

Yolo County Individualized Traffic Safety Report

Across the nation, rural areas are experiencing tremendous growth and transformation. Where once rural roads were used mainly to transport goods to market or to move farm machinery from location to location, rural roads now must accommodate commute and leisure trips that may clash with traditional transportation patterns. This influx of nontraditional traffic presents a major safety concern for rural road users.

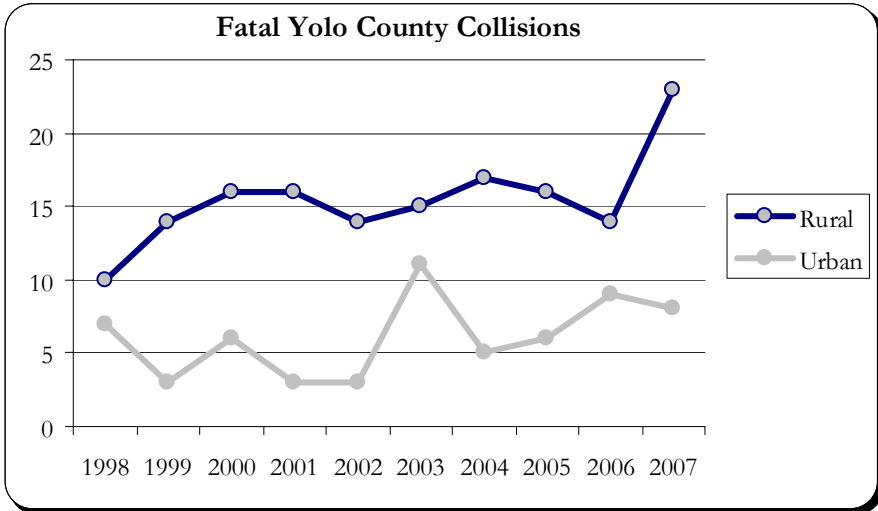
Nationally, 23 percent of the population lives in rural areas; yet, in 2006, 56 percent of the 42,642 traffic fatalities nationwide occurred in rural areas. In addition, the fatality rate in rural areas is over 4 times as high as the fatality rate (measured as deaths/100,000 persons) in urban areas. Preventing severe collisions is especially important in rural areas because statistics show that victims are more likely to die at the crash scene in rural areas than in urban areas. Of the 27,323 drivers killed in 2006, 66 percent of rural drivers and 51 percent of urban drivers died at the scene of the crash, and rural drivers represented 72 percent of drivers who died en route to the hospital. On a positive note, rural traffic fatalities did decrease 7 percent from 1997 to 2006, but the fact remains that rural areas account for a disproportionate number of fatalities. California safety statistics reflect a similar phenomenon. In 2006, only 7 percent of the population lived in rural areas, but rural areas accounted for 37 percent of the state's 4,236 traffic fatalities. See Table 1 below for more detail.

Having national and statewide data can help start discussions about roadway safety in rural areas, but more detailed safety data is necessary to find safety solutions at the local level. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments, as part of its Rural Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) planning effort, has compiled sample safety statistics (using the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System) for each county in the region in the hopes that these "safety reports" can be further customized to help bolster grant applications and inform public policy decisions that will make our rural roadways safer.

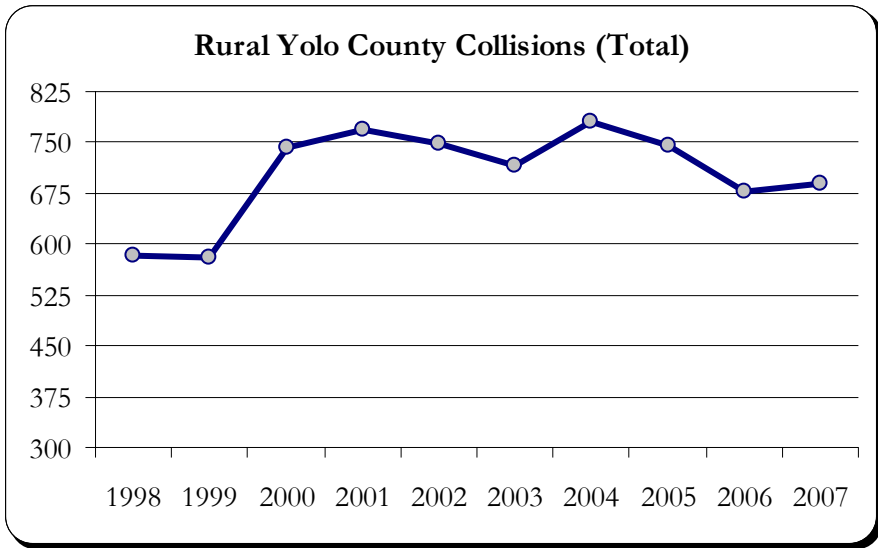
As it is part of the RUCS project, this safety report focuses on the rural areas of Yolo County. Unless otherwise stated, only fatal, rural crashes are included in the following safety statistics.

