
TRAFFIC FATALITIES BRIEF REPORT:

**INCIDENTS, ARRESTS, AND CASES IN
PHILADELPHIA FROM 2014-2024**

**ISSUED BY THE PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE | MARCH 2025**



About the Report

This brief report examines trends in traffic fatalities in Philadelphia since 2014 and summarizes initial findings on related criminal cases. While multiple public reports, such as Vision Zero PHL(1) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation’s Crash Facts & Statistics(2), highlight traffic deaths, this report focuses on the connection between these incidents and any resulting arrests or criminal charges brought by the District Attorney’s Office (DAO).

This report was authored by the District Attorney’s Transparency Analytics (DATA) Lab. Learn more about us at <https://phillyda.org/data-lab/>, and visit our Public Data Dashboard at <https://data.philadao.com>. We welcome feedback and questions: DATA Lab@phila.gov.

Methodology

Traffic fatality incidents are complex, making it challenging to systematically identify related criminal cases. The District Attorney’s Office (DAO) sought and received technical support from the Philadelphia Police Department’s (PPD) Crash Investigation Division (CID), which provided incident numbers for traffic fatalities from June 2014 to mid-July 2024. These incidents were then linked to arrest and case data within our systems.

Note that a criminal case cannot be opened by the DAO until an arrest has been made by the PPD, which may not happen in events where the incident was ruled as non-criminal in nature, or if the person at fault either fled the scene and has not yet been apprehended, or was (one of) the involved person(s) who was killed in the incident.

This analysis *excludes* incidents within Philadelphia that occurred on state-controlled roadways.



Emily Fredricks’ ghost bike at 11th and Spruce Sts.
Ride of Silence 2022. Photo: CJ Arayata



Traffic Fatalities Over A Decade

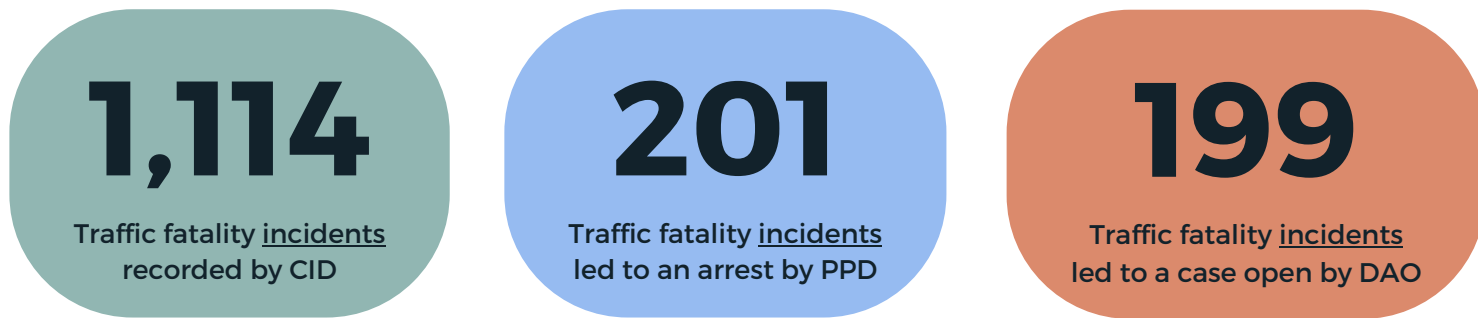
We found that between *June 06, 2014* and *July 20, 2024*, a total of **1,114** CID-identified traffic fatality incidents occurred. There was a jump in traffic fatality incidents during COVID-19, with an increase from **83** in 2019 to **143** in 2020, and these incidents have remained at a high level since.

Table 1: Traffic Fatality Yearly Incidents, Arrests, and Cases

Year	Incidents	Arrests	Cases
2014 (06/06-12/31)	86	8	9
2015	88	25	33
2016	98	16	23
2017	94	19	21
2018	98	15	26
2019	83	13	26
2020	143	24	63
2021	118	25	32
2022	118	34	45
2023	125	28	45
2024 (01/01-07/20)	63	14	11
Total	1,114	221	334

Incidents, Arrests and Cases

Between June 06, 2014 and July 20, 2024:



