

Hit-and-Run Fatalities Up 89% in 10 Years as Victims Struggle to Identify Fleeing Drivers

Comprehensive nationwide data report reveals near-record hit-and-run deaths, stark state-by-state disparities, and a growing identification gap that leaves crash victims without recourse



Sacramento, California Mar 23, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - A new data report published by LicensePlatesCar.com reveals that hit-and-run fatalities in the United States have increased 89% over the past decade, reaching a near-record high of 2,972 deaths in 2022 before a slight decline to 2,872 in 2023. Despite the staggering scale of the problem, millions of hit-and-run victims across the country have no straightforward legal path to identifying the drivers who struck them — a gap that investigators and legal professionals say is leaving cases unsolved at an alarming rate.

The report, titled "Hit-and-Run Statistics: A Nationwide Data Report," compiles data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the FBI, and other federal sources into the most comprehensive publicly available resource on hit-and-run crashes in the United States. The full report is available at <https://licenseplatescar.com/stats/hit-and-run-statistics/>

Key findings from the report include:

- Over 682,000 hit-and-run crashes occur annually in the United States — one every 43 seconds
- Hit-and-run fatalities account for 7% of all traffic deaths nationally
- 77.3% of all deadly hit-and-run crashes occur at night when identification is most difficult
- From 2018 to 2022 more than 4 million people were involved in hit-and-run incidents nationwide
- New Mexico records the highest hit-and-run fatality rate at 10.8% of all state traffic deaths,

followed by Louisiana at 10.2% and Florida at 9.8%

- Impaired drivers, unlicensed motorists, and uninsured drivers account for the majority of hit-and-run incidents — groups with the strongest incentive to flee and avoid identification

The Identification Gap

One of the most significant findings in the report concerns what researchers are calling the identification gap — the disconnect between a victim's ability to capture a license plate number at the scene and their legal ability to obtain registered owner information tied to that plate.

Under the federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA), state motor vehicle records — including registered owner names and addresses — are restricted from public disclosure. While law enforcement agencies can query DMV databases directly, civilians must either wait for an official investigation to produce results or use a licensed lookup service operating under DPPA permissible purpose exemptions.

In jurisdictions without automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology — which accounts for a significant portion of suburban and rural America — law enforcement has limited plate identification infrastructure, leaving victims in those areas particularly vulnerable.

"After 25 years as a licensed private investigator I have worked with hundreds of hit-and-run victims who had the plate number of the vehicle that struck them but had no idea how to turn that number into an identity," said Lance Casey, Founder of Lance Casey & Associates. "The data in this report tells a story that most people don't realize — hit-and-run deaths have nearly doubled in a decade, the problem is getting worse not better, and the tools to solve these cases exist but victims don't know how to access them legally. That is the gap we built this resource to address."

ALPR Technology: Effective But Incomplete

The report also examines the role of automated license plate reader technology in hit-and-run investigations. According to data from Flock Safety, over 700,000 crimes are solved annually using ALPR technology — representing approximately 10% of all reported crime nationwide. However ALPR deployment remains heavily concentrated in larger urban police departments, leaving suburban and rural jurisdictions with limited or no plate reader infrastructure.

The report notes that vehicles are involved in 70% of all crimes in the United States, making plate identification the single most reliable investigative tool available across a broad range of criminal activity — not just hit-and-run cases.

State-by-State Disparities

The report includes an interactive state-by-state heat map showing hit-and-run fatality rates across all 50 states, alongside penalty tables for hit-and-run offenses in the ten highest-rate states. Penalties range from misdemeanor charges for property-damage-only incidents to first-degree felony charges carrying up to 30 years in prison for fatal hit-and-runs in states like Florida.

About the Report

The Hit-and-Run Statistics report is the first publication in the LicensePlatesCar.com Statistics Hub, a growing collection of nationwide data resources covering vehicle theft, license plate lookup laws by

state, stolen vehicle recovery rates, and license plate reader crime data. The full hub is available at <https://licenseplatescar.com/stats/>

About Lance Casey & Associates

Lance Casey & Associates is a licensed private investigation firm with over 25 years of experience serving clients nationwide. Founded by Lance Casey, a former law enforcement professional holding California PI License #27617, the firm specializes in license plate lookups, skip tracing, surveillance, process serving, and database investigations. LicensePlatesCar.com provides instant license plate lookup services and vehicle data resources for individuals, attorneys, and insurance professionals operating under DPPA permissible purpose guidelines.

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