

SECTION 1: TRACKING CALIFORNIA'S SERIOUS ACCIDENT NEWS

California Accident News & Traffic Safety Trends Report: 2023–2026

Tracking Nearly Three Years of California's Most Serious Accident News Coverage

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Archive compiled by: Arash Law's content team, August 2023 - May 2026

Data sources: Arash Law's internal accident-news archive (archive findings); California OTS and NHTSA (official data)

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For nearly three years, the content team at Arash Law undertook a project that many would consider unusual for a law firm: the continuous monitoring and analysis of serious accident news coverage across California.

Between August 2023 and May 2026, Arash Law's internal accident-news archive recorded 10,357 traffic incidents appearing in 34 monthly reports. These entries do not represent every traffic collision that occurred on California roads. They reflect serious incidents that became visible through public reporting and were selected for editorial coverage by Arash Law's content team.

This report examines the patterns identified within the archive alongside official traffic safety data published by California and national transportation safety agencies. However, this report does not claim to present official data covering all traffic incidents in California during the reporting period.

Together, these two analytical layers provide a broader understanding of California's traffic safety landscape than either could independently.

SECTION 2: IMPORTANT NOTE

Arash Law's internal accident-news archive is not a random sample of California crashes, a complete news database, or an official government crash dataset. Incidents were selected for editorial coverage by Arash Law's content team based on seriousness, newsworthiness, available public information, location relevance, and accident type. As a result, the archive reflects patterns in serious accident news coverage rather than total crash frequency across California.

For the purposes of this report, readers should distinguish between the two analytical layers used throughout the analysis:

- **Official data** refers to traffic safety statistics published by California and national transportation safety agencies. These datasets provide the authoritative source for measuring roadway outcomes, including traffic fatalities, pedestrian deaths, impaired-driving fatalities, and other indicators used to assess traffic safety at the state

and national levels.

- **Archive findings** refer to findings from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive. The archive contributes a different perspective by identifying which serious crashes repeatedly appeared in California's public reporting and remained visible through accident news coverage.

The two analytical layers are not treated as interchangeable measures, nor are they intended to answer the same questions. Throughout this report, official statistics are identified as **official data**, while **archive findings** are identified as results from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive (or simply "the archive").

SECTION 3: REPORT SNAPSHOT

Report Snapshot

Report Title: California Accident News & Traffic Safety Trends Report: 2023–2026

Archive Period: August 2023 – May 2026

Monthly Reports Analyzed: 34

Archive Incidents Analyzed: 10,357

Archive Focus: Serious, publicly reported California traffic incidents selected for editorial coverage.

Primary Sources:

- California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- Arash Law's internal accident-news archive

SECTION 4: KEY FINDINGS

What Nearly Three Years of Accident News Coverage Reveals

The findings below represent the most important conclusions emerging from the archive and serve as a roadmap for the more detailed analysis presented in subsequent sections.

From Official Data

- According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, traffic fatalities in California *fell nearly 11%, from 4,539 in 2022 to 4,061 in 2023* ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)).
- NHTSA's final 2024 traffic fatality data reported 39,254 roadway fatalities nationwide, *a further 4.3% decrease from 2023*. The fatality rate also declined from 1.26 to 1.19 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, *representing the third consecutive annual reduction in both fatalities and fatality rate since 2021* ([NHTSA Overview of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes in 2024](#)).
- NHTSA's preliminary estimate for 2025 projects 36,640 traffic fatalities nationwide, *a further 6.7% decline from 2024*. If confirmed, this would return U.S. roadway fatalities to approximately pre-pandemic levels and reduce the fatality rate to 1.10 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, the second-lowest rate recorded since NHTSA began tracking the metric in 1975 ([NHTSA 2025 Traffic Death Estimates](#)).

From the Archive

- **A small number of categories dominated serious accident news coverage:** Of the 10,357 incidents tracked, vehicle collisions led the archive, followed by pedestrian incidents and hit-and-run crashes.
- **Vulnerable road users took center stage in the archive:** As used in this report, vulnerable road users refer to pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists. This report shows that vulnerable road users collectively accounted for 3,094 incidents, representing approximately 30% of all archive entries. Within that group, pedestrians alone accounted for 1,959 incidents, making the pedestrian category the second-largest in the entire archive.
- **Hit-and-run and DUI-related crashes were a consistent public concern:** Though representing a smaller share of overall archive volume, hit-and-run incidents and DUI-related crashes appeared with notable consistency throughout the reporting period.
- **The same cities appeared most frequently:** The city analysis revealed a high degree of geographic concentration. Los Angeles led the archive in frequency, alongside cities such as San Diego, Sacramento, Bakersfield, and Fresno. These findings do not identify California's most dangerous cities. As discussed in Sections 6 and 7 (the methodology and selection bias sections), the archive measures news visibility rather than crash rates.

SECTION 5: CALIFORNIA TRAFFIC SAFETY IN CONTEXT

What Official Data Reveals About the State's Roadways

Before examining the clear patterns from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, it is important to consult the official data in order to understand the broader traffic safety environment in which those incidents occurred.

Questions involving statewide fatalities, injury rates, impaired driving outcomes, and long-term safety performance are best answered through official government reports designed for that purpose.