Yolo County in Perspective

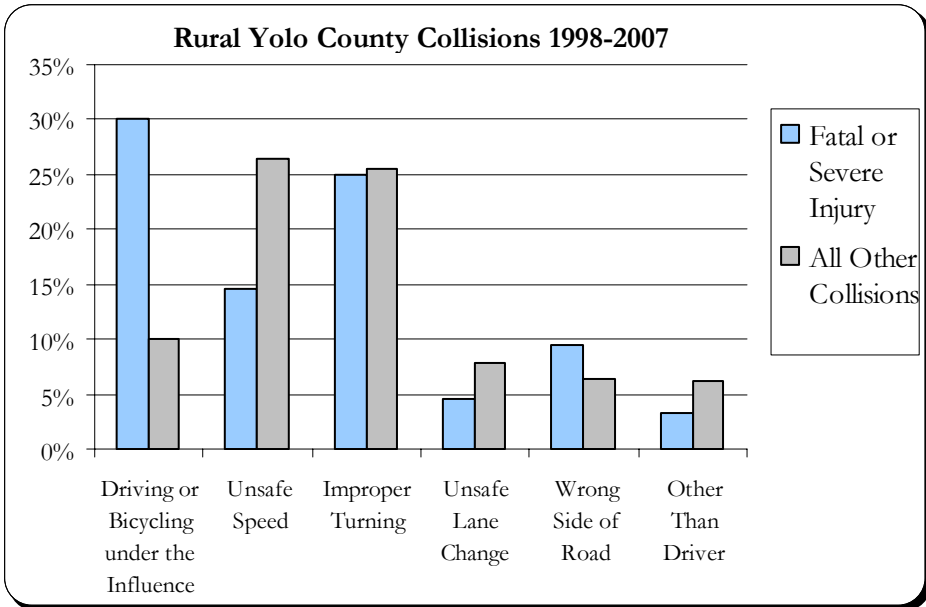
	Table 1: Summary Safety Statistics ¹							
	US		California		SACOG Region (2000)		Yolo County (2000)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural ²	Urban	Rural
Population (2006)	231,897,219	67,501,266	33,844,533	2,613,016	1,750,054	185,952	152,851	15,809
% of population	77%	23%	93%	7%	90%	10%	91%	9%
Fatalities (2006)	18,359	23,339	2,659	1,576	66	165	7	16
% of fatalities	44%	56%	63%	37%	29%	71%	30%	70%
Fatalities/100,000 persons	7.9	34.6	7.9	60.3	3.8	88.7	4.6	101.2



- Rural Yolo County has generally hovered in the very stable range of 14-17 fatalities per year. However, the outlier years of 1998 and 2007 had the lowest and highest fatality total, with 10 fatalities in 1998 and 23 in 2007.

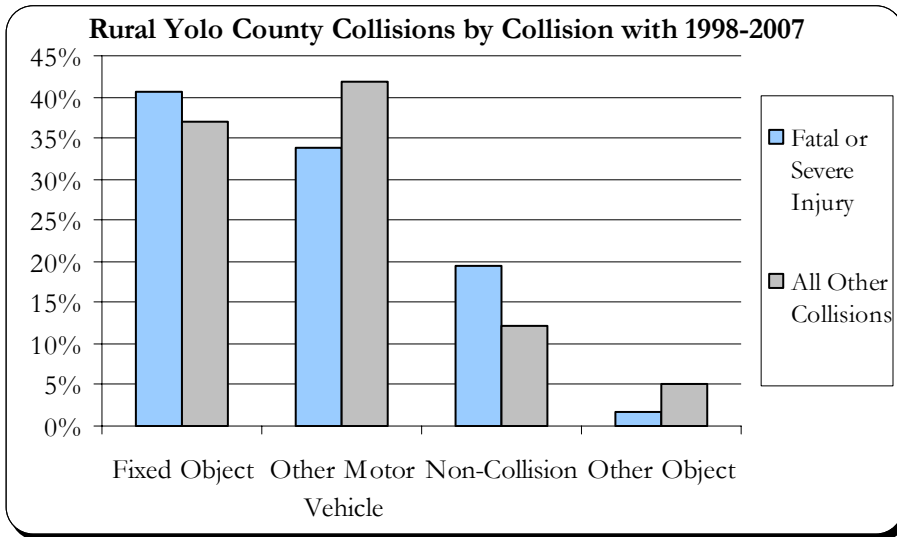


- Total collisions followed a similar path with a relatively stable total from 2000-2007. However, despite having the highest fatality total, 2007 had the 4th lowest total collisions in the 10-year period.

