



February 2024

# RIDESHARING AND TAXI SAFETY

## Information on Assaults against Drivers and Passengers

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106742](#), a report to congressional addressees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Ridesourcing and taxi companies offer similar transportation services to the public. Ridesourcing companies connect passengers and drivers by offering pre-arranged trips through an app. Taxi companies can conduct either pre-arranged or street-hail trips. Media outlets, advocacy organizations, and others have raised questions about the safety of drivers and passengers of ridesourcing vehicles and taxis.

Sami's Law, enacted in January 2023, includes a provision for GAO to conduct a study including the incidence of physical and sexual assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers in calendar years 2019 and 2020. This report describes the extent to which data on such assaults are collected and available.

To conduct this work, GAO reviewed federal database documents, such as data dictionaries, and interviewed officials from federal agencies including the Departments of Justice, Labor, and Health and Human Services. GAO also examined laws, regulations, and documents on ridesourcing and taxi oversight for five states and five localities, selected based on whether they collected data and to vary in location, among other factors.

In addition, GAO reviewed documents and websites for selected ridesourcing companies and selected taxi companies. GAO also interviewed representatives from three ridesourcing and five taxi companies. GAO selected these companies to ensure variation in size (e.g., revenue, number of trips) and location.

View [GAO-24-106742](#). For more information, contact Elizabeth Repko at 202-512-2834 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov) and Derrick Collins at 202-512-8777 or [collinsd@gao.gov](mailto:collinsd@gao.gov).

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## What GAO Found

Ridesourcing (also referred to as ridesharing) and taxi services help meet the transportation needs of many people in the U.S.

#### Taxi and Ridesourcing Transportation Services



Source (left to right): GAO and Mat Hayward/stock.adobe.com. | GAO-24-106742

There is no federal requirement to collect data specifically on assaults against drivers and passengers of ridesourcing vehicles and taxis. Some federal and non-federal sources collect data on such assaults, but the available data cannot fully describe the extent of assaults in these industries. Several factors result in the data not being comparable or complete for this purpose. These factors include the varied intended uses of the collected data, the use of different definitions and codes, and underreporting of assaults. More specifically:

- Six federal databases contain some information on assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries. These databases contain more data about assaults against drivers than against passengers. Although limitations exist with these data, a few databases provide some data that can be used to report on assaults against drivers for 2019 and 2020. For example, a census of occupational fatalities reported 19 fatal injuries or illnesses of workers in the ridesourcing and taxi industries in 2019 related to assaults (i.e., intentional injuries by another person). Data for 2020 were not published because they did not meet publication criteria.
- Three ridesourcing companies whose representatives GAO interviewed collect data on assaults against their drivers and passengers, and they voluntarily issue reports with information on the extent of the most serious types of assault. The companies report data on fatal physical assaults and use the same definitions to categorize the five most serious types of sexual assault. The three ridesourcing companies reported that about 4,600 incidents of the five most serious types of sexual assault occurred related to trips arranged through their digital applications (app) in 2019, the only year for which all three companies publicly reported data. The five taxi companies whose representatives GAO spoke with collect complaint and incident data, which can include assault data. The five taxi companies' representatives said these data are largely for internal purposes and are not reported publicly. Representatives from the five companies said that they have experienced few or no assaults in 2019 and 2020.

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## Abbreviations

app	digital application
BJS	Bureau of Justice Statistics
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFOI	Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOT	Department of Transportation
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
NCHS	National Center for Health Statistics
NCVS	National Crime Victimization Survey
NEISS-Work	National Electronic Injury Surveillance System – Occupational Supplement
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NVSS	National Vital Statistics System
OIS	OSHA Information System
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
SOII	Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

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February 22, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chairman  
The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith  
House of Representatives

Ridesourcing and taxi services help meet the transportation needs of many people in the U.S., including those without a personal vehicle and those traveling for work or leisure. Ridesourcing, also referred to as ridesharing, involves transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, using a digital network to connect passengers with drivers of, most commonly, personally owned vehicles. Ridesourcing companies offer services like those offered by taxis. However, taxi companies can conduct either pre-arranged or street-hail trips, while ridesourcing companies only offer pre-arranged trips through a digital application (app).

Media outlets, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders have raised questions about the safety of ridesourcing and taxis for drivers and passengers. For example, a group of advocacy organizations reviewed multiple sources in the public domain and reported that in 2022, at least

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31 app-based workers, which include ridesourcing drivers, were murdered while working.<sup>1</sup>

Sami's Law, enacted in January 2023, provides for GAO to conduct a study including the incidence of assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers in 2019 and 2020; background check requirements; and safety steps taken by the companies.<sup>2</sup> This report describes the extent to which data on such assaults are collected and available. We also provide preliminary observations on requirements for background checks of prospective ridesourcing and taxi drivers, as well as on in-app and in-vehicle safety features that selected ridesourcing and taxi companies have made available to passengers and drivers (see appendix I).<sup>3</sup>

We conducted several steps to describe the extent to which data on assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers are collected and available. To identify which federal databases contain such information, we interviewed officials from the Departments of Justice (DOJ), Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Transportation (DOT), and from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Within DOJ, we interviewed officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).<sup>4</sup> Within DOL, we interviewed officials from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Within HHS, we interviewed officials from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Within these federal agencies, we examined 11 databases that contain crime or workplace safety data and identified

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<sup>1</sup>Gig Workers Rising, PowerSwitch Action, and Action Center on Race and the Economy, *Murdered Behind the Wheel: An Escalating Crisis for App Drivers* (spring 2023). In this report, an app-based worker is defined as someone who works for an app corporation to provide rides or deliveries on its platform. The sources reviewed in this report included press accounts, court records, and police reports.

<sup>2</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-330, § 2, 136 Stat. 6,114, 6,114-15 (2023) (codified at 34 U.S.C. § 41313).

<sup>3</sup>We plan to issue a report with more details on background check requirements and safety features in 2024.

<sup>4</sup>BJS is DOJ's primary statistical agency and administers the National Crime Victimization Survey. For purposes of this report, all content related to the National Crime Victimization Survey is attributed to BJS.

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six databases with data relevant to our review.<sup>5</sup> We focused our review on data for calendar years 2019 and 2020, as required by the mandate.<sup>6</sup>

For the six federal databases we identified as collecting relevant information, we reviewed database documentation, including data dictionaries and standard operating procedures, to understand what data are available, how the data are collected and reported, and data limitations. Through these efforts, we identified some available data on assaults and fatalities for 2019 and 2020 provided by federal agencies from three of the six databases: BJS's National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), BLS's Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), and BLS's Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). To assess the reliability of these data, we interviewed agency officials and reviewed documents describing data collection methods. We found the data sufficiently reliable for presenting data available to be publicly reported on assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers. In presenting these data, we report on how information from the databases differs in terms of which types of drivers and assaults are included.