Traffic Fatalities Remain a Major Public-Safety Concern

In California and nationally, traffic crashes continue to represent one of the leading causes of preventable death.

National Trends Show Continued Improvement

Official national traffic safety data points in the same direction. Following the decline recorded in 2023, NHTSA's final 2024 traffic fatality data and preliminary 2025 estimates indicate that roadway fatalities have continued to decrease nationally. Although the trend is encouraging, tens of thousands of people continue to lose their lives on U.S. roads each year, underscoring the continuing public-safety significance of serious traffic crashes ([NHTSA 2025 Traffic Death Estimates](#)).

Estimated U.S. Traffic Fatalities

Year	Fatalities
2023	41,025
2024	39,254
2025 (Preliminary Estimate)	36,640

For the purposes of this report, the importance of these figures extends beyond the fatality totals themselves. They also help us understand why certain crash categories surface repeatedly within accident news coverage. Serious crashes attract attention precisely because they are consequential public-safety events.

California's Trends Also Show Improvement

According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, California recorded 4,539 traffic fatalities in 2022 before declining to 4,061 fatalities in 2023, representing a reduction of approximately 11% ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)).

California Traffic Fatalities

Year	Fatalities
2022	4,539
2023	4,061

The decline suggests that some safety indicators may be improving. However, the absolute number is still substantial, underscoring the continuing scale of the challenge facing government, transportation agencies, and policymakers.

Pedestrian Safety Remains a Persistent Concern

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration continues to identify pedestrian fatalities and injuries as a major roadway-safety challenge, noting that thousands of pedestrians are killed and tens of thousands are injured annually in traffic crashes across the United States ([NHTSA Pedestrian Safety](#)).

Similarly, the California Office of Traffic Safety maintains dedicated pedestrian-safety initiatives and public-awareness campaigns aimed at reducing serious injuries and fatalities among people traveling on foot ([California OTS Pedestrian Safety](#)).

These concerns become even more striking when viewed alongside the archive findings. As later sections demonstrate, pedestrian incidents stand out in the archive as well.

Impaired Driving Continues to Demand Attention

The California Office of Traffic Safety continues to identify alcohol-impaired driving as a significant contributor to roadway fatalities and serious injuries ([California OTS Go Safely California](#)).

At the national level, NHTSA likewise continues to identify alcohol-impaired driving as one of the leading contributors to fatal crashes across the United States ([NHTSA Drunk Driving](#)).

These concerns are reflected within the archive as well as in the sections that follow.

SECTION 6: WHAT THE ARCHIVE IS (AND ISN'T)

Methodology, Scope, and Important Limitations

Arash Law's internal accident-news archive is an accumulation of nearly three years of continuous monitoring, collection, categorization, and analysis of serious accident news coverage across California. The archive was developed as part of Arash Law's ongoing effort to track significant traffic collisions, roadway incidents, and injury-producing crashes that entered the public-information ecosystem.

Archive Scope

The archive focuses on serious traffic incidents that entered California's public reporting ecosystem during the reporting period. It is intended to identify patterns in serious accident news coverage rather than measure total crash frequency or statewide roadway outcomes.

How the Archive Was Built

The archive was compiled through continuous monitoring of publicly available accident reporting across California. Every weekday for almost three years, Arash Law's content team reviewed information from a wide range of public sources, primarily through Google News monitoring and the City News Service wire. Sources included local newspapers, television stations, regional media organizations, digital publications, wire services, public-information releases, and news aggregation platforms.

Because the archive was compiled through editorial monitoring rather than automated collection, editorial judgment necessarily influenced which incidents entered the archive. Consequently, the archive reflects patterns in serious accident news coverage rather than a complete record of all California traffic collisions.

What Qualified for Inclusion

Not every traffic collision was included in the archive. An incident generally needed to satisfy several conditions before becoming part of the archive.

It is important to state that the archive, and consequently this report, relies on editorial selection. Arash Law's content team selected incidents for editorial coverage based on factors such as the reliability of the news source, the availability of verifiable information, the extent of news coverage, and the incident's relevance to the archive. Consequently, inclusion depended on editorial selection rather than automated collection.

- The crash had to occur.
- The crash had to become visible through public reporting.
- The reporting source had to be reliable.
- The news had to be verifiable.

This second requirement is particularly important. California experiences far more traffic collisions each year than can reasonably be expected to appear in a news-based archive. Many crashes receive little or no media attention because of limited reporting resources or limited publicly available information.

The implication of this news-based selection process is that severe incidents are overrepresented relative to minor collisions. Fatal crashes, catastrophic injuries, pedestrian strikes, hit-and-run incidents, major freeway collisions, and suspected DUI crashes are generally more newsworthy than routine property-damage collisions. This characteristic influences the composition of the archive and helps explain why certain categories appear more frequently than others.

A crucial point to note is that this archive does not record injury severity, fatality counts per incident, counties, specific roadways, or time of day. Therefore, this report does not speculate on

the causes or direction of accident trends in California. Readers should refer to official traffic safety data for authoritative information on those questions.

Strengths of the Archive

The archive possesses several strengths that complement traditional traffic safety datasets.

