How often do you get in a car? When you drive from point A to point B, do you consider the danger associated with driving a car? The answers are most likely, “frequently” and “no”. We don’t give a second thought to getting into the car and driving to the grocery store, to the park, across state, across the country. Flying in an airplane offers a different perspective as the perception of flying is often skewed as a result of “not being in control” of the airplane. This was amplified in 2018 where there was [an explosion mid-flight](https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/national-international/airplane-makes-emergency-landing-at-philadelphia-international-airport/52411/) on flight 1380 which resulted in one casualty. This flight sparked [negative media attention](https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/02/health/plane-crash-deaths-intl/index.html) which led to negative profits within the airline industry. When profits decrease, consumers carry the burden of filling the gap by paying more for travel. This infographic aims to provide perspective for airline consumers.

Since 1995, there have been a total of 789 deaths that have occurred on a plane, which is dwarfed by the number of auto related deaths sitting at 819,311. That means that plane deaths account for just .1% of deaths when stacked against cars. On average there are 32,772 auto related deaths in the United States per year. When the auto related deaths are broken down by month, we see that the total number of plane related deaths (789) has never eclipsed the average monthly number of auto related deaths since 1995. That means, since 1985, adding all deaths related to flying, the sum doesn’t surpass a single monthly average for car related deaths.

Doing the same analysis on planes shows that there is an average of 32.875 deaths per year. While that number seems high, we have to remember that outlier data also contributes to this number. For example, the 911 attacks accounted for 265 of the 789 deaths. When removed, this number falls to 11 deaths on average per year, which also seems high. However, when the data are distributed on a timeline, it is apparent that there hasn’t been a single death on a major airliner plane between 2002 and 2017. That is a 15-year timeframe with zero deaths. In 2018, flight 1380 had an engine failure that resulted in the tragic loss of a woman’s life. However, with some added perspective of 2018 transportation related deaths, we can see this is highly unlikely to happen.

In 2018, There was one death related to a flight on a major airline, 52 deaths related to a bus or public transport, and 29,318 deaths related to a car. Looking across the United States, all states had at minimum 16 deaths related to auto accidents. That means there were more auto related deaths in every state within the US than there were for ALL plane related deaths for the entire year.

Flying can seem scary, as we are not in control of the driver’s seat. However, when we look at the data, the facts provide perspective. It is in fact, safer to fly in an airplane than it is to drive in a car.

Sources:

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