

CRIME & SAFETY

The state of South Carolina implemented a state-wide crime reporting system in 1976 and in 1991 implemented the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) which was developed by the FBI to allow law enforcement agencies to report data that are consistent from agency to agency, classified according to standard definitions that are used throughout the nation. The information enables agencies to make decisions in budgeting, manpower allocations and the identification of high crime areas. This information is also forwarded by SLED to the FBI on a monthly basis for inclusion in the FBI's annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). It is noted that there is no way of determining total numbers of crimes committed as only the instances of crime which come to the attention of law enforcement agencies are counted.

Crimes are classified by index offenses. There are seven Index I offenses: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, breaking or entering, larceny and motor vehicle theft. These are typically categorized as violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) and property crimes (breaking or entering, larceny and motor vehicle theft) to provide basic measures of crime. Cherokee County's violent crime rate is below the state average, but the county's property crime rate is above the state average.

South Carolina's violent crime rate decreased 6.7% from 2007 to 2008. Since 1975 the statewide violent crime rate has increased 42.9%. Of all 46 South Carolina Counties, Cherokee ranked 40th for rate of violent crimes in 2008. Both peer counties had higher rates of violent crime with Greenwood ranked 13th and Laurens ranked 16th (Table CS1).



Table CS1. Violent Crimes by County, 2008

	Violent Crime		Rape		Murder		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
	#	Rate*	#	Rate*	#	Rate	#	Rate*	#	Rate*
Cherokee	263	48.4	8	1.5	4	0.74	55	10.1	196	36.0
Laurens	580	83.2	32	4.6	2	0.29	82	11.8	464	66.6
Greenwood	619	90.3	22	3.2	2	0.29	48	7.0	547	79.8
S.C.		72.9		3.7		0.70		14.6		53.9

* per 10,000 population
SC SLED

South Carolina's property crime rate decreased less than 1% from 2007 to 2008. From 1975 to 2008, the property crime rate increased 6.9%. Of all 46 South Carolina Counties, Cherokee ranked 18th for rate of property crimes in 2008. Greenwood ranked higher at 8th, and Laurens had a lower rank at 22nd (Table CS2).

Table CS2. Property Crimes by County, 2008

	Property Crime		Breaking or Entering		Larceny		Motor Vehicle Theft	
	#	Rate*	#	Rate*	#	Rate*	#	Rate*
Cherokee	2,734	436.4	652	119.9	1,528	280.9	194	35.7
Laurens	2,724	390.9	770	110.5	1,651	236.9	303	43.5
Greenwood	3,580	522.3	754	110.0	2,663	388.5	163	23.8
S.C.		424.6		102.6		282.1		39.9

* per 10,000 population
SC SLED



As a state, South Carolina fares poorly for crime, ranking third for overall crime among the 50 states in 2008. In 2009, the state's ranking improved to fourth for overall crime.

- South Carolina's violent crime arrest rate decreased 2.1% from 2007 to 2008. From 1976 through 2008, the violent crime arrest rate has increased 14.1%.
- South Carolina's arrest rate for weapons law violations decreased 6.8% from 2007 to 2008. From 1976 through 2008, the arrest rate decreased 26.4%.
- South Carolina's drug law arrest rate decreased 9.8% from 2007 to 2008. From 1976 through 2008, the arrest rate increased 197.7%.
- South Carolina's DUI arrest rate increased 23.5% from 2007 to 2008. From 1976 through 2008, the DUI arrest rate decreased 48.3%.
- South Carolina's liquor law arrest rate increased 8.4% from 2007 to 2008. From 1976 through 2008, the liquor law arrest rate has increased 83.9%.
- South Carolina's drunkenness arrest rate increased 6.8% from 2007 to 2008. The drunkenness arrest rate has decreased 79.8% since 1976.

FBI Uniform Crime data for the two main towns in Cherokee County is provided in Table CS3.