To identify non-federal sources of data on these assaults, we reviewed safety reports and other documents from five selected ridesourcing companies. We selected Uber and Lyft, which represent the vast majority of the U.S. market, as well as HopSkipDrive, SilverRide, and Alto. Of these five selected ridesourcing companies, we interviewed representatives from Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive.<sup>7</sup> We selected these five companies to obtain diversity in populations served, fleet size (i.e., number of annual rides or number of drivers), and geographic areas served, and to select companies that collect data on assaults.

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<sup>5</sup>We determined that the following five databases did not include data relevant to this study: FBI's Next Generation Identification system, FBI's National Crime Information Center, FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting and National Incident-Based Reporting System, FBI's National Data Exchange System, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Occupational Mortality Surveillance. See table 1 for a list of the six federal databases that contain data relevant to our review.

<sup>6</sup>This report is the first report issued in response to a recurring mandate. Future reports will include more recent years.

<sup>7</sup>We interviewed representatives from Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive to gain a deeper understanding of each company's efforts to collect assault data and conduct background checks, and of each company's use of safety features. Representatives from the other two companies either declined to meet with us or did not respond to our request for a meeting. However, we plan to contact these companies as part of our ongoing work on background check requirements for prospective ridesourcing and taxi drivers and on safety features.

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We obtained information from five selected taxi companies by interviewing their representatives and reviewing information on their websites. We selected two taxi companies—United Independent Taxi Cab and Union Cab Cooperative—because they operated in states with high numbers of taxi drivers and to obtain diversity in revenue and geographic location.<sup>8</sup> The three other companies we interviewed—C&H Taxi, Yellow Cab of Los Angeles, and zTrip—were part of a taxi operator panel organized by The Transportation Alliance, a trade association representing the private passenger transportation industry. We also reviewed information available on the websites of these three companies.

We analyzed data that Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive publicly reported on selected physical and sexual assaults perpetrated against ridesourcing drivers and passengers for 2019 and 2020. To assess the reliability of these data, we interviewed company officials and reviewed documents describing data collection and categorization methods. We found the data sufficiently reliable for presenting data available to be publicly reported on assaults against ridesourcing drivers and passengers.

We also reviewed laws, regulations, and other documents for selected states and localities to understand their oversight of ridesourcing and taxi companies, including collected data on assaults. We selected five states (California, Connecticut, Montana, Nevada, and South Carolina) and five localities (Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, and Portland, Oregon) based on whether the state or locality had regulatory oversight of ridesourcing and taxi companies and collected data, and to obtain geographic diversity. We interviewed officials from the five states and from Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Portland, Oregon.<sup>9</sup>

We conducted this performance audit from April 2023 to February 2024 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that

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<sup>8</sup>We met with representatives from United Independent Taxi Cab and Union Cab Cooperative to gain a deeper understanding of each company's efforts to collect assault data and conduct background checks, and of each company's use of safety features. In addition to these two taxi companies, we selected two other taxi companies, Yellow Checker Star Transportation and Curb. We did not meet with representatives from these two companies as they either did not respond to our request for a meeting or declined to be interviewed.

<sup>9</sup>Officials from Philadelphia did not respond to our request for a meeting.



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the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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## Background

### Ridesourcing and Taxi Services

Ridesourcing is an on-demand, technology-enabled service that connects passengers with drivers who provide transportation services through digital apps. Two major ridesourcing companies—Uber and Lyft—provide service nationwide, and smaller ridesourcing companies may offer services in certain geographic areas or may specialize in providing services to certain populations. According to a Transportation Research Board report, most ridesourcing drivers are not employees of the company they drive for; rather, they are classified by these companies as independent contractors.<sup>10</sup>

Taxis represent a more traditional type of for-hire, personal transportation. Taxis conduct street-hail rides, but some also offer rides arranged through a digital app or other means. Unlike ridesourcing companies, taxi companies tend to operate locally or regionally, rather than nationally. Taxi companies get most of their ridership in large cities. According to the Transportation Research Board report, taxi drivers may be either classified as independent contractors or employees of the company for which they drive.<sup>11</sup>

States and localities have been involved in overseeing ridesourcing. All 50 states and Washington, D.C., have enacted laws related to ridesourcing. Requirements set by states differ. States may require insurance, background checks for ridesourcing drivers, and vehicle inspections. Some local governments may also provide oversight of ridesourcing. Local government requirements may be similar to those established in some states, such as requiring insurance or background checks, and they may also build upon requirements set by the state.

In addition, some states and localities may regulate aspects of taxi operations. According to the Transportation Research Board report

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<sup>10</sup>Transportation Research Board, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Between Public and Private Mobility: Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services* (Washington, D.C.: 2016).

<sup>11</sup>Transportation Research Board, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Between Public and Private Mobility: Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services*.

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mentioned above, the nature and extent of taxi regulations vary considerably within the U.S.<sup>12</sup> Regulators may set requirements related to fares and public safety.

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## Collecting Data on Assaults

Several federal agencies, including DOJ, DOL, and HHS, administer programs that collect data on overall crime and workplace injuries in the U.S. These data may include information on assaults, including sexual assaults. These agencies draw on various sources for their data, including police and hospital reports, death certificates, and employer and victim surveys. For example, the FBI estimated that in 2022, the rate of aggravated assault in the U.S. was 268.2 per 100,000 people based on data collected from law enforcement agencies.<sup>13</sup> A survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that more than one in two women and nearly one in three men have experienced contact sexual violence—rape, being made to penetrate, sexual coercion, or unwanted sexual contact—in their lifetime, according to a 2016/2017 CDC report on sexual violence.<sup>14</sup>

There are different ways of defining and reporting on assaults and sexual assaults.<sup>15</sup> We previously found that federal data collection efforts differed in intended use, source information, and measurement of sexual violence data, including sexual assaults. In particular, in 2016 we found that data collection efforts across four federal agencies used 23 different terms to describe sexual violence. As a result, these data collection efforts may

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<sup>12</sup>Transportation Research Board, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Between Public and Private Mobility: Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services*.

<sup>13</sup>FBI Crime Data Explorer. The FBI provides estimated crime numbers because not all law enforcement agencies provide data for complete reporting periods. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program documentation, an aggravated assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a dangerous weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury, or where there was a risk for serious injury or intent to seriously injure.

