

DID YOU KNOW???

MOST DANGEROUS DAILY ACTIVITY – DRIVE/RIDE IN A CAR

Unless you happen to be engaged in a dangerous occupation, such as a coal miner, logger or a worker in the fishing industry, the most dangerous thing most of us likely do on a daily basis is drive (or ride) in an automobile. Some of the more dangerous jobs, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), include construction workers, firefighters, truck drivers, on-the-road sales persons, cab drivers, and police officers. Interestingly, most of these occupations involve a great deal of driving. In fact, transportation crashes were the leading cause of job fatalities, resulting in 40% of all workplace deaths in 2016.

After reviewing the latest crash and fatality statistics from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), David Orr, PE, Director of the Cornell Local Roads Program (CLRP) put it bluntly when he wrote in the CLRP monthly e-newsletter, “There are some sobering numbers to keep in mind as you travel this spring. There were 37,461 people killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2016; an increase of 5.6% from the year before. From a low of 30,056 fatalities in 2014 we have seen a large increase in fatalities in the last few years. There are a lot of possible causes, but three percentages in the data are striking.”

- 27% of all fatalities involved speeding
- 19% of all fatalities involved alcohol and drivers
- 48% of passenger fatalities were those who were unrestrained (no seat belt or child seat)

Orr points out that, while New York saw the greatest decrease in fatalities (111) out of the few states lucky enough to see a decrease, there were still 1,025 people killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2016. Beyond the tragic human toll, the overall economic cost of fatal crashes across the United States was \$836 Billion!

What, if anything, can you do to be safer? The single most important thing to be safer in a vehicle is to wear your seat belts – all the time, every time. The statistics that emphasize that are significant. Read on! Nationwide, seatbelt compliance in 2016 was about 90%. That same year there were 37,461 people killed in vehicle crashes. That’s between 102 and 103 persons per day. Of the 37,461 persons killed, almost half of them (48%) were not wearing their seatbelts. These numbers show that by not wearing your seatbelt, you are five times more likely to be killed in a crash than if you were wearing your occupant protection – **FIVE TIMES!** Do you really want to take that risk?

Further analysis of fatalities show that teenagers 13-15 years of age had the highest rate of non-compliance; an incredible 62% of teens in this age group that died in crashes did not have their seatbelts on. As adults, how can we allow teens to ride in the car unbelted?

One more thing to be aware of – of the 37,461 people killed in vehicle crashes in 2016, only 13 were on school buses, certainly the safest means of travel on our highways.

In conclusion, never be complacent when driving or riding in a vehicle, and **ALWAYS** wear your seatbelt – no excuses!