Table CS3. Crime in Primary Towns, Cherokee County, 2008

City	Population	Violent Crime	Murder & Non-negligent Man-slaughter	Forceible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Property Crime	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Arson
Blacksburg	1,900	17	0	0	4	13	154	30	119	5	0
Gaffney	12,942	125	0	8	27	90	812	159	584	69	4

Federal Bureau of Investigation

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South Carolina’s juvenile arrest rate for violent crime increased 3.2% from 2007 to 2008. The juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes has increased 152.9% since 1976. Of all 46 South Carolina Counties, Cherokee ranked 42nd for rate of juvenile arrests for violent crime in 2008. Peer counties Laurens and Greenwood had higher ranks, at 6th and 21st respectively (Table CS3).

The juvenile arrest rate for property crimes increased 18.7% from 2007 to 2008, but decreased 11.6% since 1976. Of all 46 South Carolina Counties, Cherokee ranked 41st for rate of juvenile arrests for property crime in 2008. Peer counties Laurens and Greenwood had higher ranks, at 19th and 5th respectively (Table CS4).

Table CS4. Juvenile Arrests by County for Violent Crimes and Property Crimes, 2008

	Violent Crime		Property Crimes	
	#	Rate*	#	Rate*
Cherokee	3	2.4	13	10.4
Laurens	26	17.6	58	39.2
Greenwood	14	9.1	104	67.5

**per 10,000 population
SC SLED*

Figure CS1. Juvenile Referrals by Race

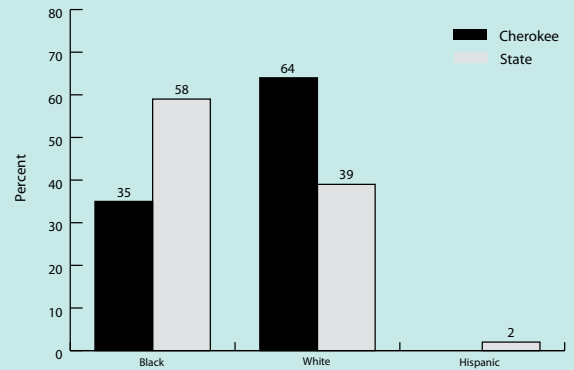


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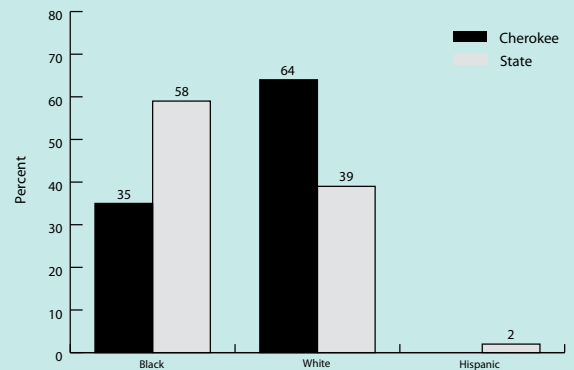
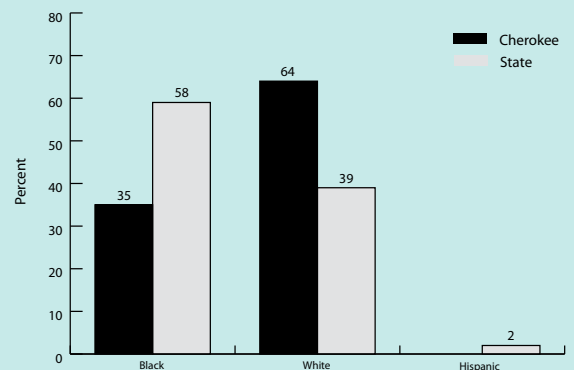


Figure CS1. Juvenile Referrals by Race



According to the SC Department of Juvenile Justice, while the state as a whole saw a decrease of 4% in juvenile cases between FY 2006/07 and FY 2007/08, and Cherokee County saw a decrease of 27%. Cherokee County was among 24 of the state's counties that had decreases in the numbers of juvenile cases. Cases in neighboring Spartanburg County increased from 1,053 to 1,122 or by 7%, and in neighboring Union County cases increased from 306 to 316, or by 3%. The greatest percentage increase by county (250%) occurred in Fairfield County.

Of the state's juveniles detained pre and post adjudication, less than 1% were from Cherokee County. Other relevant data can be found in Table CS5.