<sup>14</sup>K.C. Basile, S.G. Smith, M. Kresnow, S. Khatiwada, and R.W. Leemis, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Sexual Violence* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2022).

<sup>15</sup>Federal agencies and others have developed definitions of physical and sexual assault. For the purposes of this report, we use the term "sexual assault" to refer to a range of unwanted sexual acts (including, for example, contact and noncontact sexual acts). This report does not define sexual assault, but rather describes how data collection efforts refer to, define, and measure what we refer to in general as sexual assault.

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characterize the same act of sexual violence using different terms, or one data collection effort may use multiple terms to characterize a particular act of sexual violence depending on the contextual factors involved.<sup>16</sup>

More broadly than federal data collection efforts, RALIANCE, a national partnership working to end sexual violence, noted in 2018 that reports of sexual violence can be found in all sectors of society, and that many industries struggle to gather consistent information and data.<sup>17</sup>

Collecting consistent data is challenging in part because the occurrence of assaults, including sexual violence, is considered to be underestimated.<sup>18</sup> Violent crime has historically been underreported to law enforcement. This trend applies to sexual violence as well. For example, we have reported that victims often do not report sexual violence to law enforcement due to feelings of guilt, shame, and embarrassment; fear of the perpetrator; or fear of not being believed, among other reasons.<sup>19</sup> To help improve trust and reporting rates, public and private entities have taken steps to implement more trauma-informed response and reporting processes. For example, DOJ, along with safety and trade organizations, has developed resources to help law enforcement agencies prevent biases from compromising investigations of crimes involving sexual assault.<sup>20</sup> In addition, RALIANCE, partnering with the Urban Institute and using funding from Uber, developed a

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<sup>16</sup>As we previously reported, the differences across the data collection efforts may hinder understanding of the extent of sexual violence. We recommended that federal agencies enhance the clarity and transparency of publicly available sexual violence data by making information on the acts of sexual violence and contextual factors included in their measures publicly available, including revising their definitions of sexual violence, which HHS and DOJ have done for some of their data collection efforts. See GAO, *Sexual Violence Data: Actions Needed to Improve Clarity and Address Differences Across Federal Data Collection Efforts*, [GAO-16-546](#) (Washington, D.C., July 19, 2016).

<sup>17</sup>C. Sniffen, J. Durnan, and J. Zweig, *Helping Industries to Classify Reports of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Assault*. (Washington, D.C.: RALIANCE, 2018).

<sup>18</sup>See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Sexual Violence* and RALIANCE, *Helping Industries to Classify Reports of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Assault*.

<sup>19</sup>[GAO-16-546](#).

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, "Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Supporting Survivors Through Law Enforcement Response," *Dispatch*, vol. 16, issue 4 (2023). [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/04-2023/supporting\\_survivors.html](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/04-2023/supporting_survivors.html).

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taxonomy available to businesses to use to collect data on different types of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment.<sup>21</sup>

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## Some Data Are Collected and Available, but Do Not Fully Describe the Extent of Assaults against Ridesourcing and Taxi Drivers and Passengers

While federal and non-federal sources collect some information on assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries, available data cannot fully describe the extent of assaults in these industries. Federal agencies, selected ridesourcing and taxi companies, and selected state and local regulators collect some data on assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries. However, due to the varied intended uses of the collected data, differing definitions and codes, and other factors, the available data are not comparable or are not complete for the purpose of understanding the extent of assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers.

## Federal Data Have Limitations, but Can Provide Some Information on Assaults or Fatalities against Ridesourcing and Taxi Drivers

We found that six federal databases collect some information on assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries. These federal databases more often collect data on assaults against drivers of ridesourcing and taxi vehicles than passengers. Limitations exist with these data, and not all databases have data available to be publicly reported. However, three federal databases collect some data that can be used to report on assaults against drivers in 2019 and 2020. These available data do not provide a complete count of assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers.

## Federal Data Collected

Six federal databases contain some information on assaults—including physical and sexual assaults—in the ridesourcing and taxi industries. These databases provide more information on assaults against drivers than assaults against passengers (see table 1).

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<sup>21</sup>RALIANCE, *Helping Industries to Classify Reports of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Assault*. We provide more information on this taxonomy below.

**Table 1: Summary of Information on Assaults against Ridesourcing and Taxi Drivers and Passengers Contained in Six Federal Databases, Calendar Years 2019 and 2020**

Agency	Database	Summary of information on assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers
Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)	National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) <sup>a</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains taxi driver data.</li> <li>Contains taxi passenger data.</li> </ul>
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) <sup>b</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains ridesourcing and taxi driver data. Occupation and industry coding does not allow disaggregation of ridesourcing and taxi fatality data.</li> <li>Passenger data not collected.</li> </ul>
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) <sup>c</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains ridesourcing and taxi driver data. Occupation and industry coding does not allow disaggregation of ridesourcing and taxi injury data. Does not contain data on self-employed drivers.</li> <li>Passenger data not collected.</li> </ul>
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)	National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) <sup>d</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains ridesourcing and taxi driver data. Occupation and industry coding does not allow disaggregation of ridesourcing and taxi fatality data. Coding also includes other industry occupations.</li> <li>Passenger data not collected.</li> </ul>
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)	National Electronic Injury Surveillance System – Occupational Supplement (NEISS-Work) <sup>e</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains ridesourcing and taxi driver data. Industry coding does not allow disaggregation of ridesourcing and taxi non-fatal injury data. Coding also includes other occupations within the industry. Data are not coded in a way to capture details beyond identifying an intentional injury by another person.</li> <li>Passenger data not collected.</li> </ul>
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	OSHA Information System (OIS) <sup>f</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains ridesourcing and taxi driver data. Excludes data on self-employed drivers because they do not fall under OSHA's jurisdiction.</li> <li>Passenger data not collected.</li> </ul>

Source: GAO analysis of agency documents and interviews. | GAO-24-106742

<sup>a</sup>BJS officials stated that NCVS is undergoing a multiyear redesign that may alter information collected on drivers and passengers. Specifically, the future question will include a response that groups taxi drivers, ridesourcing drivers, and chauffeurs into a single occupation.

<sup>b</sup>According to BLS officials, fatality data for taxi and ridesourcing in CFOI are categorized by occupation (taxi driver) and industry (taxi service) codes for its fatal data analyses. Therefore, BLS does not distinguish between taxi and ridesourcing drivers.

<sup>c</sup>According to BLS officials, non-fatality data for taxi and ridesourcing in SOII are categorized by occupation (taxi driver) and industry (taxi service) codes for its non-fatal estimates. Additionally, the SOII focuses on employees, and as such, does not collect non-fatal data from self-employed individuals. Therefore, data on taxi and ridesourcing drivers who are not employees of companies are not available.

