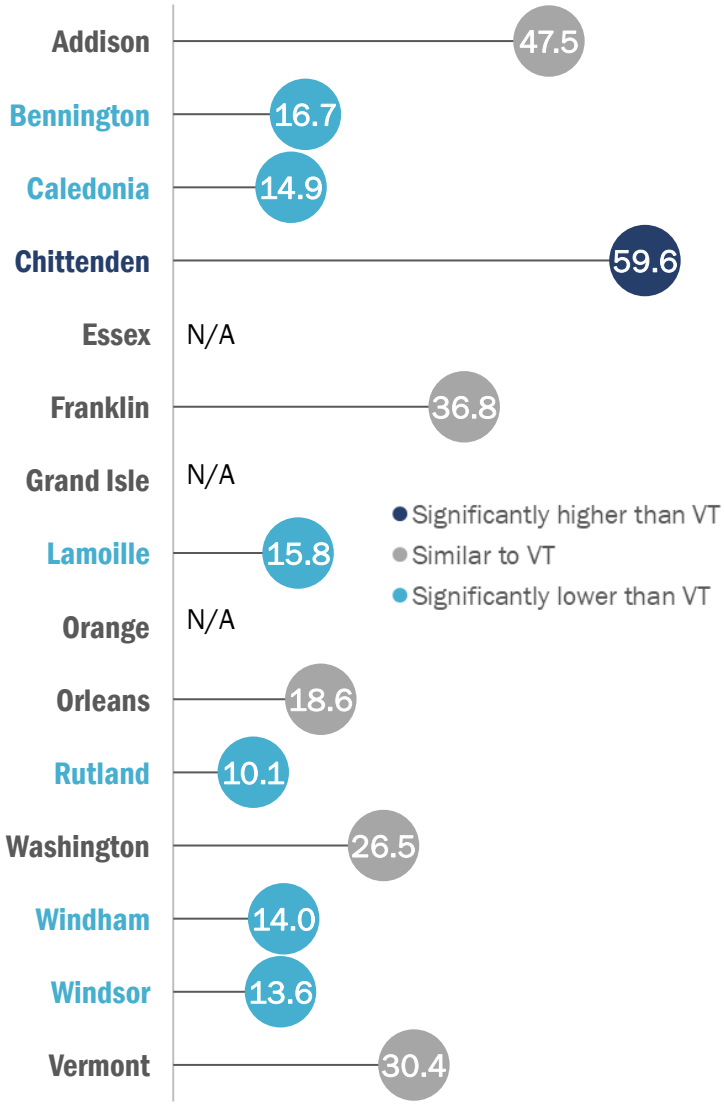
Key Takeaways

When properly fitted and used correctly, helmets can provide protection and allow for visibility while on the road.[5] In 2017, three in 10 middle school students reported rarely or never wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle.[6]

Under the Complete Streets policy, municipalities must consider the needs of all users of Vermont's roadways.[7] Communities designed for the safety of vulnerable road users can allow for safe travel and improved health through increased physical activity levels and reduced environmental impacts.

Community members can help promote safe roadway behaviors through participation in the roadway improvement process, as well as various programs and events, such as Safe Routes to School, driver education courses, community events hosted by law enforcement, and public awareness campaigns.

Hospitalization/ED Visit Rates by County of Residence per 100,0000 Vermonters, 2016-2017



Note: Some county rates were suppressed due to small numbers.
Source: Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set, 2016-2017

For more information on Road User Safety, visit: www.healthvermont.gov/RoadSafety

For questions about this data brief, contact: Kate Emmons, kate.emmons@vermont.gov

References:

[1] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2017 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes.
[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS. Accessed Oct 2019.
[3] Vermont Highway Safety Alliance, VT Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2017-2021.
[4] Vermont Vital Statistics, 2017.
[5] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Bicycle Safety. Accessed Oct 2019.
[6] Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017.
[7] Vermont Department of Health, Complete Streets: A Guide for Vermont Communities.