California Safety Performance Management Targets for 2024

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), is required to set five annual Safety Performance Management Targets (SPMTs) for all public roads in the State of California by August 31 of each year. This is pursuant to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21, P.L. 112-141). The Safety Performance Management Final Rule adds Part 490 to Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations to implement the performance management requirements in 23 U.S.C. 150.

Caltrans set SPMTs for the 2024 calendar year by August 31, 2023. Caltrans and OTS have adopted the following performance measures shown in Table 1.

Performance Measure	Data Source	5-Yr. Rolling Average Target for 2024	Annual Percentage Change for 2024
Number of Fatalities	FARS	4,080.6	-2.84%
Rate of Fatalities (per 100M VMT)	FARS & HPMS	1.300	-4.61%
Number of Serious Injuries	SWITRS	16,628.1	-3.69%
Rate of Serious Injuries (per 100M VMT)	SWITRS & HPMS	4.918	-3.69%
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Non-Motorized Severe Injuries	FARS & SWITRS	4,380.5	-2.84% for Fatalities and -3.69% for Serious Injuries

Note: The targets highlighted in gray are set in coordination with OTS.

TABLE 1. PERFORMANCE MEASURE AND TARGET BASED ON 5-YEAR ROLLING AVERAGE

Federal Guidance and Requirements

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose to achieve a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The HSIP requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads and focuses on performance. The HSIP regulation under 23 CFR 924 establishes the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) HSIP policy, as well as program structure, planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting requirements for States to successfully administer the HSIP.

The Safety Performance Management (PM) Final Rule supports the data-driven performance focus of the HSIP. The Safety PM Final Rule establishes five performance measures as five-year rolling averages to carry out the HSIP. The performance measures include:

(1) Number of Fatalities,
(2) Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT),
(3) Number of Serious Injuries,
(4) Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT, and
(5) Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Non-motorized Serious Injuries.

These safety performance measures are applicable to all public roads regardless of ownership or functional classification.

California Safety Planning and Target Setting

The overarching highway safety plan for the State of California is the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). In January 2023, California updated its SHSP, which is a statewide, coordinated traffic safety plan that provides a comprehensive framework for reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries on California's public roads. The SHSP is a multi-disciplinary effort involving Federal, tribal, State, and local representatives from the 5Es who dedicate countless hours to improve safety and partnerships across disciplines where the 5Es represent education, enforcement, engineering, emergency response, and emerging technologies.

States must establish statewide targets for each of the federal safety performance measures. States also have the option to establish any number of urbanized area targets and one non-urbanized area target for any, or all, of the measures. Targets are established annually. For three performance measures (number of fatalities, rate of fatalities, and number of serious injuries), targets must be identical to the targets established for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Highway Safety Grants program that is administered by OTS. The State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) must also coordinate with their Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in their States on establishment of targets, to the maximum extent practicable. States will report targets to the FHWA in the HSIP report due in August of each year.

Each MPO will establish targets for the same five safety performance measures for all public roads in the MPO's planning area within 180 days after the State establishes each target. The targets will be established in coordination with the State, to the maximum extent practicable. The MPO can either agree to support the State DOT target or establish a numerical target specific to the MPO planning area. MPOs' targets are reported to the State DOT, which must be able to provide the targets to FHWA, upon request.

A State is considered to have met, or made significant progress toward meeting, its safety targets when at least four of the five targets are met or the outcome for the performance measure is better than the baseline performance the year prior to the target being set. Optional urbanized area or non-urbanized area targets will not be evaluated. Each year that FHWA determines a State has not met or made significant progress toward meeting its performance targets, the State will be required to use obligation authority equal to the baseline year HSIP apportionment for safety projects. States must also develop a HSIP Implementation Plan.

Target Selection Methodology

There are three steps to setting safety performance targets, which are:

(1) estimating the existing trend to determine where the State is,
(2) determining what external factors will impact the target in order to adjust the trend for demographic and socioeconomic changes, and
(3) estimating targets based on forecasted fatality reductions from safety plans.