<sup>d</sup>According to NIOSH officials, NVSS classifies data using the Census Bureau's industry and occupation classification systems, which groups taxi, chauffeur and ridesourcing drivers together. In both classification systems, the codes include more businesses and jobs than taxi and ridesourcing drivers. In addition, data are coded based on the longest-held industry and occupation, so a fatality occurring at a secondary job, such as a fatality of a part-time taxi or ridesourcing driver, would instead be coded under the longest-held industry and occupation.

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<sup>e</sup>According to NIOSH officials, NEISS-Work classifies taxi data using the Census Bureau's industry classification system, which is categorized under the "taxi and limousine" industry. NEISS-Work does not classify data using occupation codes, and, therefore, ridesourcing and taxi occupations cannot be distinguished. According to NIOSH officials, due to budget constraints, calendar year 2023 will be the last year of data collected for NEISS-Work.

<sup>f</sup>According to OSHA officials, the fatality and non-fatal injury data included in OIS are not comprehensive. For example, self-employed ridesourcing drivers are not covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and therefore do not fall under OSHA's enforcement.

These six databases have a range of intended uses and, as such, each collects data on some assaults of passengers or drivers of ridesourcing or taxi vehicles. To date, there is no federal requirement to collect data specifically on ridesourcing and taxi assaults, and none of these databases has the intended use of collecting such data (see table 2). Specifically, four of the databases are intended to collect information about injuries or fatalities that occurred at work or were work-related. Therefore, data about passenger injuries or fatalities are outside the scope of these databases.<sup>22</sup> For example, according to database documentation, CFI data is intended to raise awareness of work hazards and help prevent fatal work injuries; its users include legislators, public health officials, and researchers. As such, CFI only collects data on workers, including drivers of ridesourcing vehicles and taxis, and not on passengers.

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<sup>22</sup>We considered a database to contain passenger data if it specifically collected data on assaults against passengers and coded the data in a way to identify a person who was assaulted as a passenger.

**Table 2: Summary of the Intended Use and Data Collection Methods of Six Federal Databases That Contain Information on Ridesourcing and Taxi Assaults**

Agency	Database	Intended use	Data collection methods
Bureau of Justice Statistics	National Crime Victimization Survey	Makes nationally representative estimates of non-fatal victimizations reported and not reported to law enforcement.	A household-based survey that collects information from a nationally representative sample.
Bureau of Labor Statistics	Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries	Produces counts of fatal work injuries and incidence rates.	A census that collects data on governmental, private, and self-employed workers from multiple source documents (including workers' compensation reports and death certificates) from all 50 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam.
Bureau of Labor Statistics	Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses	Estimates the incidence and number of workplace injuries and illnesses.	An employer-based survey that collects information from a sample of over 230,000 establishments. The survey collects information from various industries, including those in the private and public sector, such as state and local government. Self-employed workers are not included.
National Center for Health Statistics	National Vital Statistics System	Collects and compiles data on vital events, such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces.	A census that collects information on the entire U.S. population from standard death certificates completed by vital registrars operating in jurisdictions.
National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety	National Electronic Injury Surveillance System – Occupational Supplement	Monitors non-fatal injuries via work-related activities that were treated in participating emergency departments.	Data abstracted from emergency department records from participating hospitals to capture information on non-fatal injuries that occurred during work-related activities.
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	OSHA Information System	Maintains information for in-house use by OSHA staff and management, as well as by state agencies that carry out federally approved OSHA programs.	A case management system designed to help OSHA document its enforcement activities and manage its work.

Source: GAO summary of agency documents. | GAO-24-106742

## Limitations of Federal Data

Several factors limit the extent to which information in the six federal databases describe assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries. As discussed below, the data are not directly comparable, as the databases use different coding methods. Further, the data are not complete, as estimates from databases may be unreliable due to their low relative frequency; assault data are generally underreported; and some databases do not contain data on self-employed workers.

**Data are not directly comparable.** The data in federal databases are not directly comparable because databases frequently code drivers and assaults at different levels.

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- *Drivers coded differently.* The federal databases code drivers in different ways. First, several databases use a single occupation code that groups ridesourcing and taxi drivers together, meaning the data for each type of driver are not distinguishable. This is the case for CFI, SOI, and the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS). By contrast, NCVS uses a single code that specifically identifies taxi drivers. Second, some databases code drivers only at the industry level, meaning they do not use codes for specific occupations, such as ridesourcing and taxi drivers. For example, NEISS-Work only uses industry codes that identify persons working in the ridesourcing and taxi industry, which includes drivers as well as other workers. Third, while NVSS codes taxi and ridesourcing data at the industry and occupation levels, these codes incorporate additional occupations, such as limousine drivers.<sup>23</sup>
  - *Assaults coded differently.* Four of the six federal databases use similar classification systems but differ in how they use the systems to code assaults. CFI, SOI, NEISS-Work, and the OSHA Information System (OIS) all use the same coding manual to classify events and sources of injuries.<sup>24</sup> CFI and SOI can provide more detailed analyses of non-fatal and fatal injuries of ridesourcing and taxi drivers. In contrast, NEISS-Work only broadly identifies the source and event that led to the injury (e.g., intentional injury by a person) but does not distinguish the type of injury experienced by the victim (such as injury via a gun shot, rape, etc.).

**Data are not complete.** The data in federal databases are not complete for describing the extent of assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries because estimates of events that occur infrequently may be unreliable, data may be underreported, and self-employed workers may not be included.

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<sup>23</sup>Starting with 2023, NVSS will use revised occupation codes that include a specific code for taxi drivers. This revised taxi driver occupation code will include ridesourcing drivers.

<sup>24</sup>Coding and definitions of events or exposures that led to fatalities or non-fatalities are available in the Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System Manual. Specifically, this manual provides a classification system for use in coding the case characteristics of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in various programs. This manual contains the following code structures: (1) Nature of Injury or Illness (i.e., infectious disease, traumatic injuries, etc.); (2) Part of Body Affected (e.g., injuries in the upper or lower extremities, body systems, or other body parts); (3) Source of Injury or Illness/Secondary Source of Injury or Illness (i.e., objects, substances, equipment, and other factors); and (4) Event or Exposure (i.e., exposure to harmful substances, violence, violence and other injuries by persons or animals).



