

## 6.2 Motor Vehicle Accidents

### The Importance

Motor Vehicle Accidents have a significant impact on any region. At their worst, they can cause death or lifelong disability. They also produce millions of dollars' worth of damage each year as well as high insurance rates, interference with the flow of goods and people, and added costs to the provision of health care and public services. A smooth, safe transportation network is essential for a healthy region and a healthy regional economy.

### About this indicator

The Capital District's traffic accidents are tracked using the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (NYSDVM) data annually from 1990 to 2000, the last year for which the data set is available. For each year, the total number of Capital District traffic accidents is compared to the total traffic injuries and fatalities. Due to a 1997 amendment to the Vehicle and Traffic Law, reportable accidents that include a police report and involved only property damage have increased.

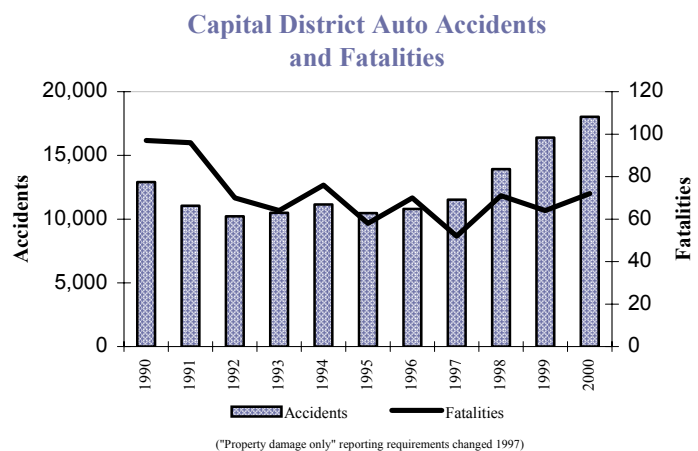
For comparison with other regions, this indicator uses the Fatality Analysis Reporting System data to compare the average number of fatalities per 100,000 people that took place over the eight-year period between 1994 and 2001. The average annual population for each region and the nation was calculated using Census Bureau estimates.

### Sources for this Indicator

- The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (NYSDVM) annual statistics on reported automobile accidents.
- The Fatality Analysis Reporting System of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) statistical records of automobile accident fatalities.

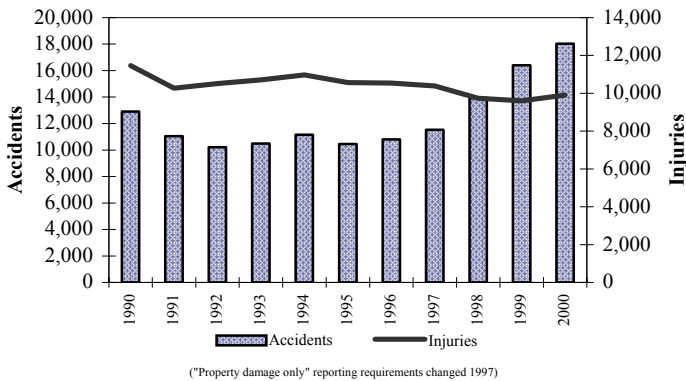
### Motor Vehicle Accidents in the Capital District

In the Capital District between the years 1990 and 1997, the number of automobile accidents was relatively stable while there was an overall downward trend in accident fatalities. After the 1997 change in the accident reporting laws, there was a 56% increase in reported auto accidents through 2000. At the same time, the number of accident fatalities changed very little.



6.2 SAFETY

Capital District Auto Accidents and Injuries



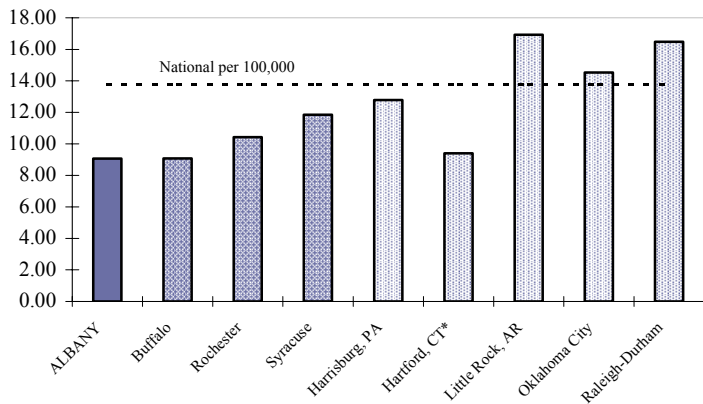
During the same time period, a trend similar to that of accident fatalities took place with injuries sustained as a result of accidents. In fact, while accident fatalities rose slightly from 1997 to 2000, injuries resulting from accidents have continued their downward trend. Although recent data on the number of accidents is indeterminate due to changes in policy, the trends with injuries and fatalities show that auto travel in the region has become safer.

Nationwide Comparison

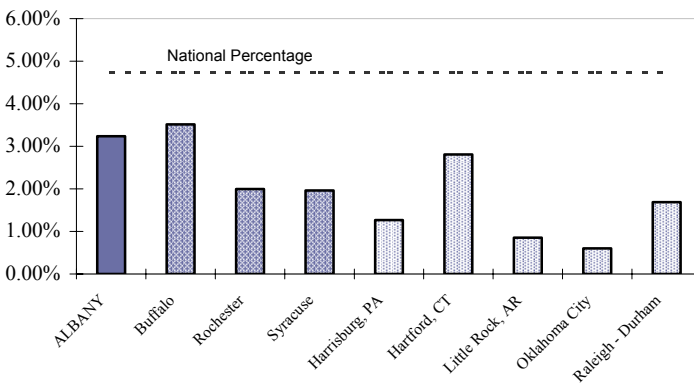
When compared with other MSA's in upstate New York, the Albany MSA has a fatality rate per 100,000 people that is similar to the Buffalo-Niagara MSA and less than both the Rochester and Syracuse fatality rates.

With the exception of the Hartford, CT MSA, the Albany MSA has a significantly lower rate of accident fatalities per 100,000 people than the other MSA's in its peer group. On average, other state capital regions correspond to the national average, and have four or more traffic deaths per 100,000 people than the Albany MSA.

Traffic Fatalities per 100,000 residents by MSA



Percent of Workers Using Public Transit by MSA



A possible explanation for the relatively low number of fatalities are that approximately 40% of the Capital District's population lives in cities and villages which are dominated by dense street-grid patterns of development. The street-grid slows traffic and facilitates greater public transit usage. The Capital District boasts a much higher percentage of workers using public transportation as a means to work than most other MSA's aside from Buffalo, NY and Hartford, CT. If we examine the number of accident fatalities that take place in each of the peer MSA's, there is a correlation between larger dense urban centers and lower accident fatality rates.