Since SPMTs are applicable to all public roads in California, regional and local jurisdictions should be notified of the safety target setting process. On August 9, 2023, a virtual outreach meeting was held to discuss the SPMTs with the MPOs and other vested stakeholders. During this meeting, the 2024 SPMTs were presented along with the methodology, which extrapolates the annual decrease of fatalities and serious injuries into the future.

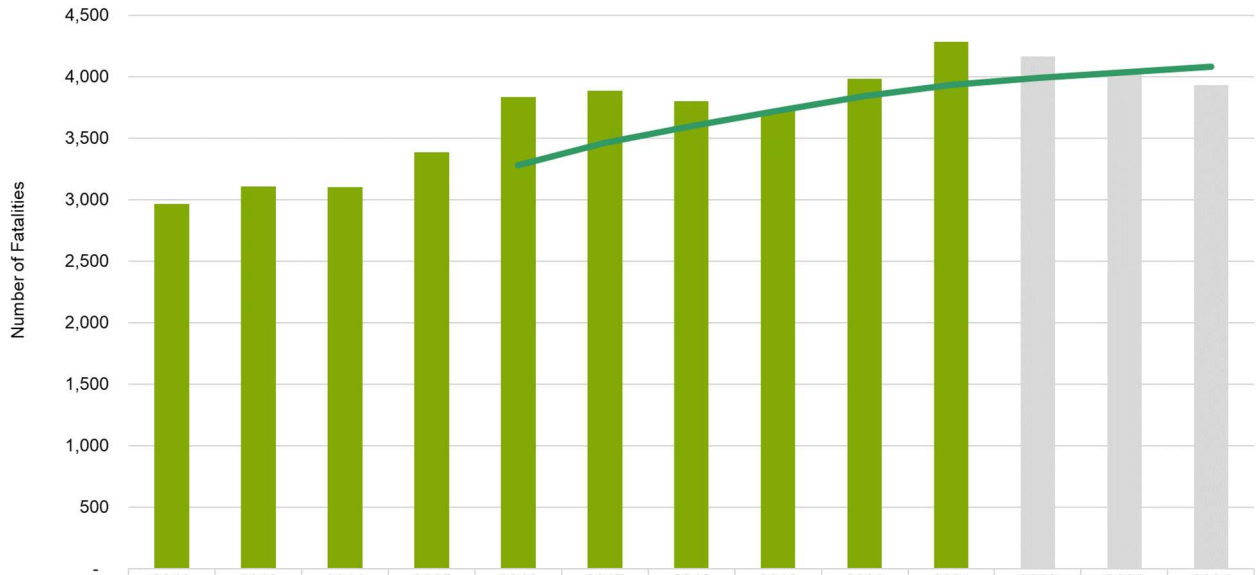
Statewide Number of Fatalities

The 2024 target for the number of fatalities is a five-year rolling average of **4,080.6**. NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data was used from 2012 through 2021. In California, traffic fatalities generally increased between 2012 to 2017 as shown in Figure 1, but there was a 2.2% reduction in traffic fatalities in 2017 from 3,884 to 3,798 in 2018 and a 2.1% reduction in traffic fatalities in 2018 from 3,798 to 3,719 in 2019. Traffic fatalities then jumped by 7.0% in 2020 and 7.7% in 2021.

Caltrans and OTS considered several options while reviewing the various trends for the 2024 target. Some options included and excluded COVID-impacted years and the expected projections. Another option was a vision zero target where the necessary annual reductions were determined to reach zero fatalities by 2050. These various methods either resulted in an increasing target from the 2021 five-year rolling average or provided inconsistencies as to which data or years to include to determine the target.