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- *Unreliability of data due to low frequency of events.* For databases that rely on sampling, estimates for events of relatively low frequency in the data may be unreliable, and therefore unreportable. For example, BJS was not able to provide reliable estimates of the number of taxi passengers who were victims of assault in 2019 and 2020 due to the low incidence of such events in NCVS data.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, BLS officials stated that they could not provide estimates of assaults against taxi drivers using data from SOII that they considered unreliable or that fell outside acceptable benchmarks. Even if data are reliable, they are subject to disclosure requirements, and therefore may be unreportable. For example, BLS officials said that as part of their policy for data confidentiality protections for CFI and SOII, BLS may not disclose estimates and counts for certain occupations and years.
  - *Assaults may be underreported.* BLS and NIOSH officials, as well as representatives of industry groups we interviewed, said that victims may underreport assaults. For example, according to BLS officials, SOII data show 20 sexual assaults across all occupations in 2020, which the officials stated could be due to underreporting. We have previously found that underreporting of assault data, specifically sexual violence, is a challenge in federal data collection efforts.<sup>26</sup>
  - *Self-employed workers not always included.* Two of the federal databases do not collect data on self-employed workers. Federal data suggest many ridesourcing and taxi drivers are self-employed.<sup>27</sup> These workers would not be represented in federal databases that do not contain data for self-employed workers. For example, BLS's SOII collects data from employers on employees and, therefore, does not contain data on self-employed workers.

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<sup>25</sup>While BJS could not provide reliable annual estimates for 2019 and 2020 because of the small number of sample cases per year, officials provided reliable aggregate estimates of the total number of non-fatal violent victimizations among taxi drivers for broader time frames. According to NCVS documentation, the sample design is optimized to produce national-level estimates of victimization annually and estimates within smaller subgroups may not meet reliability standards.

<sup>26</sup>See [GAO-16-546](#) and GAO, *VA Health Care: Actions Needed to Prevent Sexual Assaults and Other Safety Incidents*, [GAO-11-530](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 7, 2011).

<sup>27</sup>Estimates of the percentage of taxi drivers that were self-employed vary. Specifically, according to BLS officials, the BLS Employment Projections program estimated that in 2021, approximately 89 percent of taxi drivers were self-employed; this program uses an occupation code that includes ridesourcing and taxi drivers. According to 2020-2021 estimates from the Current Population Survey, 37 to 39 percent of the taxi population, which includes ridesourcing, were self-employed.

## Federal Data Available

While these factors prevented us from fully describing the extent of assaults in the ridesourcing and taxi industries, three databases—NCVS, CFOI, and SOII—have some data available to be publicly reported on ridesourcing or taxi driver fatalities and intentional injuries, which includes assaults (see table 3). The data available in these three databases are about drivers. As mentioned above, coding within the databases results in ridesourcing and taxi industries being indistinguishable for two of the databases.

**Table 3: Summary of Ridesourcing and Taxi Driver and Passenger Data on Assaults in Six Federal Databases Available to Be Publicly Reported, Calendar Years 2019 and 2020**

Agency	Database	Driver data available to be publicly reported	Passenger data available to be publicly reported
Bureau of Justice Statistics	National Crime Victimization Survey	Yes, taxi driver data are reportable but for a longer time frame than 2019 to 2020, with limitations.	No, estimates are unreliable due to low frequency of events in sample data.
Bureau of Labor Statistics	Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries	Yes, aggregate data are reportable for 2019, with limitations.	n/a
Bureau of Labor Statistics	Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses	Yes, aggregate data are reportable for 2019, with limitations.	n/a
National Center for Health Statistics	National Vital Statistics System	No <sup>a</sup>	n/a
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health	National Electronic Injury Surveillance System – Occupational Supplement	No	n/a
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	OSHA Information System (OIS)	No <sup>b</sup>	n/a

Source: GAO analysis of agency documents and interviews. | GAO-24-106742

<sup>a</sup>According to NIOSH officials, NVSS classifies data using the Census Bureau's industry and occupation systems, which groups taxi, chauffeur, and ridesourcing drivers together. Therefore, the codes include more businesses and jobs than taxi and ridesourcing drivers.

<sup>b</sup>According to OSHA officials, data are limited to OSHA inspections, and thus not comprehensive for the industry. We therefore did not report data from OIS.

As discussed above, data in these databases are specific to the intended use and data collection methods of each database. Therefore, the number of victimizations, fatalities, and injuries obtained from these databases are not directly comparable and cannot be aggregated. However, these figures provide some information about known assaults against drivers, as captured by existing classification codes and their definitions.

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- For calendar years 2016 through 2020, BJS's NCVS estimated a total of 47,597 non-fatal violent victimizations of taxi drivers.<sup>28</sup>
  - For calendar year 2019, BLS's CFOI reported 19 fatal injuries or illnesses of workers in the taxi or ridesourcing industry (whether employed or self-employed) related to intentional injuries by other persons.<sup>29</sup>
  - For calendar year 2019, BLS's SOII estimated 30 non-fatal injuries to taxi or ridesourcing drivers, not including self-employed drivers, that led to days away from work due to intentional injuries by other persons.<sup>30</sup>

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### Selected Ridesourcing and Taxi Companies Collect and Report Some Assault Data

Selected ridesourcing and taxi companies collect some data on assaults against drivers and passengers from reports or complaints made by drivers, passengers, and others to the companies. However, much like federal data, several factors limit the completeness of these data and mean they are not directly comparable to data from other sources.

**Selected ridesourcing companies.** The three selected ridesourcing companies whose representatives we interviewed—Uber, Lyft, and

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<sup>28</sup>According to BJS, a violent victimization is defined as a single person who experienced a violent crime, such as a rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, or simple assault. Using a 95 percent confidence interval, the margin of error for this estimate from BJS is +/- 26,311 victimizations. Due to BJS's sampling methodology, the data did not support producing a reliable estimate for the 2019–2020 time frame.

<sup>29</sup>BLS officials reported no publishable estimates of fatal injuries of taxi drivers related to intentional injuries by a person for 2020. Taxi industry workers includes ridesourcing and taxi drivers, as well as other taxi and ridesourcing occupations. CFOI includes fatalities of self-employed workers. CFOI uses the Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System Manual to classify the types of injuries victims experience or are exposed to. Intentional injuries by a person (coded as 111\*) include various events or exposures, such as shooting by other person; stabbing, cutting, slashing, or piercing; hitting, kicking, beating, shoving; and rape or sexual assault.

<sup>30</sup>BLS officials reported no publishable estimates of non-fatal injuries of taxi drivers related to intentional injuries by a person for 2020. Taxi drivers includes both ridesourcing and taxi drivers. SOII data excludes self-employed workers, and therefore, taxi drivers and ridesourcing drivers that are considered self-employed would likely not be captured in the data. SOII uses the Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System Manual to classify the types of injuries victims experience or are exposed to. Intentional injuries by a person (coded as 111\*) include various events or exposures, such as shooting by other person; stabbing, cutting, slashing, or piercing; hitting, kicking, beating, shoving; and rape or sexual assault.