Table CS5. Select Juvenile Justice Statistics for Fiscal Year 2007-2008, County and State Comparisons

	Cherokee	State
Total number of juvenile cases	235	23,826
Percent increase / decrease from previous year	-27%	-4%
Number of juvenile cases classified as violent or serious	22	2,229
Percent increase / decrease from previous year	-31%	-6%
Number of status offense cases (e.g. truancy)	50	2,216
Percent increase / decrease from previous year	-44%	-3%
Rate of delinquency processing per 1,000 juvenile population	45	59
Cases dismissed or diverted by Solicitor	65%	57%
Cases dismissed by judicial action	7%	6%
Cases disposed to probation by judicial action	63%	63%
Cases committed to DJJ for evaluation	19	1,778
		<i>SC DJJ</i>

The rate per 1,000 juveniles age 10-16 detained by DJJ and committed to DJJ was lower in Cherokee County than the state average and than in both peer counties (Table CS6).

The social characteristics of Cherokee County juvenile referrals, with state comparison, is indicated in Figures CS1 through CS3. It is clear that the juveniles who are referred to DJJ from Cherokee County mirror the state referrals in terms of age and sex. However, referrals by race are lower for black and Hispanic juveniles in Cherokee County.

Table CS6. Rate of Juveniles Detained and Committed to DJJ Facilities, FY 2007-08

	Rate* Detained	Rate* Committed
Cherokee	3	2
Laurens	6	3
Greenwood	10	8
Total	11	5
	<i>* per 1,000 juvenile residents SC DJJ</i>	

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The South Carolina Incident Based Reporting System (SCIBRS) defines illegal drug activity as an arrest for either drug law violations or drug equipment violations with up to three offenses captured per arrest. Any arrest which includes a drug offense is defined as drug related, regardless of which offense was the most serious. There are sixteen reportable illegal drug categories.

South Carolina's drug arrest rate increased 1.9 percent from 2005 to 2006 but increased 235.7 percent since 1976. Information provided by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) indicates that there were 36,222 reported drugs arrests in South Carolina in 2006. These rates include arrests for crimes related to the possession, distribution or manufacture of illegal narcotic substances. South Carolina is an importation base and transit area for illicit drugs bound for the eastern seaboard of the United States. With its extensive coastline, numerous rural airstrips and matrix of interstate highways, South Carolina represents an attractive transshipment point. Although crack cocaine is the most trafficked drug in the state, more people continue to be arrested for using marijuana in South Carolina. More inmates in the South Carolina Department of Corrections are serving time for drug offenses than any other offense category - 20.6 percent of the 23,390 inmates in FY 2006.

Other state-wide data (McManus, 2008 and McManus, 2008) indicate that in 2006:

- Two drugs, marijuana and cocaine dominated illegal drug use. While 2.2 percent of the state population over age 12 used cocaine in the past year, 8.8 percent had used marijuana in the past year. Further, 7.3 percent had used some kind of illegal drug in the previous month.
- The drug arrest rate increased 46.8 percent between 1996 and 2006 with the highest annual drug arrest rate (88.4 per 10,000) in 2006.
- Personal use offenses accounted for 76.8 percent of the illegal activities associated with drug arrests.

- In terms of substance, cannabis was reported most often, accounting for 64.3 percent of drug arrests.
- The highest drug arrest rate was among young adults from 17 to 24 years old. The median age of people arrested for drug offenses was 25 years.
- Males accounted for 83.8 percent of drug arrests. The drug arrest rate for males was 447.5 percent higher than the drug arrest rate for females.
- Blacks accounted for 53.1 percent of drug arrests, while whites accounted for 46.6 percent. The drug arrest rate for non-whites was 147.3 percent higher than the drug arrest rate for whites.
- Charleston County had both the highest number (4,869) of drug arrests and the highest rate (146.7) of drug arrests than any other county. Spartanburg County was not in the top 10 counties for drug arrest rate.