NHTSA published a final rule on February 6, 2023, that requires States to submit constant or improved targets for the common performance measures and the common targets must be identical in the HSIP annual report and Highway Safety Plan (HSP). NHTSA also approved a triennial HSP that required OTS to report performance measures and targets through 2026. To comply with NHTSA's new requirements, Caltrans and OTS agreed on a target-setting method that would reflect targets that remained constant when comparing the 2026 five-year rolling average with the 2021 five-year rolling average. This was achieved by setting the 2026 five-year rolling average target equal to the 2021 five-year rolling average and using the average annual change to calculate the annual 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 values. Since Caltrans continues to report performance measures and targets annually, the expected projections will be shown through 2024 only.

In Figure 1, the green bars reflect the data that was available in FARS at the time of the target setting process and the gray bars reflect the projected annual decrease of 2.84%. The dark green line represents the 5-year rolling average of the annual number of fatalities.



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Fatalities	2,966	3,107	3,102	3,387	3,837	3,884	3,798	3,719	3,980	4,285	4,163	4,045	3,930
5-Year Average					3,279.8	3,463.4	3,601.6	3,725.0	3,843.6	3,933.2	3,989.0	4,038.4	4,080.6

FIGURE 1 – STATEWIDE NUMBER OF FATALITIES

Through assistance with the HSIP, many California agencies have or are developing Local Roadway Safety Plans that put a focus on reducing fatal and serious injury crashes throughout their respective jurisdictions. This coupled along with an increase in the number of OTS grants from the prior year will assist California in continuing this downward trend in fatalities.

Statewide Number of Serious Injuries

The 2024 target for the number of serious injuries is a five-year rolling average of **16,628.1**. CHP's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data was used from 2012 through 2021; however, the final data for 2021 was not available and considered preliminary at the time of 2024 target setting. In California, serious injuries due to traffic crashes generally increased between 2012 to 2016, and then in 2018, the first full year when the serious injury definition included suspected serious injury, resulted in a significant 13.8% increase. There was a 6.8% reduction in 2019 from 16,443 to 15,392 in 2020, but then there was another significant 16.3% increase in 2021.

To comply with NHTSA's new requirements, Caltrans and OTS agreed on a target-setting method where the 2026 five-year rolling average target will be equal to the 2021 five-year rolling average and using the average annual change to calculate the annual 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 values. Since Caltrans continues to report performance measures and targets annually, the expected projections will be shown through 2024 only.

In Figure 2, the green bars reflect the data that was available in SWITRS at the time of the target setting process and the gray bars reflect the projected annual decrease of 3.69%. The dark green line represents the 5-year rolling average of the annual number of serious injuries.

