

DID YOU KNOW???

DEADLIEST VERSUS SAFEST TIMES TO DRIVE

Take a guess – which season, summer or winter, is the more dangerous time to drive? Bet you think winter. How about the most dangerous four hour period of a 24-hour day? Bet you are thinking something between midnight and early morning. What day of the week do you think is the safest day to drive? How about the most dangerous day?

An interesting survey by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) presents some interesting results, as described in the May issue of their “Status Report”. It turns out that an analysis of fatal crashes between 1998 and 2014 found that summer and early fall are the most dangerous times of the year. Weekends are deadlier than weekdays, and the highest number of deaths occurs between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Are you surprised? Well, maybe not - there are more miles driven in summer months versus winter, so maybe that part makes sense. And, although we view drunk drivers being on the road during the period of midnight to early morning, there really isn't much traffic at that time.

According to the IIHS, that pattern of deaths remains unchanged. The riskiest times still remain risky, according to Charles Farmer, IIHS vice president for research and statistical services.

As in the earlier analysis, weekends were deadlier than weekdays. There was an average of 139 deaths on Saturdays, compared with 89 on Tuesdays. The highest number of deaths occurred between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. and the lowest between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.

July and August were the deadliest months, with an average daily toll of 116. They were followed by June, October and September. January and February had the lowest daily tolls and, not coincidentally, the lowest number of vehicle miles traveled.

Among January days, New Year's Day was an exception, with an average of 135 deaths. That's the second-highest after July 4, which had an average of 141 deaths, according to the IIHS study.

Pedestrian deaths, which comprised 12 percent of all traffic deaths during the study period, were generally highest in late November and early December, when days are getting shorter. Jan. 1 was the worst single day for pedestrian deaths.

So what does all these statistics mean? Probably not too much, but I thought they were of interest. We likely won't change our driving patterns at all – if we need to go somewhere, it won't matter much what season it is, what time of day it is, or what day of the week it will be. In reality, summer road trips mean more traffic deaths, and a higher death rate is a downside of economic recovery. In prosperous times, we travel more.

If you really think about the above statistics, there shouldn't be much of a surprise. The data analyzed is for fatalities, not fatalities per mile driven. Thus, the more drivers on the road, the more fatalities should be expected - just something to keep in mind when you are out there driving. Remember, a fatal crash can occur anytime anywhere. Don't let it be you that causes it, and be alert for other drivers' mistakes – it could be the difference between life and death.