

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

### **SPEEDING A NEGLECTED PROBLEM**

Speeding is a factor in the deaths of approximately 10,000 people each year in the U.S. but the problem isn't being addressed comprehensively. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) convened a speeding forum in April with a diverse group of stakeholders to identify strategies to reduce speeding, prevent crashes and save lives.

Speeding increases the likelihood of being involved in a crash because it takes longer to stop or slow down. It also intensifies the severity of injuries sustained in a crash because crash energy increases exponentially as speeds increase. Proven countermeasures against speeding—automated enforcement technology, vehicle technology and design, and education campaigns—are underused, which leads to more frequent speeding, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. And, because posted speed limits are predominantly based on observed operating speeds (85th percentile), widespread speeding can lead to an undesirable cycle of higher speed limits, still higher operating speeds, and increased fatalities.

Determined by each state, maximum speed limits have been on the rise since 1995. The maximum speed limit is 75 mph in 12 states and 80 mph in six. Texas now allows speeds as high as 85 mph. In the 2019 legislative session, at least seven states have introduced bills to raise limits to 75 mph or higher, according to the IIHS.

Despite these risks, exceeding the posted speed limit has become an accepted way of driving on our nation's roadways. Unlike impaired driving, speeding is not socially unacceptable, which may be one reason speeding-related fatalities have increased in recent years—drivers may underestimate the risks associated with it. After reaching a low of 9,283 fatalities in 2014, speeding-related traffic fatalities increased to 9,723 in 2015 and 10,111 in 2016.

Although research shows speeding impacts all road users, it is particularly dangerous for the most vulnerable, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. A March DYK article centered on the fact that pedestrian deaths in 2018 were the highest in 28 years.

To address the speeding problem, here are several possible actions:

- Update and promote best practices for automated speed enforcement, addressing new technologies such as point-to-point enforcement.
- Establish a national education and enforcement campaign similar to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Click It or Ticket.
- Encourage passenger-vehicle manufacturers to adopt intelligent speed adaptation systems.
- Revise guidance on setting speed limits to lessen the reliance on 85th-percentile operating speeds.
- States should implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce speeding-related crashes, including authorizing the use of automated speed enforcement.
- Drivers should follow posted speed limits; drive even slower in poor weather conditions

Let's implement some of these – our lives may depend on it!