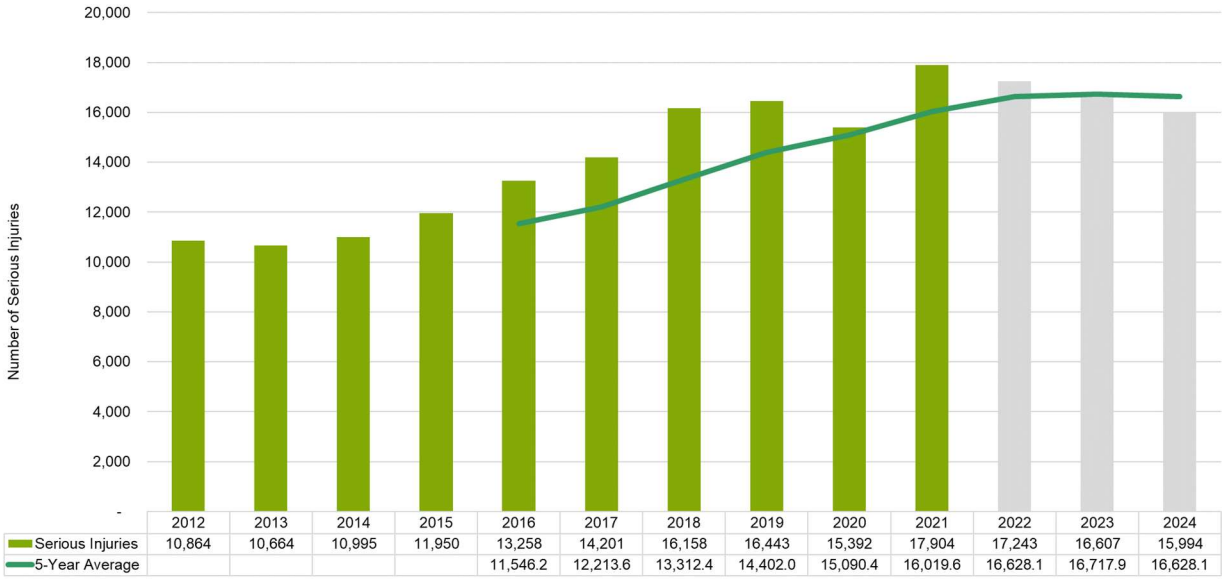


FIGURE 2 – STATEWIDE NUMBER OF SERIOUS INJURIES

Statewide Fatality Rate

The 2024 target for the fatality rate is a five-year rolling average of **1.30**. NHTSA used the Crash Data Acquisition Network to share the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles driven. In California, the fatality rate generally increased between 2012 to 2017, and there was a 3.7% reduction in 2018 and 2019 only to have a 22% increase occur in 2020 and then a 3.8% increase in 2021.

To comply with NHTSA's new requirements, Caltrans and OTS agreed on a target-setting method where the 2026 five-year rolling average target will be equal to the 2021 five-year rolling average and using the average annual change to calculate the annual 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 values. Since Caltrans continues to report performance measures and targets annually, the expected projections will be shown through 2024 only.

In Figure 3, the green bars reflect the data that was available through NHTSA at the time of the target setting process and the gray bars reflect the projected annual decrease of 4.61%. The dark green line represents the 5-year rolling average of the annual fatality rates.

