

# How Each Major Holiday Weekend Ranks for Fatal Car Accidents



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Every year millions of Americans hit the road for the holidays, especially ones like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Do certain holidays tend to be more dangerous than others, though? We took a look at the Fatality Analysis Reporting System to see which holidays had the most fatal car accidents (where at least one person was killed), per year between 2011 and 2015.

**Memorial Day Weekend**  
312 fatal accidents per year  
Deadliest City: Houston

**Labor Day Weekend**  
308 fatal accidents per year  
Deadliest City: Los Angeles

**4th of July Weekend**  
307 fatal accidents per year  
Deadliest City: Houston

**Easter Weekend**

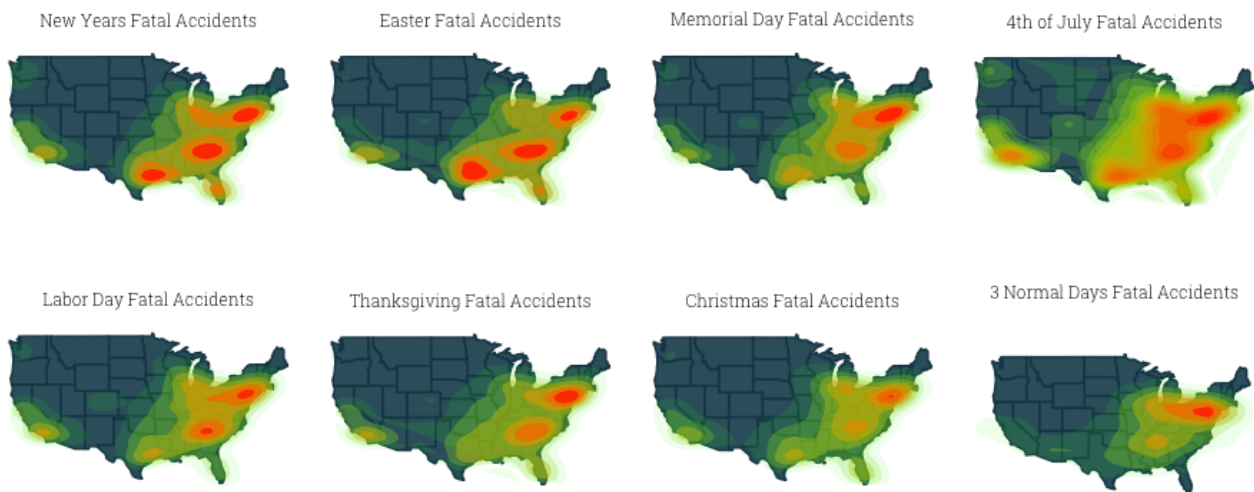
**280 fatal accidents per year**  
**Deadliest City: Los Angeles**

**Thanksgiving Weekend**  
**258 fatal accidents per year**  
**Deadliest Cities: Los Angeles**

**New Year's**  
**245 fatal accidents per year**  
**Deadliest Cities: Houston**

**Christmas**  
**231 fatal accidents per year**  
**Deadliest Cities: San Antonio**

## Where Do Fatal Accidents Happen During the Holidays?



The red regions in the maps above represent the spots that get the highest density of fatal accidents. On a normal 3 day period, the stretch between Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York see the most fatal accidents.

When it comes to the holidays however, some cities and states get more accidents than normal. On New Year's and Easter for example, Atlanta and Houston get a fatal accident density similar to the

northeast. While Memorial Day and Labor Day Weekends had more fatal accidents per year than 4th of July Weekends, these maps show that the crashes that happened on 4th of July Weekend were more widespread.

The far Midwest and top of the southwestern United States are either safer drivers on Memorial and Labor Day weekends or don't seem to celebrate it like the rest of the country. On 4th of July however, those regions also experience a higher density of car accidents

Drivers and passengers, beware: You are four times as likely to die in a traffic accident over the Memorial Day weekend as over a regular weekend, according to Value Penguin.

In assessing driving risks, the personal finance website compared traffic fatalities over all the major holidays using statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Memorial Day led with an average of 312 fatal accidents per year over the period 2011 to 2015. The other big summer holidays were not far behind, however. Labor Day averaged 308 fatalities and the Fourth of July, 307.



The clear takeaway: Driving on any of the big summer weekend holidays is much more dangerous than on a normal weekend. The most dangerous single day -- rather than weekend -- is July 4, perhaps because many families are driving at night to and from fireworks displays. More and more travelers on the road add to those dangers. AAA forecasts that 39.3 million Americans will travel more than 50 miles over this year's Memorial Day weekend, the most since 2005, reflecting the ongoing economic recovery. Of that number, an estimated 34.6 million, or 88 percent, will be driving.

"The expected spike in Memorial Day traffic mirrors the positive growth seen throughout the travel industry this year," said AAA senior vice president Bill Sutherland. "Higher confidence has led to more consumer spending. Many Americans are choosing to allocate their extra money on travel this Memorial Day."

### FATAL CAR CRASHES ON MAJOR HOLIDAY WEEKENDS



SOURCE: VALUEPENGUIN.COM

Other highlights of Value Penguin's study:

- Surprisingly, New Year's weekend was the second-least dangerous holiday, with an average of 245 fatal accidents per year between 2011 and 2015. It may be that years of public service announcements have convinced party-goers not to drink and drive. Christmas had the lowest level of fatalities at 231.
- As on normal weekends, the stretch of the Northeast between Washington, D.C., and New York had a high incidence of fatal accidents on most holiday weekends.
- Texas and California shared in the carnage. The dubious distinction of being the deadliest city on individual holiday weekends was split between Houston and Los Angeles.

Knowing these dangers probably will not deter you from driving to your holiday celebrations. But keep in mind today's No. 1 safety tip: Texting or other distracted driving is more dangerous than driving drunk. If you need to tell your relatives you are running late, pull over.