



For immediate release: August 13, 2014

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## **New Report Finds Older Connecticut Pedestrians at Risk**

*Analysis shows people aged 60 years and older suffer disproportionately high pedestrian fatality rates*

Connecticut pedestrians 60 years and older are disproportionately at risk of being killed in collisions with vehicles while walking, according to a new study by Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

From 2003 through 2012, 123 pedestrians aged 60 years and older were killed on Connecticut roads, according to Tri-State's report, *Older Pedestrians at Risk: A Ten Year Survey and Look Ahead*. Though comprising only 19 percent of the State's population, this age group accounted for 35 percent of the total pedestrian fatalities in these 10 years. Those aged 75 years and older represent seven percent of Connecticut's population, but 17 percent of pedestrian deaths. The pedestrian fatality rate for Connecticut residents 60 and older is more than twice that of residents under 60. For residents 75 and older, the pedestrian fatality rate is over three times that of those under 60.

"In 10 years, the share of Connecticut residents 60 and older increased from 17.9 percent of the population to 20.7 percent, 2.8 percentage points," said Renata Silberblatt, Tri-State Transportation Campaign's senior analyst. "As our population ages, it is imperative for municipalities and state officials to design communities with the needs of active older residents in mind."

According to AARP, decreased bone density exacerbates injuries sustained by seniors. Coupled with mobility issues that hinder their ability to across a road quickly, this age group is particularly prone to critical injuries from car collisions.

"Despite older pedestrians' increased risk of being killed while walking, simple roadway improvements – clearly marked crosswalks, longer crossing signals and wider pedestrian islands – make walking safer and easier for older residents and younger residents alike," noted Veronica Vanterpool, executive director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

"Connecticut's complete streets law requires municipalities to consider all users in road design and maintenance projects, but few are," said Kelly Kennedy, Executive Director of Bike Walk Connecticut. "Cities, towns and counties across the state must be proactive in ensuring that road and bridge projects include pedestrian and bicyclist components like sidewalks and bike lanes," she added.

Tri-State's research showed that New London County had the highest average older pedestrian fatality rate of any county in Connecticut and the 20<sup>th</sup> highest of the 41 counties in the tri-state region (Connecticut, New Jersey and downstate New York counties). Of Litchfield County's 36 pedestrian fatalities, 12 were pedestrians 60 or older. The chart below ranks all Connecticut counties by older pedestrian fatality rates:

Rank	County	Avg. Older Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100,000* (2003-2012)	Avg. Younger (under 60 years) Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100,000* (2003-2012)	Older (60+ years) Pedestrian Fatalities, 2003-2012
1	New London County	2.39	1.10	12
2	Litchfield County	2.22	0.13	9
3	Tolland County	2.00	0.80	5
4	Fairfield County	1.91	0.60	31
5	New Haven County	1.85	0.99	30
6	Hartford County	1.74	0.89	30
7	Windham County	1.44	0.63	3
8	Middlesex County	0.85	0.70	3
n/a	Connecticut	1.84	0.79	123

*\*Fatality rates are calculated according to the population of the relevant age group (i.e., population aged 60 years and older, population under 60 years).*

“For far too many older residents, simply crossing the street or walking to the grocery store can be fatal. Continuing to invest resources in making our streets safe for all users is vital to creating more livable communities and ending these preventable deaths,” said Jennifer Millea, associate state director of communications for AARP Connecticut.

Tri-State recommends that:

- ConnDOT should create and fund Safe Routes for Seniors and Safe Routes to Transit programs that implement pedestrian safety improvements in areas with high concentrations of seniors and near transit stops.
- ConnDOT should redesign Connecticut’s Highway Design Manual, the state’s standard road design reference book, to address the goals and policies of the state’s complete streets law.
- Municipalities should work to enact complete streets ordinances that require all transportation projects to consider the needs of pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
- ConnDOT should adopt the National Association of City Transportation Officials’ (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guidelines. The guidelines provide technical standards that departments of transportation can use to create streets that safely accommodate all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. The Federal Highway Administration, thirty-seven cities, including New York City, and six states have adopted NACTO standards.
- Communities across the state should pursue transit oriented development (TOD), which ensures that housing, shops and offices are in proximity to existing bus and rail routes.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign Senior Analyst Renata Silberblatt conducted the analysis using data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Encyclopedia and the U.S. Census Bureau to examine fatality rates by age and gender for each county in Connecticut, downstate New York and New Jersey.

The full report, as well as county fact sheets and maps showing the locations of pedestrian fatalities throughout the region can be found at [www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org).

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*The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.*