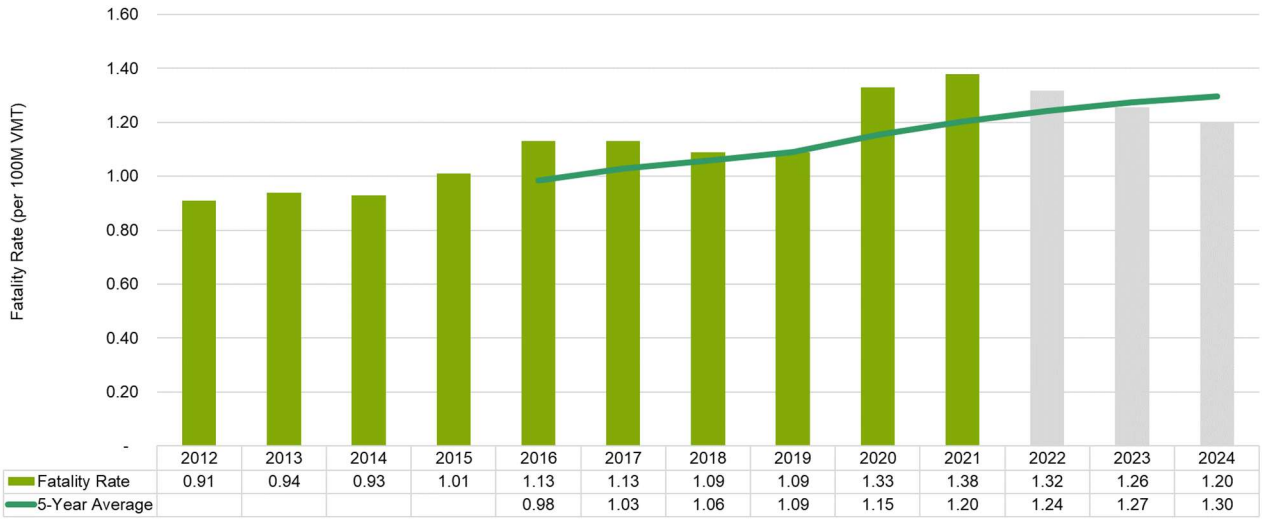
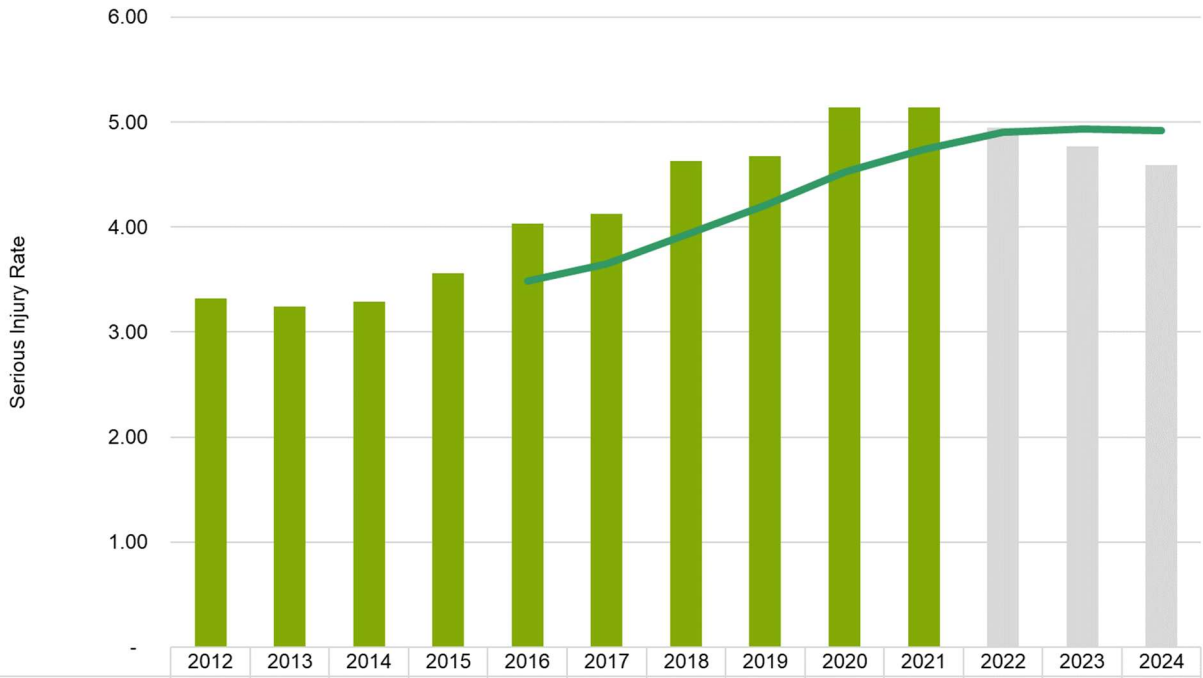


FIGURE 3 – STATEWIDE FATALITY RATE (PER 100M VMT)

Statewide Serious Injury Rate

The 2024 target for the serious injury rate is a five-year rolling average of **4.918**. CHP's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data was used from 2012 through 2021; however, the final data for 2021 was not available and considered preliminary at the time of 2024 target setting. In California, the serious injury rate due to traffic crashes generally increased between 2012 to 2017, and then in 2018, the suspected serious injury inclusion resulted in a 12.1% increase. There was another 9.8% increase in 2020.

In Figure 4, the green bars reflect the data that was available through SWITRS at the time of the target setting process and the gray bars reflect the projected annual decrease of 3.69%. The dark green line represents the 5-year rolling average of the annual serious injury rate.