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HopSkipDrive—have processes to collect assault data.<sup>31</sup> These companies derive their assault data from reports that drivers and passengers submit to the companies, or from reports collected from a third party, such as law enforcement agencies or insurance companies. The companies use the data they collect to enhance the safety of their drivers and passengers, including by informing investments in safety features for users, according to safety reports issued by Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive.<sup>32</sup>

In their public safety reports, the three ridesourcing companies provide information on the prevalence of certain assaults—fatal physical assaults and the most serious types of sexual assault—related to rides arranged on their apps by year. (See table 4 for data in the reports on the number of such assaults in 2019 and 2020.) The other two selected ridesourcing companies did not issue reports or publish information on assaults for 2019 and 2020 related to rides arranged on their apps, according to our review of their websites and publicly available data.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>In recent years, some ridesourcing companies have started sharing safety data in the form of safety reports. Specifically, Uber issued two U.S. Safety Reports for 2017-2018 and 2019-2020; Lyft issued a Community Safety Report for 2017-2019; and HopSkipDrive issued four safety reports for 2019 to 2022. These reports include information on the total number of assaults for years beyond our focus of 2019 and 2020. We requested that Uber and Lyft provide additional data for 2019–2020. The companies declined to provide additional data to break out the assaults against drivers and against passengers for 2019–2020. In addition, Lyft representatives stated that they were preparing to report updated assault data, including data for 2020, in upcoming safety reports.

<sup>32</sup>Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive, as well as other ridesourcing companies, have developed safety features to help enhance driver and passenger safety. We plan to report more fully on safety features made available by ridesourcing and taxi companies in a report to be published in 2024. See appendix I for preliminary observations on these safety features.

<sup>33</sup>Because these two companies declined our request for an interview, we were unable to obtain information about their processes for collecting data.

**Table 4: Number of Assaults Reported Publicly by Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive, Calendar Years 2019 and 2020**

Ridesourcing company	Fatal physical assaults		Most serious types of sexual assault <sup>a</sup>	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Uber <sup>b</sup>	9	11	2,826	998
Lyft <sup>c</sup>	4	—	1,807	—
HopSkipDrive <sup>d</sup>	0	0	0	0

Source: Publicly issued company safety reports from Uber, Lyft, and HopSkipDrive and interview with HopSkipDrive representative. | GAO-24-106742

Note: The ridesourcing companies' public reports on the number of fatal physical assaults and most serious types of sexual assault are based on reports of incidents made by drivers, passengers, and third parties (such as law enforcement) to the ridesourcing companies. In its safety report, Uber notes that incidents must be related to a ride arranged on the company's app and occur within 48 hours of the end of a ride. Lyft, in its safety report, notes that incidents must be related to a ride arranged on the company's app.

<sup>a</sup>These ridesourcing companies use the Sexual Misconduct and Violence Taxonomy created by RALIANCE to categorize unwanted sexual experiences that occur related to rides arranged through a company's app. For safety reports covering 2019 and 2020, Uber and Lyft publicly reported the number of reported incidents and percentage of rides with incidents for the five most serious types of sexual assault, and HopSkipDrive reported the percentage of rides with incidents for the five most serious types of sexual assault.

<sup>b</sup>The percentage of fatal physical assaults in 2019 and 2020 was less than 0.0001 percent of Uber's total trips (2.1 billion), and the percentages of the five most serious types of sexual assaults in 2019 and 2020 was less than or equal to 0.0001 percent of Uber's total trips (2.1 billion).

<sup>c</sup>Lyft has publicly reported data on assaults for 2019 only. When asked about available data for 2020, Lyft representatives said that the ridesourcing company plans to publicly report data for 2020 in a future Community Safety Report. Therefore, as of November 2023, data for 2020 were not available. The percentage of fatal physical assaults in 2019 was less than 0.0001 percent of all trips, and the percentages of the five most serious types of sexual assaults in 2019 was less than or equal to 0.0001 percent of all trips.

<sup>d</sup>For each year and type of assault, HopSkipDrive publicly reported 0.000 percent of rides with any incident. When asked, a HopSkipDrive representative said that the number of fatal physical assaults and sexual assaults for the categories listed in their public safety reports was zero for both years.

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The three companies use RALIANCE's Sexual Misconduct and Violence Taxonomy to categorize reported incidents of sexual assault related to ridesourcing trips.<sup>34</sup> In addition, RALIANCE audited and validated how Uber and Lyft classified sexual assault data using the taxonomy for the information included in each company's safety reports. According to RALIANCE representatives, the taxonomy's behavior-specific definitions allow for more uniform and objective classification of sexual assault, making it possible to compare data across industries and time periods.

While the three selected ridesourcing companies use the same definitions from the RALIANCE taxonomy to categorize and report data on sexual assaults, these definitions differ from the definitions used for other databases. Therefore, the data publicly reported by these companies are not directly comparable to data from other sources, including the federal data discussed above.

As is the case for federal databases, certain limitations also exist with data collected by these companies. These limitations, which affect the companies' ability to report complete information about assaults against drivers and passengers, include:

- *Lack of standardized definitions for physical assaults.* While there are standardized definitions of sexual assault available for companies to use, similar definitions do not exist for physical assaults. According to Uber representatives, the lack of a standard industry-wide definition or taxonomy for non-fatal physical assaults makes it difficult to classify these types of assaults consistently and accurately. As a result, Uber representatives noted that the company has decided not to publicly report on the data it collects on non-fatal physical assaults.

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<sup>34</sup>RALIANCE is a national partnership working to end sexual violence. In 2018, RALIANCE, in collaboration with the Urban Institute, released a joint report, *Helping Industries to Classify Reports of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Assault*, to help industries and companies more effectively categorize reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault. According to the joint report, the Sexual Misconduct and Violence Taxonomy categorizes 21 acts of sexual violence into two overarching categories—sexual assault and sexual misconduct. The sexual assault category consists of 10 types of sexual assaults, organized in increasing order of severity. The five most serious types of sexual assault in the taxonomy are “non-consensual kissing of a non-sexual body part, attempted non-consensual penetration, non-consensual touching of a sexual body part, non-consensual kissing of a sexual body part, and non-consensual sexual penetration.” According to RALIANCE representatives, there are likely many other companies, both within and beyond the ridesourcing industry, that use the taxonomy. The taxonomy was developed by experts from the anti-sexual violence, survivor support and advocacy, and prevention communities.