- While official databases excel at measuring crash occurrence, the archive provides insight into visibility and public attention.
- The archive spans nearly three years of continuous reporting, allowing long-term patterns to emerge.
- The archive provides a level of narrative context that is often absent from statistical databases. Studying only incidents that received news coverage helps illuminate the themes that repeatedly shaped public understanding of traffic safety during the study period.

These strengths make the archive a useful complement to official traffic safety statistics rather than a substitute for them.

Limitations of the Archive

Like any editorial collection, the archive has limitations that should be acknowledged openly.

- The archive is subject to selection bias (see Section 7) because it relies on publicly reported incidents. Differences in media coverage, editorial decisions, reporting resources, and regional visibility can influence which incidents enter the archive and which do not.
- The archive also does not measure population-adjusted risk, exposure rates, vehicle miles traveled, or total crash frequency. As a result, it cannot determine which cities are safest or most dangerous, nor can it calculate statewide collision rates. Accordingly, this report does not make such claims.
- Additionally, the archive reflects information available at the time incidents were reported. Subsequent investigations, legal proceedings, or official findings may alter the understanding of individual crashes after their initial appearance within the news cycle.

These limitations define the scope within which the archive should be interpreted and explain why its findings are presented alongside official traffic safety data throughout this report.

SECTION 7: UNDERSTANDING SELECTION BIAS

Why Visibility and Frequency Are Not the Same Thing

One of the most important methodological principles underlying this report is the distinction between visibility and frequency. The purpose of this section is to explain how selection bias affects the archive and how it should be considered when interpreting the report's findings.

Newsworthiness is often influenced by the events most likely to attract public attention, generate discussion, or be considered significant by news organizations. Consequently, the archive reflects these same reporting dynamics because it is derived from publicly reported accident news coverage.

Understanding selection bias is essential to interpreting the archive appropriately and within the scope for which it was compiled.

Why Serious Crashes Are Overrepresented

- The archive's composition reflects a basic reality of news reporting: unusual, severe, or consequential events are more likely to receive coverage than routine incidents, such as a low-speed collision in a parking lot.
- Because severe incidents are more likely to attract reporters, editors, and public attention, categories associated with serious injuries naturally become more visible. This dynamic helps explain why pedestrian incidents, hit-and-runs, motorcycle crashes, and DUI-related collisions occupy such a prominent place within the archive.

The result is an archive that is particularly effective at identifying recurring themes within serious accident reporting.

Media Ecosystems Shape Visibility

Another important source of selection bias arises from differences in local reporting environments.

- As in most states, news coverage is not distributed evenly across California. Some regions are served by multiple television stations, newspapers, digital publications, and wire services. Other areas have significantly fewer reporting resources. These differences can influence whether an incident becomes part of the public record and, by extension, whether it becomes part of the archive.
- A serious crash occurring in a large metropolitan area may be covered by several independent news organizations. The same type of incident occurring in a smaller community may receive only limited attention, even when the underlying circumstances are similar. This does not mean the crash is less significant. It simply means it may be less visible.

Understanding this dynamic is particularly important when interpreting city-level findings. The archive reflects the interaction between crash occurrence and media visibility. It does not isolate one from the other.

The Turlock Example

Turlock provides one of the clearest examples of why visibility should not be confused with frequency.

As discussed in Section 13, Turlock, a Central Valley city of about 73,000, ranked eighth among all cities appearing in the archive despite appearing in only eight reporting periods out of 34.

At first glance, that result may seem surprising. Turlock is considerably smaller than many California cities that appeared less often or failed to appear in the rankings altogether. Yet during portions of the reporting period, enough highly visible incidents occurred in the city for it to become one of the archive's most frequently referenced locations.

A reader unfamiliar with the archive's methodology might conclude that Turlock is one of California's most dangerous cities. That conclusion would be incorrect.

The archive cannot support such a claim because it does not measure crash rates, population-adjusted risk, vehicle miles traveled, or total collision volume. What the archive demonstrates is that incidents associated with Turlock appeared frequently within the reporting ecosystem feeding the archive.

In June 2024, for example, Turlock topped the monthly city rankings because the city's incidents were highly visible within the reporting environment during that period.

Understanding the Implications of Selection Bias

Selection bias does not prevent the archive from identifying meaningful patterns; rather, it defines the scope within which those patterns should be interpreted. For instance:

- Because the archive emphasizes serious crashes that entered public reporting, it is particularly well suited to identifying recurring themes in serious accident news coverage rather than measuring overall crash frequency.
- Larger metropolitan areas generally have both greater populations and more extensive news-reporting resources. Consequently, findings from the archive reflect the interaction between crash occurrence and media visibility, particularly within California's larger metropolitan areas.

By understanding both the strengths and limitations of the archive, readers can interpret its findings alongside official traffic safety statistics and within the methodological framework described throughout this report.

SECTION 8: ARCHIVE VOLUME AND WHAT IT MEANS

Why Archive Size Matters When Interpreting the Findings

Between August 2023 and May 2026, the archive recorded 10,357 serious incidents appearing in California accident news coverage. The large number of observed and recorded incidents is not simply a description of scale. It provides a broad observational base from which recurring accident news patterns can be examined over time.