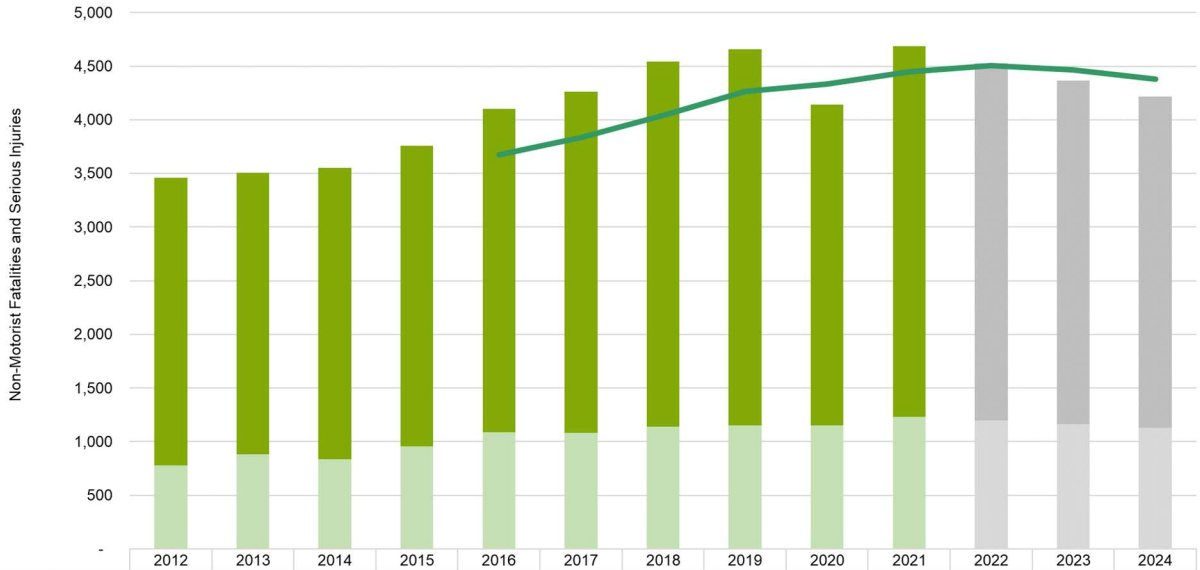


	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Serious Injury Rate	3.32	3.24	3.29	3.56	4.03	4.13	4.63	4.68	5.14	5.14	4.95	4.77	4.59
5-Year Average					3.488	3.650	3.928	4.206	4.522	4.744	4.908	4.936	4.918

FIGURE 4 – STATEWIDE SERIOUS INJURY RATE (PER 100M VMT)

Statewide Non-Motorized Fatalities and Non-Motorized Serious Injuries (Pedestrians and Bicyclists)

The 2024 target for non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries is a five-year rolling average of **4,380.5**. In Figure 5, the light green bars reflect the number of fatalities from FARS and the dark green bars reflect the number of serious injuries from SWITRS at the time of target setting for pedestrians and bicyclists combined. The gray bars reflect the annual decrease of 2.84% for non-motorized fatalities and the dark gray bars reflect the annual decrease of 3.69% for non-motorized serious injuries. The dark green line represents the 5-year rolling average of the annual non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Non-Motorized Serious Injuries	2,677	2,624	2,717	2,803	3,017	3,175	3,399	3,503	2,995	3,454	3,327	3,204	3,086
Non-Motorized Fatalities	782	881	838	955	1,088	1,085	1,143	1,154	1,149	1,233	1,198	1,164	1,131
5-Year Average					3,676.4	3,836.6	4,044.0	4,264.4	4,334.2	4,450.6	4,503.5	4,468.6	4,380.5

FIGURE 5 – STATEWIDE NON-MOTORIZED FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES (COMBINED)

Contacts:

Shaila Chowdhury
Deputy Division Chief of Transportation Safety, Caltrans Division of Safety Programs
Phone: (916) 639-5755
Email: shaila.chowdhury@dot.ca.gov

Nagendranath (Nagi) Pagadala
Office Chief of Strategic Safety and Implementation, Caltrans Division of Safety Programs
Phone: (916) 387-5850
Email: nagi.pagadala@dot.ca.gov

Kelly Mar
Safety Target and Monitoring Programs, Caltrans Division of Safety Programs
Phone: (916) 617-0159
Email: kelly.mar@dot.ca.gov