According to the Seventh Circuit Solicitor's Office's 2007 annual report for Spartanburg and Cherokee counties:

- Thirty women completed mandated treatment in 2006 for mothers who gave birth to babies with illegal drugs in their systems. Dozens more were enrolled in the treatment program and others faced criminal charges for refusing to participate.
- Ninety-six percent of drug tests given to persons sentenced to intervention by Drug Court revealed no further use of illegal substances. Treatment costs were significantly less than incarceration costs would have been.
- Additional federal grant funds enabled aggressive prosecution of DUI cases, resulting in increased conviction and guilty pleas.

According to the S.C. Department of Public Safety (2009), gang-related crime has increased dramatically in South Carolina in recent years. Some statistics reported include:

- The rate of gang related incidents increased 996% from 1998 to 2007.
- The rate of gang violence increased 920% over the same time period.
- Gang related murders increased from none reported in 1998 to a total of 21 in 2007.
- There was an 184% increase in inmate gang members from FY 00 to FY 08.
- Gang violence constituted one in 1,000 violent crimes in 1998 but almost 1 in 100 by 2007, representing a change from 0.09% in 1998 to 0.99% in 2007.

Although gang violence has increased markedly in South Carolina over the last decade, it remains a fairly minor contributor to overall crime. However, although identified gang members represent a small portion of the corrections and community corrections populations, they cause a disproportionate share of incidents in the inmate population. Inmate gang members committed 3,438 violations in FY 08 of which 442 were violent. Gang members in community corrections were revoked at a rate of 44.1%.

In terms of the demographics of gang violence in South Carolina, the SC Department of Public Safety has found that

- Gang related crime is disproportionately the province of juveniles and young adults, males and minorities.
- The geographic distribution of gang violence is not heavily weighted towards the more populous urban counties. Although Richland County reported more gang violence than any other county in 2007, it was followed by Florence and Darlington counties, two mid-sized counties.
- Proportionate to county population, Richland, Charleston, Greenville and Spartanburg ranked one through four respectively in terms of the number of gang members in the correctional system.

Table CS7. Gang violence by County, 2007

	Number	Rate
Spartanburg	31	1.1
Cherokee	8	1.5
Laurens	46	6.6
Greenwood	5	0.7
Colleton (highest rate)	98	25.2
Union (lowest rate)	0	0.0

SC Department of Public Safety

By peer county, the data indicate that

- Richland County reported the most victims of gang violence among the 46 counties in 2007.
- None of the peer counties, Cherokee, Laurens or Greenwood, was among the then highest counties in 2007 for gang violence victimization rates.
- Richland county committed the largest number of identified inmate gang members to the corrections system (June, 2008). Richland was the only peer county in the top 10 counties for the highest rates of gang member inmates.
- Greenville county had the largest number (number = 139, rate = 3.3) of identified gang members under community correctional supervision (September, 2008). By comparison, Spartanburg had 44 identified gang members under community correctional supervision (rate = 1.6).
- Greenville and Richland were among the top 10 counties for rates of gang members under community correctional supervision (September, 2008).

Gang violence by select county is reported for 2007 in CS7. Cherokee County's rate was somewhat higher than Spartanburg County's, although this reflected only 8 incidents of gang violence. Laurens County's rate was markedly higher than Cherokee County's, and Greenwood's was somewhat lower.

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Table CS8. Victim to Offender Relationships in Family Violence, S.C. 1977-2000

Relationship	Number	Percent
Grandchild	1,009	0.6%
Grandparent	1,495	0.8%
In-law	10,397	5.7%
Parent / Stepparent	34,678	19.0%
Child / Stepchild	37,998	20.8%
Sibling / stepsibling	41,523	22.8%
Other Family	55,195	30.3%

S.C. Department of Public Safety

Elder abuse data is not kept as a category of the Uniform Crime Report. According to the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education (2009), as many as one in seven seniors nationwide experience elder abuse, usually at the hands of a family member. Abused seniors are more than three times more likely to die within the next decade than other seniors of the same age.