Archive Volume by Period

Period	Archive incidents	Months
2023 (Aug–Dec)	2,232	5
2024	4,795	12
2025	1,851	12
2026 (Jan–May)	1,479	5

Why the Archive's Volume Is Important

- **The archive captures patterns rather than isolated events:** A larger archive makes it possible to examine whether observed patterns persist across different reporting periods rather than reflecting isolated events.
- **Consistency across nearly three years strengthens long-term observation:** Nearly three years of continuous reporting makes it possible to identify recurring themes across multiple reporting periods.
- **Archive volume makes city-level analysis possible:** The city findings presented later in this report illustrate why archive size matters. A one-month dataset might identify which city appeared most often in a given month, but such information would contribute less to understanding long-term patterns across the reporting period.
- **Archive volume makes category analysis more reliable:** The category findings discussed in Sections 9 and 10 also depend heavily upon archive scale. A dataset containing only a few hundred incidents might suggest that one category received unusual attention during a particular period. The archive's larger size makes it possible to examine whether those patterns remain visible across thousands of incidents and multiple years.

The figures in the table above describe the volume of the archive's monitoring and reporting, not the total number of traffic crashes occurring in California. For example, the data shows that 2024 was the archive's most active year and considerably more active than 2025. This should not be interpreted to mean that California experienced more crashes in these categories during 2024 than in 2025; only official government reporting can support such a conclusion. Rather, the archive indicates that fewer qualifying incidents were documented, particularly during the final quarter of 2025.

Despite this distinction, the mix of categories remained remarkably stable throughout the reporting period. Pedestrian crashes, for example, accounted for 1,959 archive entries and remained consistently visible across the archive. Because the archive spans more than 10,000 incidents collected over nearly three years, this recurring visibility represents a pattern evident across multiple reporting periods rather than a single reporting cycle.

SECTION 9: THE CRASHES THAT KEPT MAKING THE NEWS

Understanding the Categories That Defined California's Serious Accident News Coverage

Across 10,357 incidents collected between August 2023 and May 2026, the same categories appeared repeatedly. Some dominated the archive from beginning to end. Others remained consistently visible despite accounting for a smaller share of total incidents. Together, these categories provide a useful lens through which to understand which crash types repeatedly attracted public attention during the reporting period.

Archive Classifications and Recurring Crash Themes

The table below details the eight largest categories in the archive, plus a residual "Other Accident Types" row that captures the remainder.

Archive Category	Incidents	Share
Car	3,787	37%
Pedestrian	1,959	19%
Hit-and-Run	1,146	11%
DUI	914	9%

Archive Category	Incidents	Share
Motorcycle	762	7%
Truck	746	7%
Bicycle	373	4%
Reckless Driving	241	2%
Other Accident Types	429	4%

This reflects Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, not official statewide crash totals.

The archive groups incidents using more than one type of classification. Some categories identify the primary road user or vehicle involved (such as car, pedestrian, motorcycle, truck, and bicycle), while others identify notable crash characteristics or alleged contributing circumstances (such as hit-and-run, DUI, and reckless driving). Accordingly, these categories should be understood as archive classifications rather than a single classification system.

Together, these eight categories account for approximately 96% of all incidents appearing within the archive.

This concentration demonstrates how heavily serious-crash reporting was focused around a relatively small number of recurring themes. While thousands of individual incidents entered the archive over the course of the study period, the underlying categories remained remarkably consistent.

- Car Accidents Had the Greatest Presence:** Vehicle collisions remained the archive's largest category, leading in the most frequently covered cities, including Los Angeles, Sacramento, Bakersfield, and Victorville. Even in cities where pedestrians represented the leading category, vehicle collisions generally ranked second.
- Pedestrian Incidents Emerged as the Archive's Most Significant Non-Vehicle Category:** Pedestrian accidents accounted for 1,959 archive entries, representing about 19% of all tracked events, or nearly one in every five incidents recorded during the study period. As discussed in Section 10, pedestrian crashes emerged not merely as a significant category, but as one of the archive's defining themes.

The prevalence of pedestrian incidents is perhaps the most striking observation in the archive. That share does not mean pedestrians accounted for 19% of California crashes or crash victims — it means pedestrian incidents were highly visible within the serious accident news reports Arash Law reviewed.

SECTION 10: VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

The Most Consistent Pattern in California's Serious Accident News Coverage

Throughout this report, vehicle collisions remain the archive's largest category overall. However, vulnerable road users collectively represented one of the most persistent and consequential themes in California's serious accident news coverage.

This finding is particularly noteworthy because it aligns with the official California data. While the two analytical layers measure different things, both point to the continuing vulnerability of pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists on California's roadways.

The consistency of the pattern suggests that vulnerable road users occupy a unique place within California's serious-crash landscape. When accidents become severe enough to attract public attention, the person injured is often someone outside the protective structure of a passenger vehicle.

Who Are Vulnerable Road Users?

The term "vulnerable road user" is widely used in transportation safety research to describe individuals who lack the physical protections available to occupants of passenger vehicles. For the purposes of this report, vulnerable road users include:

- Pedestrians
- Motorcyclists
- Bicyclists

Everyone in these groups shares a common characteristic: when a collision occurs, they are significantly more exposed to injury than the occupants of enclosed vehicles.

