

More Detail on Low Traffic Casualties in Oslo – Article from Aftenposten (online) from 3rd January 2020

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<https://www.aftenposten.no/osloby/i/d00rzz/1975-41-doede-i-oslo-trafikken-2019-en-doed-i-oslo-trafikken>

1975: 41 died in Oslo traffic. 2019: One death in Oslo traffic.

Fewer cars in the center of Oslo and lower speed limits have led to a sharp decline in the number of traffic fatalities in Oslo in recent years.

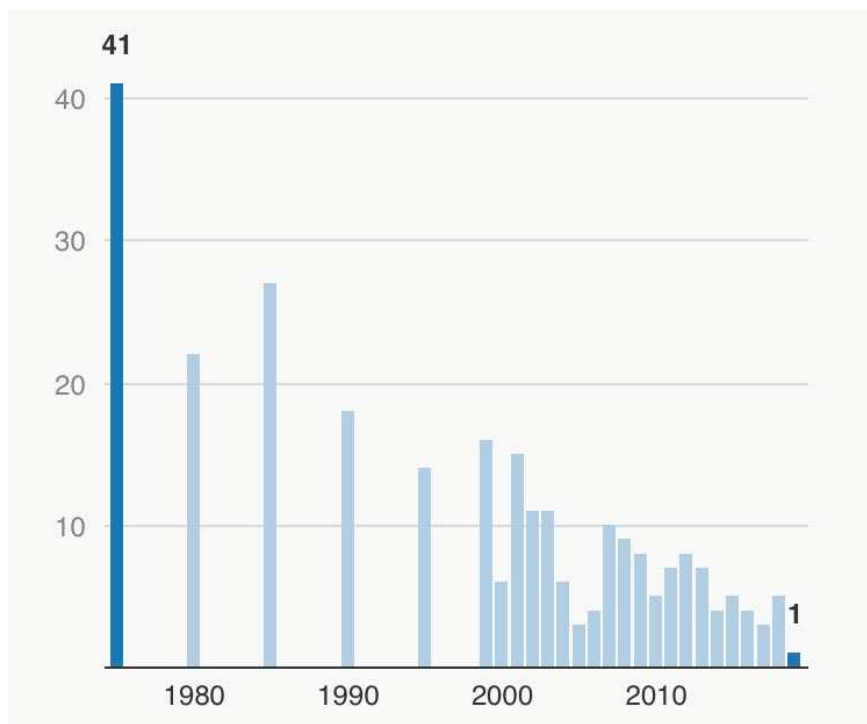
One pleasing fact is that no children aged 0-15 are killed in traffic in Norway in 2019, according to recent figures from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration.

The figures for 2019 also stand out for the capital: In 2018, five people died in traffic accidents in Oslo. In 2019, one person died.

Aftenposten has looked at historical figures showing that Oslo traffic took 41 lives in 1975. Since then, the trend has been clear:

Still fewer people die in traffic on a national basis and in the capital. But after reaching a bottom with three fatalities in 2005, the trend reversed. Over time, however, it is seen that the trend has also been positive in recent years.

Number of traffic fatalities in Oslo



The only person killed in the traffic in Oslo in 2019 was an adult man who died when the car he put in collided with a fence at Skillebekk in June.

Explaining the decline in Oslo

- While the number of fatalities in traffic has stabilized on a national basis, we see that the figure has dropped sharply in Oslo, says Christoffer Solstad Steen, communications adviser at Trygg Trafikk.

- *What is the cause of this decline?*

- Oslo has received **several regulations that have reduced the number of places where it is possible to drive**. This is especially true of the city center and downtown areas. **It has also become more cycling**. The risk of accidents between motorists and cyclists has been reduced. The more you separate the different road user groups, the less the risk of serious traffic accidents. **And then we see that the speed limit has been lower on several roads**, says Steen.

In recent years, city-center roads such as Ullevålsveien and Ensjøveien have lowered the speed limit. The same goes for several stretches outside the city center.

Safer school road

Steen adds that several Oslo schools have got so-called **heart zones** that make it safer for students to walk or cycle. Schools that have a heart zone, in collaboration with the municipality, are implementing small and large measures to make the school road safer. The city council has decided to create heart zones around all primary schools in Oslo.

- *Does that mean that it is the City Council's policy that has led to fewer fatalities in Oslo?*

- We can't say that is the whole reason, but some of the measures may have contributed to it.

Less through traffic

Researcher Rune Elvik at the Department of Transport Economics (TØI) is behind a number of reports and scientific articles on transport, traffic safety and people's behavior on the way. He also says that **lower speed limits are one of the main reasons why fewer people die in traffic in Oslo**.

- There are several factors that have contributed to the decline in both Oslo and elsewhere in the country. **Lower speed limits in the built-up areas** and **less transit traffic in the residential areas** are some of the reasons for this in Oslo. By developing new areas today, motorists and soft road users will have their own road network. In addition, the **cars have become much safer over the years**, says Elvik.

He adds that traffic safety measures such as speed bumps and lower speed limits were introduced in the late 1970s. Therefore, the number of traffic victims began to decline significantly from the end of that decade.

- There are also fewer people driving per mile today. All this has contributed to the decline in the numbers, Elvik emphasizes.

Takes more chances in traffic

Finn Erik Grønli, police officer in the traffic police in the Oslo police district, says it is gratifying that the number of traffic fatalities in Oslo has gone down. He thinks modern cars and better roads are some of the main reasons for that.

- There are several elements that have led to this. Especially modern cars, which are equipped with everything from airbags to electronic rangefinders, have contributed to fewer fatalities in traffic. We also have better road networks than before, says Grønli.

And although fewer people die in traffic, Grønli sees no reason to reduce the amount of enforcement.

- The human factor is an important reason why we have accidents today. **There are drivers who take greater chances, drivers who drive faster**, and drivers who drive with a barrel. **We also know that illegal mobile use is a growing problem** that causes many rear-end collisions. And then the traffic picture in Oslo has become more complicated with more and more cyclists and electric park cyclists. It is important that we are present to prevent accidents, says Grønli.

Road Director Ingrid Dahl Hovland is pleased with record numbers in an international context.

- But this is no cushion. Every serious accident is one for many. The fight against traffic death and serious injuries in traffic continues with unabated strength, she says.

From 101 to zero killed children

Nationally, the number of fatalities in traffic has been a positive trend since the peak year of 1970 when 560 were killed on the roads. This despite the fact that the number of cars on Norwegian roads represented a fraction of today's figures. 101 of those killed were children.

- During these years we have among other things been given seat belt injunctions, which has been very important to reduce the numbers. Traffic safety has also been addressed at several levels in organizations and public bodies. It is particularly gratifying that no children have died in traffic in 2019, says Steen.

As late as 1985, 482 people lost their lives in road accidents in Norway.

On a nationwide basis, 110 people were killed in traffic last year. This is two more than in 2018. In 2017, the figure ended at 106.