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- *Underreporting of assaults.* As described above, we and others have found that underreporting of assault data, especially data on sexual violence, poses a challenge in society and across industries including ridesourcing. In addition, Uber and Lyft representatives cited underreporting of assaults as a societal challenge. As noted above, these companies collect assault data from reports submitted to them by drivers, passengers, and third parties. Since drivers and passengers might choose not to report incidents, the companies' data are limited to what is reported to them. To reduce the problem of underreporting, the three companies provide multiple ways for a driver or passenger to report an assault. For example, according to Uber's safety report, the company receives safety incident reports through more than 10 channels, including through its app and response line, with the aim of making it easier to report safety incidents. According to Uber representatives, researchers and advocates have noted that increasing mechanisms for reporting, reducing barriers to reporting, and raising awareness of sexual assault policies can lead to increased incident reporting.
  - *Underreporting of incident details.* When incidents are reported, these reports may not include specific details about the assault. Lyft representatives said that even when affected parties report incidents, they may provide minimal information, which can make it difficult to correctly classify incidents. In addition, Uber's safety report notes that an initial incident report from law enforcement may simply state that a user was sexually assaulted, and further contact with the reporting party to obtain additional details was declined or not possible.
  - *Assaults involving "imposter" drivers not always included.* According to representatives from three ridesourcing companies, data they collect may or may not include instances of physical or sexual assault involving fraudulent or imposter drivers—that is, individuals who pose as ridesourcing drivers but are not affiliated with an app. According to Uber's safety report, it captures incidents if they occurred in conjunction with a ride between parties matched through the company's app. According to Lyft officials, the company will include an incident reported to it, such as an assault reported to law enforcement, in its data and safety report even if it occurred after a trip was completed or Lyft is unable to match it to a ride arranged through its app.

**Selected taxi companies.** Representatives we spoke with from five selected taxi companies told us they collect data related to passenger and driver safety, which may include assault data, through various means. For example, representatives from three selected taxi companies

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we interviewed said they collect information through complaint or insurance claim processes which can include assault data, though that is not their primary purpose. Furthermore, representatives from one of these three taxi companies said they capture information on complaints, assaults, and other types of incidents in a general incident form, which is then entered into a database. In addition, a representative of one selected taxi company said that if drivers experience an assault, they are to report it to taxi company personnel, who ask the driver to also report the incident to local law enforcement.

According to representatives we interviewed from the five taxi companies, taxi companies collect data for various purposes to support operations, such as identifying trends for driver training or collecting data for insurance claims, rather than for reporting on the extent of assaults; therefore, the companies do not publicly report data. For example, representatives from two taxi companies said their analysis of the data helps them better train their employees or inform their drivers of areas with significant safety concerns.<sup>35</sup> Since the data are intended for internal operations, the taxi companies do not generally publicly report these data, including data on assaults. However, there are some exceptions. For example, representatives from one selected taxi company said they are required to summarize complaint data in broad categories and provide these data to the city where the company operates when it renews its license.

Representatives from taxi companies we interviewed said they have experienced few assaults in recent years; most said they had no assaults recorded in their data for 2019 and 2020.<sup>36</sup> Given the low frequency of assaults, taxi companies generally do not publicly report the assault data. Data from the taxi companies are not directly comparable because of

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<sup>35</sup>Of the five selected taxi companies whose representatives we interviewed, four operate locally and one operates in multiple states and at least 16 cities.

<sup>36</sup>One federal database, NCVS, collects nationwide data on violent victimizations of taxi drivers and passengers, although limitations exist with this data, as previously discussed. Representatives we spoke with from the five selected taxi companies said their companies experienced few or no assaults in 2019 and 2020, based on their searches and reviews of internal data and information. The data collected by taxi companies have various intended purposes and are not intended to specifically collect assault data. Selected taxi companies operate locally, and the data they collect are limited to where they operate. Therefore, we did not request data from selected taxi companies. Representatives from most of the selected taxi companies we interviewed said they were concerned about the limited security features available for their drivers compared to passengers. We will provide additional information on safety features that selected ridesourcing and taxi companies have made available to passengers and drivers in a report to be issued later in 2024.



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data collection methods and variation in assault definitions. More specifically, the selected taxi companies' data are collected as part of broader data collection efforts that have different purposes. In addition, representatives from two of the taxi companies said they use the assault definitions that apply to their service area, meaning the companies use different definitions of assault based on where they operate. Also, as is the case for ridesourcing companies, the taxi companies' data are limited to what information on assaults is reported to them and, therefore, may be incomplete.

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### Most Selected States and Localities Do Not Collect Assault Data from Ridesourcing and Taxi Companies

Most of the five selected state agencies and five selected local agencies we reviewed do not regularly collect assault data from the ridesourcing and taxi companies they regulate. Generally, officials we spoke with from the state and local regulatory agencies said that they primarily focus on licensing requirements for ridesourcing and taxi drivers, vehicles, and companies, among other areas of responsibility.<sup>37</sup> Officials from four states and three localities said that law enforcement agencies—such as local police departments, state courts, and the state-level justice departments—may collect data on assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers. However, according to an industry association, law enforcement agencies might not collect data in a manner that allows such assaults to be identified.

Among the selected state and local agencies whose officials we interviewed, only California regularly collects assault data from ridesourcing companies, and none regularly collect assault data from taxi companies.<sup>38</sup> The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the state agency responsible for overseeing ridesourcing companies, requires ridesourcing companies to submit information about their operations annually, including information about assault and harassment incidents

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<sup>37</sup>We limited the scope of our review to state and local regulatory officials.

<sup>38</sup>Officials from Nevada said that if a taxi driver is assaulted, the company is required to report the assault to the Nevada Transportation Authority. If a taxi driver is the victim of a violent crime while on duty, the taxi company is required to notify the Nevada Transportation Authority within 24 hours or on the next business day about the crime and provide all relevant details. The taxi company is also required to notify all taxi companies authorized to operate taxicabs within the county where the crime occurred, so these companies can in turn provide information on the crime to drivers and dispatchers. Nev. Admin. Code § 706.3748(1). The Nevada Transportation Authority has jurisdiction over taxis in counties with a population of less than 700,000 and any other county that enacts an ordinance granting the Authority jurisdiction.

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that drivers, passengers, or members of the public reported to them.<sup>39</sup> According to CPUC officials, the agency uses these data to understand trends within the ridesourcing industry, to inform future regulations, and to help identify areas in which specific ridesourcing companies may be out of compliance and require further follow-up.