Vulnerable Road User Breakdown According to Arash Law's Internal Archive

Category	Incidents
Pedestrian Accidents	1,959
Motorcycle Accidents	762
Bicycle Accidents	373
Total	3,094

Total Share of Archive: **Approximately 30%**

Across the 10,357 incidents analyzed in this report, vulnerable road users accounted for 3,094 incidents, meaning that nearly three out of every ten incidents appearing in Arash Law's internal accident-news archive involved a pedestrian, motorcyclist, or bicyclist.

State Official Data Points in the Same Direction

The official data points in the same direction from a different angle: in 2023, the data showed that California's overall traffic deaths fell 11%. However, in this same year, the Office of Traffic Safety still recorded 1,106 pedestrian deaths, 583 motorcyclist deaths, and 145 bicyclist deaths ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)).

While the official data points to fatalities resulting from serious crashes, Arash Law's internal accident-news archive points specifically to trends in reported incidents. Although the two analytical layers measure different aspects of roadway safety, both identify vulnerable road users as a persistent area of concern.

SECTION 11: HIT-AND-RUN CRASHES

The Fleeing Driver: A Persistent Presence in California's Serious Accident News Coverage

Between August 2023 and May 2026, the archive recorded 1,146 hit-and-run incidents, making this the third-largest category in the archive and one of the most persistent themes in California's serious accident news coverage.

This consistency is noteworthy because hit-and-runs are fundamentally different from many of the other categories examined in this report. While other categories classify traffic incidents, this category identifies not only a traffic incident but also a fleeing driver who leaves the scene before fulfilling the legal responsibilities normally expected following a collision.

This uniqueness often necessitates public investigation and community action, and this helps explain why hit-and-run accidents occupy such a prominent place within accident news coverage.

When viewed in relation to the archive's total volume, hit-and-runs accounted for approximately 11% of all recorded incidents. This means that roughly one out of every nine serious crashes appearing within the archive involved a driver who allegedly left the scene.

Hit-and-Runs Appeared Across California's Most Visible Cities

The city analysis reveals that hit-and-runs were not concentrated within a single community. Instead, they appeared throughout many of the archive's most frequently covered cities.

Selected City Hit-and-Run Totals

City	Hit-and-Run Incidents
Los Angeles	166
San Diego	49
Sacramento	46
Bakersfield	37
Fresno	31
San Francisco	20

Los Angeles provides perhaps the clearest example. The city recorded 166 hit-and-run incidents within the archive, making the category one of the defining features of its accident news profile. Sacramento, Bakersfield, Fresno, and San Francisco also recorded substantial numbers of hit-and-runs, demonstrating that the phenomenon was not confined to any particular region of the state.

Transparency Note

The June 2025 monthly report did not record a hit-and-run line item, so the archive's hit-and-run total is, if anything, conservative.

SECTION 12: DUI INCIDENTS

Impaired Driving Remains a Recurring Story

DUI-related incidents appeared 914 times within the archive, accounting for approximately 9% of all tracked incidents. Although comparatively smaller than the categories above it, DUI-related accidents remained visible throughout the study period and appeared in every phase of the archive.

DUI Archive Summary

Metric	Value
Total DUI Incidents in Archive	914
Share of Archive	9%
Ranking Among Categories	4th

It is important to note that, under the archive's classification rules, an incident was tagged as DUI only when the underlying news report specifically identified it as such. The figures reported in the archive do not represent DUI convictions. Official OTS data shows that alcohol-impaired driving deaths in California fell from 1,419 in 2022 to 1,355 in 2023 ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)).

Cities Where DUI Incidents Repeatedly Appeared

Several cities appeared repeatedly within the archive's DUI profiles, including:

DUI-Tagged City Appearances in Monthly City Tables, 2024–May 2026

Rank	City	DUI Incidents
1	Bakersfield	30
2	Fresno	22
3	San Diego	21
4	Los Angeles	18
5	Victorville	14
6	San Jose	12
7	Sacramento	11

These figures reflect DUI-tagged incidents appearing in Arash Law's internal accident-news archive and should not be interpreted as official DUI crash statistics or DUI crash rates. They measure the frequency with which DUI-related incidents appeared in the archive's news-monitoring process during the study period. This city-level DUI table begins in 2024 because city-level DUI reporting was not consistently available in the same format during the partial 2023 archive period.

These archive figures are not official counts, nor do they speculate on death tolls. They show only how this category was reflected in statewide news reporting ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)).

SECTION 13: THE CITIES THAT KEPT APPEARING IN ARCHIVE REPORTING

Understanding Geographic Patterns in California's Serious Accident News Coverage

One of the most natural questions raised by this report is also one of the easiest to misunderstand: *Which California cities appeared most often in the archive?*

Before answering that question, it is important to note a vital limitation: each monthly report identified the cities that appeared most often in that month's accident news coverage, typically through a top-ten list representing roughly one-quarter to one-third of all incidents covered during that period.

The figures below aggregate those monthly rankings across all 34 reporting periods. Because they are derived from monthly top-location lists, they undercount every city's total presence within the archive and exclude communities that never appeared in a monthly ranking. For that reason, these figures should be interpreted as a measure of repeat news visibility. They identify

the places California's serious-crash coverage returned to again and again, not crash rates, danger rankings, or measures of roadway risk.

