

DID YOU KNOW???

SPEEDING EQUALLY DANGEROUS AS DRUNKEN DRIVING - NTSB

First of all, every driver speeds, period. Some most of the time, others not usually, but show me the driver that doesn't speed sometimes and I'll eat my proverbial hat! "Speed Kills" is the message the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) hopes to amplify and correct with a recent report that offers a reminder to motorists about the dangers of speeding after nearly one-third of traffic fatalities during a recent decade involved driving either above the posted limit or faster than conditions allowed.

Because we all speed coupled with the fact that most of us drive for years without being involved in crashes simply due to speeding, we feel we can drive safely above the posted speed limit or beyond what is prudent for existing conditions. But, speeding is risky because it reduces the time for a driver to react to a surprise, lengthens the distance needed to stop and boosts the chances for leaving the road, the NTSB report says.

While safety and law-enforcement spotlights often shine on drunken driving, about the same number of fatal crashes each year, approximately 10,000, involve speeding, according to the board. "The simple truth is that speeding makes a crash more likely," said Robert Sumwalt, acting chairman of the board. "In a crash that's speeding-related, you're more likely to be injured, your injuries are more likely to be severe, and you're more likely to die. And that's true whether you're the speeding driver, another driver, a passenger, a bicyclist or a pedestrian."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that 5,933 speeding drivers died in crashes in 2014, the most recent year available. Another 1,835 passengers in those speeding cars died, along with 1,136 occupants of other vehicles, 314 pedestrians and 46 bicyclists. And we still call these incidents "accidents"? Seriously? A crash caused by speeding is just an accident – something unavoidable? I don't think so! NHTSA said 112,580 people died in speeding-related crashes from 2005 through 2014, just one decade - that's more people than in the city of Albany.

"Unlike other crash factors such as alcohol impairment or unbelted occupants, speeding has few negative social consequences associated with it. This is likely because we all speed. In fact, there is perhaps an inverse social consequence associated with driving at or below the speed limit. Try driving at the speed limit and note how many other drivers tailgate you, pass you under unsafe conditions, and generally show their irritation with how slow you are going compared with how fast they want to go.

Furthermore, "Speeding doesn't have a leader campaigning to increase public awareness about the issue at the national level," Sumwalt said. "We hope that this study helps to bring the issue of speeding back into the spotlight." Please, don't be so blasé about speeding. Slow down and get there safely. It'll only take you a few seconds longer.

Once again, thanks go to Sheriff Mulverhill and the National Sheriff's Association for some of the information contained in this article.

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