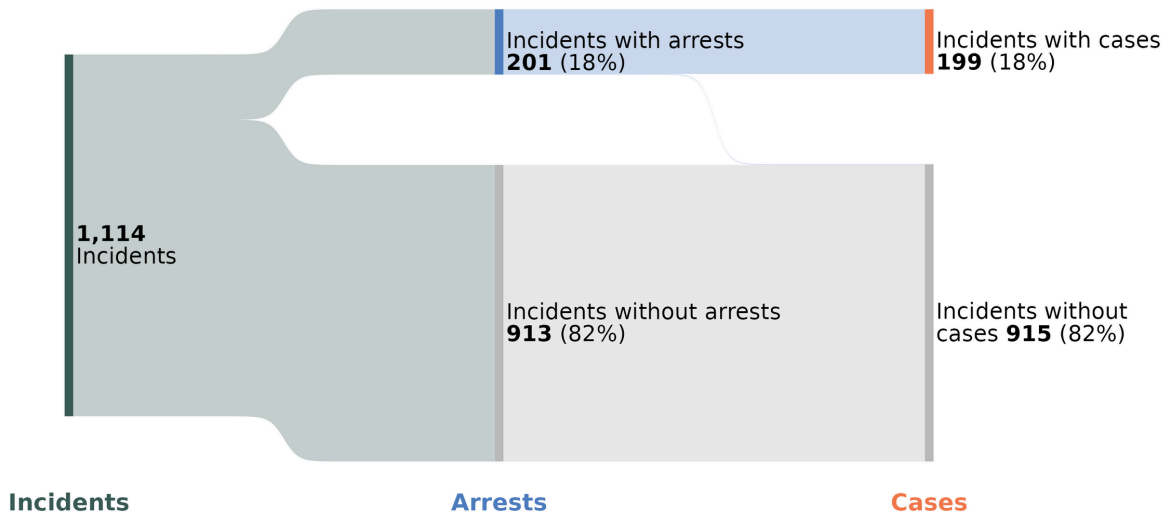
Of 1,114 incidents identified by CID, 201 of them led to at least one arrest. Of those 201 incidents with an arrest, 199 of them led to at least one case open. It is important to note that one incident may lead to multiple people being arrested, and/or one arrest may lead to multiple cases if there are multiple victims.

In **Table 1**, we see that in the past decade, there were a **total** of 221 arrests and 334 cases opened from these traffic fatality incidents. **Figure 1** illustrates how these incidents moved to cases.

Figure 1: Traffic Fatality Incidents, Arrests, and Cases

Incidents between June 06, 2014 to July 20, 2024.

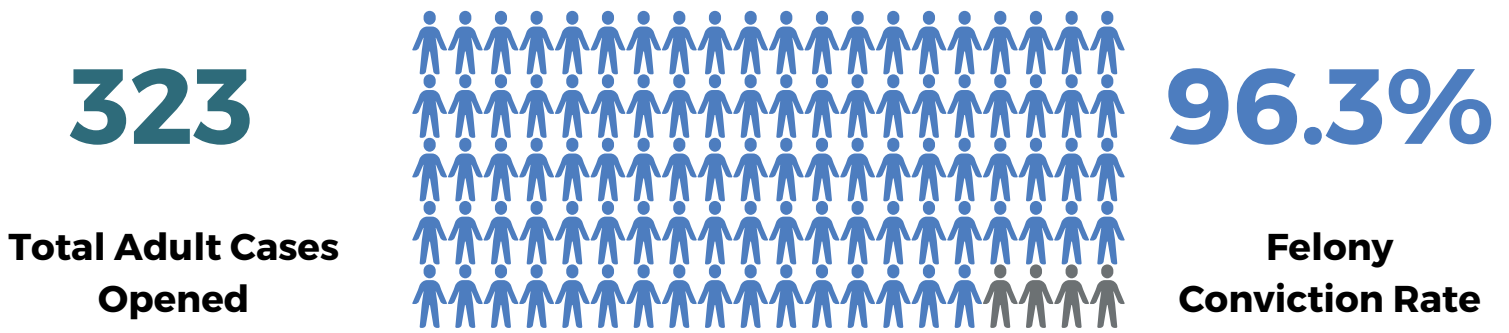
To allow time for Arrest following an incident, Arrests and Cases until October 31, 2024.