Tabular Representation of Dominant Cities

Rank	City	Archive count	Months listed (of 34)	Most common types
1	Los Angeles	735	33	Car (245), hit-and-run (166), pedestrian (139)
2	San Diego	403	33	Pedestrian (121), car (62), hit-and-run (49)
3	Sacramento	387	29	Car (170), pedestrian (77), hit-and-run (46)
4	Bakersfield	292	31	Car (80), pedestrian (54), hit-and-run (37)
5	Fresno	262	28	Pedestrian (64), car (54), hit-and-run (31)
6	Victorville	120	20	Car (42), pedestrian (24), DUI (14)
7	San Francisco	114	16	Pedestrian (35), car (24), hit-and-run (20)
8	Turlock	103	8	Car (60), pedestrian (11), hit-and-run (11)
9	San Jose	85	15	Pedestrian (34), DUI (12), car (11)
10	Hesperia	80	12	Car (39), pedestrian (14), motorcycle (11)

This reflects Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, not official statewide crash totals.

Why "Months Listed" Matters

It is natural to focus on the archive-count column. However, the "Months Listed" column may actually be the more revealing measure.

A city can accumulate a high total through a handful of unusually active reporting periods. By contrast, appearing repeatedly across dozens of monthly reports indicates sustained visibility. It shows that the city remained consistently visible in California's serious accident news coverage over an extended period.

Observations From the "Months Listed" Column

- Los Angeles is in a category of its own, appearing on the list 33 months out of 34. Los Angeles also shows high reporting for hit-and-run incidents, which defines its archive profile.
- San Diego matched Los Angeles in consistency, appearing in 33 months despite recording significantly fewer incidents overall. Bakersfield appeared in 31 months, Sacramento in 29, and Fresno in 28. These findings do not reflect isolated spikes in reporting activity. They are long-term patterns of recurring visibility.
- Pedestrian incidents lead in San Diego, Fresno, San Francisco, and San Jose: not car crashes, which is significant and unexpected even in a measure of news reporting distinct from crash totals. It is significant that in four of California's ten most-covered cities, the person struck on foot was the most common serious-crash story.

That observation does not mean pedestrians experienced the most crashes in those cities. The archive cannot support that conclusion. What it does mean is that when serious crashes from those cities entered public reporting, pedestrians appeared with striking frequency. When viewed through the lens of news/archive visibility, pedestrians became one of the most recurring figures in California's serious-crash narrative.

The Turlock Clarification

The table above reveals what the archive clearly shows: Turlock appeared in the archive 103 times across 8 listed months. However, this should not be taken to mean that the city poses unusual danger for road users. The data reflects concentrated regional news coverage of the Stanislaus County area within those 8 months. Please see the Selection Bias section (Section 7) for further clarification.

SECTION 14: WHERE THE ARCHIVE'S INCIDENTS CAME FROM

Source Composition of the Archive

The data presented throughout this report is derived from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, which collected and categorized 10,357 incidents appearing in California accident news coverage between August 2023 and May 2026.

Discovery-source information was recorded in the monthly reports beginning in May 2024 and continuing through May 2026; it was not recorded in the same format for every month of the

archive. Within the months where that field was available, approximately 5,200 incidents were identified through Google News monitoring and approximately 1,275 through the City News Service wire, with smaller numbers arriving through both channels or through X. These figures therefore describe the months where discovery sources were recorded, not a complete source breakdown of all 10,357 archive incidents.

These figures describe the primary information sources contributing to the archive. Details regarding the archive's methodology, collection process, inclusion criteria, and limitations are discussed in Section 6.

This source composition shapes the archive: a crash covered by a wire service or identified through Google News monitoring was far more likely to be captured in the archive than one mentioned only by a small local outlet, or not reported publicly at all.

SECTION 15: WHAT THESE FINDINGS MEAN FOR INJURED CALIFORNIANS

What These Patterns Mean If You're the Story

The patterns identified throughout this report extend beyond statistics and news coverage. Each incident recorded in the archive represents a real collision that affected real people, families, and communities.

Every incident in Arash Law's internal accident-news archive began as someone's worst day. Behind the 10,357 incidents analyzed in this report are real people who were struck in crosswalks, families waiting for a loved one who never came home, motorcyclists facing months of rehabilitation, and drivers whose lives changed in seconds because another motorist made a reckless decision.

The archive measures patterns in serious accident news coverage, but those patterns matter because they reflect the types of crashes that repeatedly produce life-altering consequences. Across nearly three years of reporting, the same categories kept surfacing:

- Pedestrians struck by vehicles.
- Hit-and-run incidents.
- DUI crashes.
- Motorcycle collisions.
- Truck accidents.
- Serious multi-vehicle crashes.

These types of incidents are important because what happens in the first hours and days after a crash can significantly affect an injured person's ability to protect their legal rights and preserve potential legal remedies.