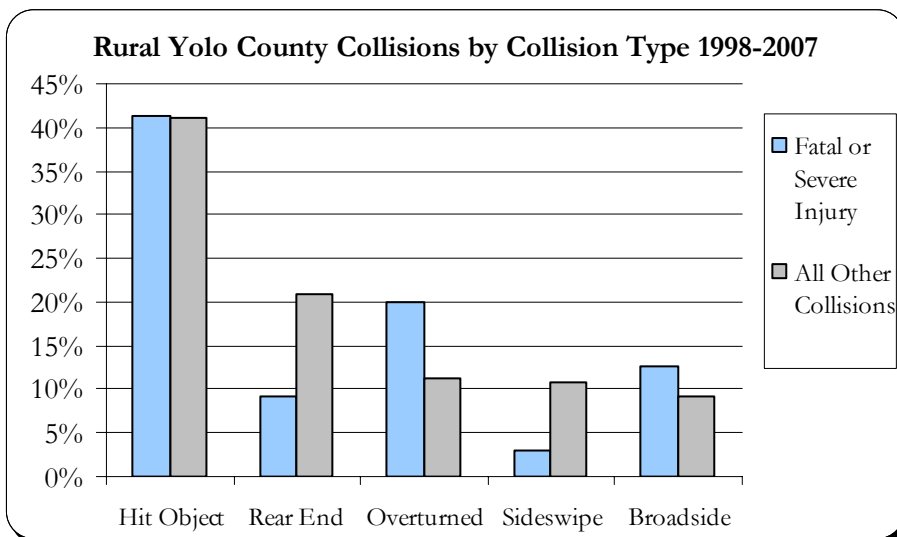


- Unsafe speed accounts for nearly double the percentage of “all other collisions”³ than it does for fatal or severe injury collisions.
- Alcohol accounted for over 30 percent of fatal or severe injury collisions and 11 percent of all other collisions.
- Improper turning and unsafe speed were the most common causes, each accounting for 26 percent of total collisions.

	Table 2: Rural Yolo County Detailed Collision Data						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Yolo Total	Region Total
Total Collisions	716	781	744	677	689	3,607	86,307
<i>Property Damage Only (PDO)</i>	444	457	421	396	382	2,100	55,049
<i>% PDO</i>	62.0%	58.5%	56.6%	58.5%	55.4%	58.2%	63.8%
<i>Injury</i>	257	307	307	267	284	1,422	30,447
<i>% Injury</i>	35.9%	39.3%	41.3%	39.4%	41.2%	39.4%	35.3%
<i>Fatal</i>	15	17	16	14	23	85	811
<i>% Fatal</i>	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	3.3%	2.4%	0.9%
<i>Pedestrian Killed</i>	0	1	1	0	0	2	116
<i>Bicyclist Killed</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1	22
<i>Motorcyclist Killed</i>	0	0	1	0	4	5	113
Fatal Collisions							
<i>Alcohol Related</i>	8	5	3	4	6	26	295
<i>Speeding Related</i>	0	2	2	1	2	7	95
<i>Truck Collision</i>	0	2	1	3	3	9	67
<i>Hit Object Collision</i>	7	4	6	9	7	33	278
<i>Head-On Collision</i>	1	5	1	2	4	13	117
<i>Broadside Collision</i>	4	1	3	1	6	15	141
<i>Overtaken Collision</i>	3	3	3	2	4	15	79
<i>Occurred on a Weekday (M-Th)</i>	10	8	6	5	8	37	376
<i>Occurred on a Weekend (F-Su)</i>	5	9	10	9	15	48	435
<i>Occurred during Daylight</i>	8	9	11	8	12	48	420
<i>Occurred after Dark (with or without street lights)</i>	7	7	5	6	9	34	360
Fatal Collision Location							
<i>Route 5</i>	3	5	0	4	5	17	*
<i>Route 16</i>	2	1	3	2	0	8	*
<i>Route 505</i>	0	1	3	1	2	7	*
<i>Route 113</i>	2	1	1	0	1	5	*
<i>County Road 27</i>	1	1	2	0	0	4	*
<i>Intersection Collision</i>	3	0	2	1	4	10	98
<i>State Highway</i>	7	9	10	9	11	46	335
<i>Not State Highway</i>	8	8	6	5	12	39	476



- The most common cause of fatal or severe injury collisions was collision with a fixed object, while the most common cause of “all other collisions” was collision with another motor vehicle.
- Non-collisions also accounted for a significant number of collisions, through a far greater percentage of fatal or severe injury collisions were actually non-collisions.



- Hit object collisions accounted for an equal percentage of all collisions, but rear ends and sideswipes were far more common in “other collisions” while overturned collisions accounted for 20 percent of fatal or severe injury collisions.

Further Study

This safety report highlights only a small portion of the data available for future analysis. SACOG believes this type of detailed data can make our region’s safety projects very competitive in federal and state safety programs such as the High Risk Rural Roads (HR3) program. For more information about the data used in this report or to request technical assistance for your agency, please contact Christine Scherman at cscherman@sacog.org or by phone at 916-340-6262.

¹ In Table 1, U.S. and California safety data were taken from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA used the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) to collect the data. Population data were taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) census file 1. County-level rural/urban population data were not available for 2006, so 2000 data were used for Yolo County and the region. Yolo County and region fatalities (for year 2000) were taken from SWITRS.

² “Rural” as defined by the 2000 census is all territory, population, and housing units located outside an urbanized area or an urban cluster. An urban cluster is a densely settled area (1,000 people/sq. mile) with a population of 2,500-49,999 and any surrounding areas with 500 people/sq. mile. “Rural” as defined by the SWITRS database is any unincorporated area and areas with a population of fewer than 2,500 people.

³ “All other collisions” refers to collisions resulting in complaint of pain, other visible injury, or property damage only.