

## **DID YOU KNOW???**

### **OLDER DRIVER? HERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD**

Are you a driver age 65 or older? If you are, here is some good news for you but also some bad news. First, let's get the bad news out of the way. In 2013, the latest year for statistical data, there were 5,671 people 65 and older killed and an estimated 222,000 injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes in the US. These older people made up 17 percent of all traffic fatalities and 10 percent of all people injured in traffic crashes during the year. Obviously, this is far too many deaths and injuries – but, the older driver population is getting better.

Now, here's some good news. The population of people 65 and older increased by 23 percent from 2004 through 2013; however, driver fatalities in crashes involving older drivers declined by 9 percent over this period. Older drivers made up 17 percent of all licensed drivers in 2013, compared with 15 percent in 2004. So, we have an increase in the population of 65 and older and the percentage of drivers 65 and older is also increasing, yet crashes involving older drivers are declining. That's good news.

All older drivers are getting better, but older women drivers are getting better faster than older male drivers. From 2004 to 2013, older male driver fatalities declined by 3 percent compared with a 20-percent decrease in older female driver fatalities.

Here are a few more interesting facts, provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA). For older pedestrians, 62 percent of fatalities in 2013 occurred at non-intersection locations. This means too many older pedestrians are crossing at locations other than at crosswalks. And, among the older population, the fatality rate per 100,000 population was highest for the 80-to-84 age group—for both males and females.

Here are some more facts related to older drivers. Most traffic fatalities in crashes involving older drivers in 2013 occurred during the daytime (75%), occurred on weekdays (69%), and involved other vehicles (65%). This differs from the percentages for all fatalities in 2013: 49 percent occurred in the daytime; 58 percent occurred on the weekdays; and 42 percent involved another vehicle. This could be the result of older drivers realizing their limitations in driving after dark and likely limiting their driving to daytime when possible.

And, the last of the good news, of all drivers in 2013, older drivers involved in fatal crashes had the lowest percentage of drivers with blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher at 7 percent. Again, this could be the result of older drivers knowing the dangers of driving under the influence. Whatever the reasons, it is indeed good news that older driver crash rates are declining even though their numbers is increasing. Keep up the good work.

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