The Crashes That Dominate the Archive Often Create the Most Complex Legal Questions

Many of the categories that appear most frequently in the archive are also among the most legally complex:

- A pedestrian collision may raise questions about right-of-way, traffic-signal timing, roadway design, visibility conditions, or whether a driver failed to yield.
- A hit-and-run crash may require investigators to identify a fleeing driver before evidence disappears.
- A truck collision may involve multiple potentially responsible parties, including a driver, trucking company, maintenance provider, cargo contractor, or vehicle manufacturer.
- A DUI crash may create both criminal proceedings and separate civil claims for compensation.
- In fatal crashes, surviving family members may have the right to pursue a wrongful death claim under California law. Those claims can involve compensation for financial losses, funeral expenses, and the loss of a loved one's companionship and support.

The legal issues differ from case to case. The common thread is that serious crashes often create questions that cannot be answered immediately at the scene but instead rely on evidence that is best gathered as early as possible.

Why Timing Matters: Evidence That Disappears Fastest

With the accident categories listed above, critical evidence rarely waits, and evidence not gathered in the first hours or days after a collision may disappear permanently.

- A hit-and-run claim may depend on nearby surveillance footage that is routinely overwritten.
- A truck crash may involve driver logs, dispatch records, inspection reports, or electronic data that must be identified and preserved quickly.
- A pedestrian case may turn on a traffic-signal sequence, roadway-maintenance records, or witness accounts that become harder to obtain as time passes.

The longer an investigation is delayed, the greater the risk that important information disappears. Even when evidence is preserved promptly, victims and surviving family members may benefit from obtaining timely professional guidance to help evaluate, organize, and protect available evidence while it remains accessible.

Understanding Your Options

Not every serious crash results in litigation, and not every insurance claim develops into a lawsuit. Nevertheless, serious crashes frequently raise important legal, practical, and financial questions that deserve careful consideration while evidence remains available and facts can still be verified.

Common questions may include:

- What evidence currently exists?
- Who may be legally responsible?
- What insurance coverage applies?
- Are there additional potentially liable parties?
- What deadlines could affect a future claim?
- What rights and options are available under California law?

The answers to these questions often become more difficult to determine as time passes for the reasons identified above. For this reason, it is important that injured individuals and families evaluate their options as early as possible following a serious crash. Doing so can help preserve important information and support informed decision-making while the relevant facts remain available.

If you were injured in a serious California crash and have questions about your legal rights, professional legal guidance may help you better understand your options.

Arash Law can review what happened, help preserve available evidence, and explain your options through a free consultation. Call (888) 488-1391. There are no fees unless the firm recovers compensation on your behalf.

SECTION 16: HOW TO USE AND CITE THIS REPORT

How to Cite This Report

This report was created to serve as a public resource for journalists, researchers, transportation safety professionals, policymakers, community organizations, and anyone seeking to better understand patterns in California's serious accident news coverage.

Readers are welcome to reference, quote, and cite the report with attribution as:

Samuelson, Chidike. *California Accident News & Traffic Safety Trends Report: 2023–2026*. Arash Law, 2026, <https://www.arashlaw.com/california-accident-trends-report/>.

When citing findings from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, they should be identified as archive findings or accident news visibility findings rather than official California crash statistics.

About the Author

This report was written by Chidike Samuelson, an independent contributor whose published work includes contributor writing for Entrepreneur.com. It was prepared from Arash Law's internal accident-news archive together with official public traffic safety data published by the California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Arash Law compiled the archive and reviewed the report for factual accuracy, methodology, and legal-advertising compliance. Archive findings and official statistics are presented as two separate analytical layers throughout, and the report's methodology and limitations are disclosed in full.

Data Use, Licensing, and Attribution

The aggregate archive data files accompanying this report are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license. Readers may share, reproduce, adapt, and build upon the material, provided they give appropriate attribution to Arash Law and include a link to the original report.

Summary of Findings and Key Conclusions

This report does not show which California cities or crash types are the most dangerous. Instead, it shows which serious crashes repeatedly became visible in public accident news coverage between August 2023 and May 2026.

Across 10,357 archive entries, the same themes appeared again and again: vehicle collisions, pedestrian incidents, hit-and-runs, DUI-related crashes, motorcycle crashes, truck crashes, and bicycle crashes. These patterns suggest that serious-crash reporting in California consistently centered on serious, newsworthy incidents involving vulnerable road users, fleeing drivers, and complex roadway events.

The city findings should be read the same way. Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, Bakersfield, Fresno, and other cities appeared often in the archive, but those appearances reflect repeat news visibility, not official crash rates or danger rankings.

The main conclusion is that Arash Law's internal accident-news archive provides a useful view of serious crash visibility in California. It should be read alongside official traffic-safety data, not as a replacement for it.

SECTION 17: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does this report include every traffic accident in California?

No. In fact, one of the report's most important methodological disclosures is that it was never designed to do so.

Arash Law's internal accident-news archive tracks serious crashes that entered public reporting and were selected from news coverage between August 2023 and May 2026. It is reasonable to infer that the crashes receiving the greatest news coverage are generally among the most serious, or are otherwise considered especially newsworthy. However, the archive does not claim to measure all serious crashes or every crash occurring in California.

Readers seeking statewide collision totals, fatality counts, or official crash rates should rely on government reporting systems such as CHP's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS), the California Office of Traffic Safety, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Which cities appeared most often in the archive?

Los Angeles appeared more frequently than any other city in Arash Law's internal accident-news archive, recording 735 incidents across 33 of the archive's 34 reporting periods.

