

LIVES SAVED:
TOTAL LIVES SAVED 1982-2009: 35,375
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R. Solomon & S. Pitel
Professors, Faculty of Law
The University of Western Ontario

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Although there have been sharp declines in alcohol-related traffic fatalities in Canada during the past three decades, there is no precise estimate of the total number of lives that have been saved. However, a reliable estimate can be calculated. Such an estimate is important in terms of documenting the progress that has been made and in determining what additional measures must be implemented to achieve further substantial reductions in these needless deaths.

Dr. James Fell, an internationally-respected traffic safety expert and former Chief of Research and Evaluation for the United States National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), developed a method for estimating the number of lives saved in the United States. Given the similarities in Canada and the United States in drinking and driving patterns, collision rates and other relevant variables, MADD Canada has adopted Dr. Fell's approach in estimating the number of lives saved in Canada since 1982.

The starting point for the analysis is the 1982 crash statistics. According to Transport Canada, there were 4,169 fatalities on Canadian roads in that year. The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) has estimated that 60% of the fatalities were alcohol-related (2,501) and that 40% (1,668) were non-alcohol-related. Dr. Fell's approach assumes that if there were no declines in alcohol-related fatalities, this 60/40 ratio would remain constant. Using the number of non-alcohol-related crash fatalities as the base, we calculated the number of fatalities that would have occurred had the 60/40 ratio remained constant. The difference between this figure and the actual number of traffic fatalities provides an estimate of the number of lives saved due to the reduction in alcohol-related fatalities. These calculations are presented in Table I below.

The number of total traffic fatalities for 1982 to 1997 has been obtained from Transport Canada's "Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics 1999" (Table entitled "Collisions and Casualties – 1980-1999"). The number of total traffic fatalities for 1998 to 2009 has been obtained from Transport Canada's "Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics 2009" (Table entitled "Collisions and Casualties – 1990-2009").

The percentage of alcohol-related fatalities and of non-alcohol-related fatalities for 1987 to 2009 has been obtained from Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, *Alcohol-Crash Problem in Canada: 2009* prepared by TIRF (November 2011) (Table 3-7).

Table I: Analysis of the Lives Saved in Canada due to Reductions in Alcohol-Related Fatal Crashes from 1982 to 2009

Year	Total Traffic Fatalities	Alcohol-Related Fatalities		Non-Alcohol-Related Fatalities		Total Fatalities if Alcohol-Related Ratio Remained at 1982 Level	Lives Saved Due To Reductions in Alcohol-Related Fatalities
		Fatalities	%	Fatalities	%		
1982	4,169	2,501	60.0%	1,668	40.0%	4,169	
1983	4,216	2,441	57.9%	1,775	42.1%	4,437	221
1984	4,120	2,324	56.4%	1,796	43.6%	4,491	371
1985	4,364	2,265	51.9%	2,099	48.1%	5,248	884
1986	4,068	2,132	52.4%	1,936	47.6%	4,841	773
1987	4,286	2,276	53.1%	2,010	46.9%	5,025	739
1988	4,154	2,106	50.7%	2,052	49.4%	5,130	976
1989	4,246	1,970	46.4%	2,272	53.5%	5,679	1,433
1990	3,963	1,799	45.4%	2,164	54.6%	5,409	1,446
1991	3,690	1,771	48.0%	1,919	52.0%	4,797	1,107
1992	3,501	1,680	48.0%	1,817	51.9%	4,543	1,042
1993	3,615	1,616	44.7%	1,999	55.3%	4,998	1,383
1994	3,263	1,432	43.9%	1,831	56.1%	4,576	1,313
1995	3,351	1,454	43.4%	1,897	56.6%	4,742	1,391
1996	3,091	1,289	41.7%	1,805	58.4%	4,513	1,422
1997	3,063	1,195	39.0%	1,865	60.9%	4,663	1,600
1998	2,919	1,141	39.1%	1,778	60.9%	4,444	1,525
1999	2,980	986	33.1%	1,994	66.9%	4,984	2,004
2000	2,903	1,033	35.6%	1,870	64.4%	4,674	1,771
2001	2,756	1,045	37.9%	1,711	62.1%	4,279	1,523
2002	2,921	1,022	35.0%	1,899	65.0%	4,747	1,826
2003	2,779	1,064	38.3%	1,715	61.7%	4,287	1,508
2004	2,731	948	34.7%	1,783	65.3%	4,458	1,727
2005	2,898	1,058	36.5%	1,840	63.5%	4,601	1,703
2006	2,884	1,070	37.1%	1,814	62.9%	4,535	1,651
2007	2,761	1,052	38.1%	1,709	61.9%	4,273	1,512
2008	2,419	936	38.7%	1,483	61.3%	3,707	1,288
2009	2,209	831	37.6%	1,378	62.4%	3,445	1,236
Totals	94,320	42,437		51,879		129,695	35,375
Total Lives Saved = 35,375							

The figures in this Table are estimates, as the true number of lives saved cannot be known with certainty. Nevertheless, these figures are based on a scientifically justifiable approach and provide a reasonable estimate of the total number of lives that have been saved. The figures provide us with an important perspective on the progress that has been made since the founding of MADD Canada and its predecessor organizations.

MADD Canada is extremely gratified to see that its efforts, along with those of other organizations and agencies, have contributed to reducing alcohol-related traffic deaths. However, we must be mindful that during this period 42,437 Canadians were killed in alcohol-related crashes and that these crashes remain Canada's leading criminal cause of death. While we are pleased with the progress that has been made, we must redouble our efforts if we are to make further gains in minimizing alcohol-related crash deaths and injuries in our society.