CPUC officials told us they have faced challenges collecting consistent information from ridesourcing companies about assault and harassment incidents, which led the agency to adopt new, standardized definitions. For example, according to a 2022 CPUC decision, from 2017 through 2019, Uber and Lyft used different definitions for sexual assault data for reporting sexual assault and sexual harassment claims.<sup>40</sup> As a result, CPUC received assault and harassment information in categories defined by individual ridesourcing companies, making it difficult to compare data across companies without requesting additional information from the companies.

In June 2022, CPUC adopted standardized definitions for sexual assault and sexual harassment and required ridesourcing companies to use them

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<sup>39</sup>In 2013, a state regulation placed ridesourcing companies under CPUC's oversight and enforcement. See Cal. Pub. Util. Comm'n Rulemaking (R.) 12-12-011, including D. 13-09-045 and D. 16-04-041. According to CPUC documentation for its 2023 report, CPUC collects assault and harassment complaints against ridesourcing drivers, passengers, and members of the public for assaulting, threatening, or harassing a passenger, driver, or any member of the public during the ridesource trip. The 37 elements of information CPUC requires for each incident include the vehicle of the ridesourcing driver, geographical coordinates of the incident, details about the assault, and any consequences for the passenger or driver following the incident. In addition, ridesourcing companies report various types of assault and harassment actions, including assault, attempted robbery, fighting, verbal harassment, physical sexual assault, unwanted advances, and verbal threat of sexual assault. Ridesourcing companies must include the complaint in the data they submit to CPUC regardless of whether the complaint was resolved as a non-assault/harassment complaint or resulted in the deactivation or suspension of a driver or passenger. According to CPUC documentation, in 2019, ridesourcing companies were required to submit 18 elements of information to CPUC, and in 2020, they were required to submit 25 elements.

<sup>40</sup>Cal. Pub. Util. Comm'n. D-22-06-029, p. 4-5 (describing the different taxonomies used by Uber and Lyft). Uber and Lyft incorporated the Sexual Misconduct and Violence Taxonomy developed by RALIANCE in collaboration with the Urban Institute after it was published in 2018.

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in their future annual reports.<sup>41</sup> CPUC also left open the possibility to refine the framework for training, investigating, and reporting protocols for assault and harassment incidents pending an expert review.

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## Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOJ, DOL, HHS, DOT, and FTC for review and comment. BLS, BJS, OSHA, and HHS provided technical comments, which we incorporated, as appropriate. DOT, FBI, and FTC did not have any comments.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees; the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Transportation; the Attorney General; the Chair of the Federal Trade Commission; and other interested parties. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Elizabeth Repko at (202) 512-2834 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov), and Derrick Collins at (202) 512-8777 or [collinsd@gao.gov](mailto:collinsd@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on

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<sup>41</sup>CPUC adopted the following definition of sexual assault: "An act by a person; [w]ho touches or attempts to touch the sexual body parts (e.g., the mouth, breasts, buttocks, or genitalia), or non-sexual body parts, of a Transportation Network Company passenger or driver; and [t]he touching or attempted touching is against the will of the Transportation Network Company passenger or driver being touched." D-22-06-029, p. 33. CPUC adopted the following definition of sexual harassment: "An act by someone who engages in; unwelcome visual, verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct (either a single act or multiple acts); directed at a Transportation Network Company passenger or driver; based on sex and/or gender (including gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation); and which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment to a reasonable person." D-22-06-029, p. 34. CPUC also provided a non-exhaustive list of the types of conduct that ridesourcing companies must report under each definition. D. 22-06-029, p. 33-38.

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the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth Repko", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Repko  
Director, Physical Infrastructure

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Derrick Collins", in a cursive style.

Derrick Collins  
Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice

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# Appendix I: Preliminary Observations on Ridesourcing and Taxi Background Check Requirements and Safety Features

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Sami's Law provided for us to conduct a study including the incidence of assaults against ridesourcing and taxi drivers and passengers, background check requirements, and safety steps taken by the companies.<sup>1</sup> We are examining public- and private-sector requirements for background checks of prospective ridesourcing and taxi drivers, and in-application (app) and in-vehicle safety features that selected ridesourcing and taxi companies have made available to drivers and passengers, among other things.

This appendix contains preliminary observations on these topics. We will provide additional information in a report to be issued in 2024.

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## Background Check Requirements

Background checks for ridesourcing and taxi drivers may be required by either the state or local government. Most states require that ridesourcing drivers undergo a background check. In a review of ridesourcing laws across all 50 states and Washington, D.C., we found that 45 states and D.C. require a criminal background check, and that these checks vary in scope. States may require a local, state, national, and/or multi-state/multi-jurisdictional criminal check. For taxi drivers, as an example, local regulations on background checks may provide for fingerprinting and a list of disqualifying offenses within a certain time period.

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## In-App and In-Vehicle Safety Features

Selected ridesourcing and taxi companies have implemented a range of in-app and in-vehicle safety features that are intended to ensure the safety of drivers and passengers. In-app features can help passengers correctly identify their driver and vehicle; offer a means for drivers and passengers to report an emergency; and allow passengers to share their trip information, including geolocation, with a friend or family member. For example, to operate in one state, ridesourcing companies must have a photo of the driver, license plate number of the driver's vehicle, and an image of the make and model of the vehicle clearly visible in the company's app.<sup>2</sup>

Selected ridesourcing and taxi companies have also implemented in-vehicle safety features. For example, ridesourcing companies encourage drivers to install dash-cams, depending on local privacy laws. Further, taxi owners operating in one locality we interviewed are required to either install a partition between the front and back seat or have all of the

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<sup>1</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-330, § 2, 136 Stat. 6,114, 6,114-15 (2023) (codified at 34 U.S.C. § 41313).

<sup>2</sup>Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 5445.1.

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**Appendix I: Preliminary Observations on  
Ridesourcing and Taxi Background Check  
Requirements and Safety Features**

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following: trouble lights, a cell phone with an emergency dialing feature, and an in-vehicle camera system, which must meet certain specifications.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Rules of the City of New York, Taxi & Limousine Comm'n §§ 58-35.

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# Appendix II: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contacts

Elizabeth Repko, (202) 512-2834 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov) and Derrick Collins, (202) 512-8777 or [collinsd@gao.gov](mailto:collinsd@gao.gov)

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contacts named above, Joanie Lofgren (Assistant Director), Valerie Kasindi (Assistant Director), Amy Suntoke (Analyst in Charge), Howard Arp, Willie Commons III, Emily Crofford, Melanie Diemel, Isamar Hernandez, Chloe Kay, John Tamariz, Laurel Voloder, Alicia Wilson, and Elizabeth Wood made key contributions to this report.

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