A recent survey of 5,777 cognitively capable individuals over age 60 conducted by the Medical University of South Carolina (Acierno, et. al., 2010) revealed that more than one in ten U.S. seniors experienced elder mistreatment during the previous year. Prevalence rates by category of abuse include:

- 4.6% for emotional abuse
- 1.6% for physical abuse
- 0.6% for sexual abuse
- 5.1% for potential neglect
- 5.2% for financial abuse by family members

The latest comprehensive victim studies for South Carolina indicated that, in the period 1977-2000, family violence accounted for 11.2% of violent criminal victimization. Victim to offender relationships in these crimes are reported in Table CS8, showing that approximately 20% of family crime victims are parents or grandparents of the offenders.

Fire death rates vary from region to region in the United States. This often is a result of climate, income, education, and other demographic factors. The national fire death rate in 2005 was 12.3 deaths per million population. The highest fire death rate in 2005 was in the District of Columbia (36.3), and the state with the lowest rate was Hawaii (4.7). South Carolina ranked fourteenth, and above the national average, with a fire death rate of 16.2.

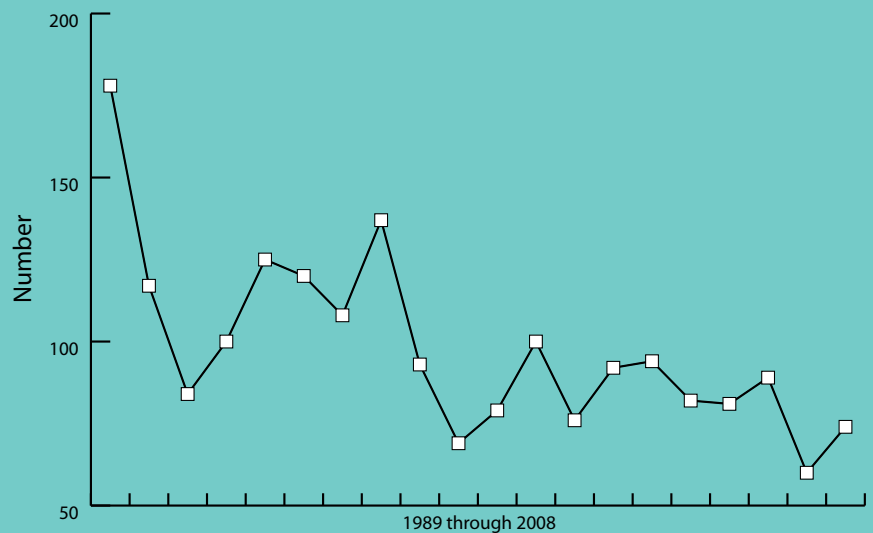
The South Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshall, Division of Fire and Life Safety has the statutory authority to collect, analyze and disseminate fire data provided by fire departments in South Carolina. In 1983 South Carolina adopted the National Fire Incident Reporting System (SCFIRS) to collect consistent data on emergency responses by local fire departments. In 2007, South Carolina fire departments participating in the SCFIRS responded to a total of 166,279 incidents. These incidents include:

- 22,819 fires
- 83,924 rescue / medical incidents
- 8,168 hazardous condition calls
- 10,229 services calls
- 15,334 good intent calls
- 24,271 false calls
- 1,534 other calls

Comparative civilian fire fatality data by peer county is reported in Table CS10. Fire fatalities have been consistently low in Cherokee County.

The number of civilian deaths from fire in South Carolina ranged from a high of 179 in 1989 to a low of 60 in 2007. Generally, there has been a decreasing trend in civilian fire deaths since 1989 (Figure CS5).

Figure CS5. S.C. Civilian Fire Deaths



*SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation,
Office of the State Fire Marshall*

Table CS10. S.C. Civilian Fire Fatalities, Trend by County

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cherokee	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2
Laurens	4	1	2	3	0	1	0	4	3	0
Greenwood	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	2
State Total	100	76	92	94	88	81	89	60	74	79

SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Office of the State Fire Marshall

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According to a 2008 study (TRIP), South Carolina's traffic fatality rate is the sixth highest in the nation, and the state's rural traffic fatality rate is more than four times higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state. The state's mileage death rate (MDR), traffic fatalities per 100 million miles of travel, was 2.1 in 2007. The national mileage death rate in 2007 was 1.4. Based on these figures, South Carolina's mileage death rate was 50 percent higher than the national average in 2007. The South Carolina mileage death rate for 2008, based on preliminary statistics, decreased to an historic low of 1.9, a 9.5percent decrease from 2007.