Note: Arrests and Cases count the number of incidents with at least one arrest or case charged, respectively.
Source: DAO analysis of Philadelphia criminal-justice data

Traffic Fatality Case Outcomes

For incidents between June 06, 2014 and July 20, 2024:

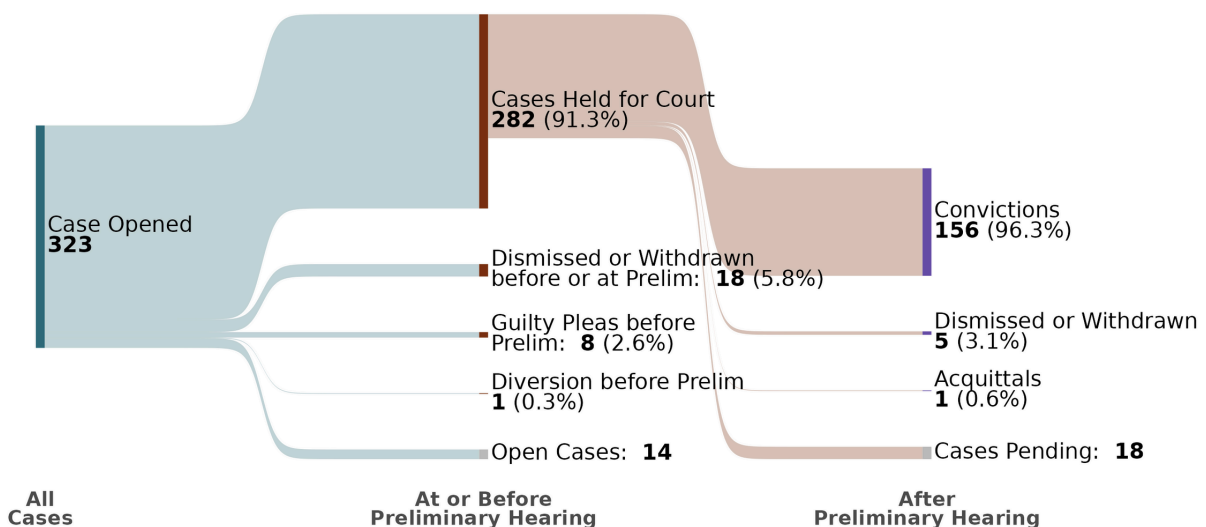


The graph below shows the outcomes of traffic fatality cases in the *adult criminal-legal system* by stages. In this chart, misdemeanor cases, which would be resolved before Preliminary Hearings, are displayed in the middle.

Most traffic fatality cases resulted in a felony being charged. Their outcomes are displayed to the right.

Figure 2: Traffic Fatality Adult Case Outcomes Sankey

Based on cases with incident dates between June 06, 2014 and July 20, 2024.



Source: DAO analysis of data from Philadelphia Police Department Crash Investigation District (CID)

- Note:**
1. Numbers differ between cases held for court and post-PH dispositions because multiple dockets may be combined at the CP level.
 2. When counting cases, we are only looking at adult cases that were not a summary and not transferred out of criminal courts
 3. Open/pending cases are omitted in percentage calculations.

Acknowledgements

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Recently-installed red light cameras around City Hall.
Photo: CJ Arayata

Limitations

There are many logistical and legal complexities surrounding traffic fatality incidents, and while this brief report cannot fully capture all of the nuances here, we attempt to demystify and explain some of the considerations.

Traffic fatalities are difficult to investigate. Assuming those involved remained on the scene, if the incident is ruled as non-criminal in nature, or the deceased party is determined at the scene to have been at fault, then there would be no arrest. For incidents where the perpetrator left the scene, there would be a need for sufficient evidence, eyewitnesses, and other such information to link a specific person to the potential crime so an arrest warrant can be filed. Even after this arrest warrant is filed, that person would then need to be located and arrested so that charges can be brought against them. Advances in technology, such as doorbell cameras with auto-record features, make investigating these incidents slightly easier than in the past, but it is important to note that the vast majority of these incidents do not result in an arrest or criminal charges. *A criminal case cannot be opened by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office until an arrest has been made.*

References

- 1 Vision Zero Philadelphia 2024 Annual Report: <https://visionzerophl.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Vision-Zero-Annual-Report-2024.pdf>
- 2 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation - Crash Facts & Statistics: <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/penndot/about-penndot/results-data/crash-facts-statistics.html>



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