The top five cities were:

City	Archive Incidents	Months Listed (of 34 months)
Los Angeles	735	33
San Diego	403	33
Sacramento	387	29
Bakersfield	292	31
Fresno	262	28

These figures represent appearances within the archive and should not be interpreted as crash rates or danger rankings.

How is this different from official crash data?

Official crash data and Arash Law's internal accident-news archive measure fundamentally different things. Government agencies such as the California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration collect and publish data designed to measure traffic safety outcomes. These systems provide information on crash frequency, fatalities, injuries, roadway trends, and statewide safety performance.

For example, according to the California Office of Traffic Safety, California recorded 4,061 traffic fatalities in 2023 ([California OTS Traffic Safety Quick Stats](#)). Official statistics such as these are the authoritative source for measuring roadway outcomes.

The archive serves a different purpose. It tracks serious crashes that became public news stories and were subsequently covered within Arash Law's reporting system.

An easy way to think about the distinction is this: Official data measures what happened, while the archive measures what became visible through accident news coverage. Neither source replaces the other. Together, they provide complementary perspectives on California's traffic safety landscape.

What exactly is this report?

This report is a research piece focused on patterns in California's serious accident news coverage over nearly three years. Arash Law's internal accident-news archive analyzed 10,357 incidents appearing in serious accident news coverage between August 2023 and May 2026. This report examines the archive's findings and what they mean.

This report combines two analytical layers: the first layer consists of official traffic safety statistics drawn from government agencies, including the California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The second layer is Arash Law's internal accident-news archive as described above.

Official data helps explain overall roadway outcomes. The archive helps identify the types of serious crashes, roadway users, and cities that repeatedly entered public reporting.

Why does Arash Law track accident news?

Arash Law is a California personal injury law firm that represents people and families affected by serious accidents across the state. Over the last 17 years, Arash Law has helped thousands of people involved in all categories of accidents covered in this report. By tracking accident news, Arash Law seeks to better understand patterns in California's serious accident news coverage and to supply valuable information to researchers and the public.

The archive emerged from a practical editorial process rather than a formal research project. For nearly three years, Arash Law's content team monitored accident reporting across California on a daily basis. Over time, that effort produced a substantial collection of serious-crash reports spanning multiple years, regions, and accident categories.

Once the archive reached sufficient scale, patterns began to emerge. These are the trends examined throughout this report. The result is a large internal analysis of serious accident news visibility in California during the reporting period.

What were the most common crash types in the archive?

Vehicle collisions represented the largest category in the archive, accounting for 3,787 incidents or approximately 37% of all entries. Pedestrian accidents ranked second with 1,959 entries, appearing with notable consistency across the reporting period. Hit-and-run incidents ranked third, appearing persistently across reporting months for a total of 1,146 entries.

The complete category ranking is shown below.

Category	Incidents
Car Accidents	3,787
Pedestrian Accidents	1,959
Hit-and-Run Incidents	1,146
DUI Incidents	914
Motorcycle Accidents	762

Truck Accidents	746
Bicycle Accidents	373

Taken together, these findings suggest that vulnerable road users (pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists) occupied a central place within California's serious accident news conversation between 2023 and 2026.

What should someone do after a serious accident in California?

Individuals involved in a serious crash should prioritize safety and medical care while also preserving information and evidence whenever circumstances permit. Photographs, witness contact information, police report numbers, surveillance-camera locations, insurance details, and medical documentation can all become important later.

One point is worth emphasizing: information tends to disappear faster than many people realize. Seeking appropriate professional guidance early in the process can help ensure that important information remains available while those questions are being addressed.

While this report examines patterns in California's serious accident news coverage rather than individual legal claims, the findings also highlight circumstances that frequently give rise to complex injury and wrongful death litigation. Understanding these recurring patterns can help crash victims and their families appreciate the importance of timely legal guidance, evidence preservation, and informed decision-making following a serious collision.

The preceding sections of this report present research findings based on Arash Law's internal accident-news archive together with publicly available traffic safety data. The following section describes legal services offered by Arash Law and should be regarded as attorney advertising where applicable. Nothing in this report constitutes legal advice, and reading this report does not create an attorney-client relationship.

SECTION 18: TALK TO ARASH LAW AFTER A SERIOUS ACCIDENT IN CALIFORNIA

Throughout this report, the archive has illustrated how serious crashes can leave individuals and families facing difficult legal, financial, and practical questions. For those directly affected by such collisions, understanding what happened is often only the beginning.

Determining who may be responsible, identifying available insurance coverage, preserving critical evidence, and evaluating potential legal claims can quickly become overwhelming, particularly in cases involving catastrophic injuries or the loss of a loved one.

Legal representation can assist with many aspects of this process, including investigating the collision, preserving important evidence, communicating with insurance companies, identifying potentially responsible parties, and explaining the options available under California law.

Arash Law represents individuals and families affected by serious motor-vehicle collisions throughout California. If you or someone you love has been injured in a serious crash and would like to better understand your legal rights and available options, Arash Law's team is available to review the circumstances of the incident and answer your questions.

Call **(888) 488-1391** or visit **ArashLaw.com** for a free consultation.

There are no upfront fees, and you pay nothing unless compensation is recovered on your behalf.