The S.C. Department of Public Safety (2009) reports that, in 2007, South Carolina had 3,146,979 licensed drivers who operated 3,829,448 registered motor vehicles on a roadway system of 66,248 miles of streets and highways. South Carolina has the fifth largest state-maintained highway system in the nation.

During 2008, there were 110,647 traffic collisions reported on South Carolina's roads and highways.

This constitutes a 1.3 percent decrease from 2007 when 112,067 collisions were reported. Collisions in 2008 resulted in an estimated 933 fatalities and 49,300 injuries. Again, fatalities were 13 percent lower than in 2007. The estimated economic loss to the state from traffic crashes in 2007 was \$2,840,000,000, and is estimated to be \$2.80 billion for 2008. Traffic safety is a result of a number of variables predicated on local conditions. Counties with larger populations have higher numbers of collisions due to greater amounts of travel, although counties with the highest collision and fatality rates per population are in the rural counties.

Table CS9. Cherokee County Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Trends, 2005-2007

	2005	2006	2007
Total collisions ranking by county	19	19	18
Fatal collisions ranking by county	14	33	25
Injury collisions ranking by county	19	19	19
Number S.C. drivers licenses	40,056	40,545	38,655
Number S.C. vehicle registrations	51,692	46,923	48,290
Motor vehicle death rate/100,000 population	47	15	34
Economic loss (rounded to \$100,000)	\$51,700,000	\$31,200,000	\$42,400,000

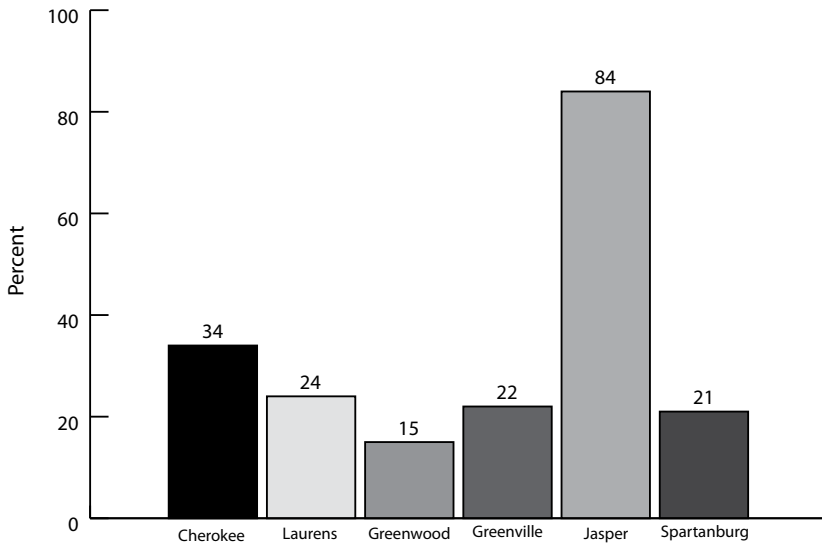
S.C. Department of Public Safety

The three-year motor vehicle collision data show somewhat mixed trends for Cherokee County (Table CS9).

In Cherokee County in 2008 there were:

- 13 fatal collisions (16 persons killed)
- 438 injury-only collisions (969 people injured)
- 905 property damage only collisions

Figure CS4. Motor Vehicle Death Rate, Selected S.C. Counties



When traffic fatality rates by population are examined by county for 2007, Cherokee County has a higher fatality rate than peer counties Laurens and Greenwood and large neighboring counties Spartanburg and Greenwood (Figure CS4). Cherokee County's fatality rate is markedly lower than Jasper County's rate which is the highest in the state.

According to the South Carolina 2007 Traffic Collision Fact Book, in 2007 traffic fatalities across the state increased by 3.2% from 2006. This constituted a 2.13 deaths per hundred million vehicle miles traveled. The estimated cost for the state's total number of collisions in 2007 was \$2.84 billion.

According to the South Carolina Crash Statistics Clock, the state experiences:

