



2004 – The Close of a Deadly Year on NH Highways

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Will 2004 Be Our Deadliest Crash Year-to-Date?

- ◆ As of November 30...
- ◆ Number of fatal crashes up from 107 to 141 Year-to-Date – a 31.7% increase.
- ◆ Number of persons killed up from 116 to 153 Year-to-Date – a 31.8% increase.

Put in Human Terms...

- ◆ 37 more funerals – 37 more families grieving – 37 more sets of ambulance bills, hospital bills, autopsy bills, insurance settlements, traumatic experiences for everyone from first responders to families and coworkers, to police officers knocking on doors to deliver death messages.

If the year continues at this rate...

- ◆ Average of 3 fatal crashes a week...one every 56 hours, somewhere in New Hampshire.

Drivers, Passengers, Cyclists, Pedestrians Were the Victims

- ◆ 79 (51.6%) were drivers of vehicles
- ◆ 30 (19.6%) were innocent passengers, of whom 3 were little children.
- ◆ 12 (7.8%) were pedestrians, all of them adults – not counting one killed over the weekend in Durham.
- ◆ There were two OHRV operators and one bicyclist killed, all adults.

Other Victims

- ◆ The year was particularly deadly for motorcycle drivers and passengers.
- ◆ 29 (18.9%) were on motorcycles – 27 drivers and two passengers.
- ◆ This was an increase of 222% (from 9 to 29) year-to-date

Commercial Vehicle Involvement

- ◆ 9 fatalities involved commercial vehicles (vs. 12 last year, year-to-date, killing 2 commercial vehicle drivers (vs. one the previous year)).

Total Crashes are Virtually Unchanged; Fataals are Up

- ◆ 32,261 reportable crashes year-to-date vs. 31,904 last year to date – a 1.1% increase.
- ◆ 12,711 injuries were reported, vs. 12,570 last year-to-date – up 1.1%
- ◆ Conclusion: More people are being killed in the almost same number of crashes! Why?

Fatalities by County

- ◆ Belknap – fatalities have almost doubled
- ◆ Carroll – 50% increase
- ◆ Cheshire – 25% decrease
- ◆ Coos – 300% increase
- ◆ Grafton – 50% decrease
- ◆ Hillsborough – 20.8% increase
- ◆ Merrimack – 40% increase

Fatalities by County (Cont'd)

- ◆ Rockingham – 10% increase
- ◆ Strafford – 157% increase
- ◆ Sullivan – 57.1% decrease

Causes – Weather Conditions (updated as of 11/1/04)

- ◆ 80.2% where the cause was reported occurred on dry roads (speed, alcohol, inattention, fatigue, medical?)
- ◆ 7.9% occurred on wet roads (hydroplaning, following too closely?)
- ◆ 6.3% occurred during fog, snow or ice (speed, visibility?)

Daylight vs. Darkness Fatal Crashes (as of 11/1/04)

- ◆ 52.6% for which light conditions were noted on the report occurred during broad daylight
- ◆ 8.4% occurred at dusk
- ◆ 29.5% occurred during the hours of darkness (75% of those in locations where there was a street light on)

Fatalities By Road Type – as of 11/1/04

- ◆ 78.4% on two-lane roads
- ◆ 18.1% on divided highways
- ◆ 3.4% on one-way streets

Fatalities by Road Alignment

- ◆ 38.6% of fatal where road alignment was reported occurred on straight and level roads
- ◆ 10.6% on straight grades
- ◆ 5.3 on hillcrests
- ◆ 34.3% on curves

Speed Limit at Fatal Sites

- ◆ 12% on 65 mph roads
- ◆ 16.9% on 55 mph roads
- ◆ 19.3% on 50 mph roads
- ◆ 9% on 40 or 45 mph roads
- ◆ 9.6% on 35 mph roads
- ◆ 32.2% speed limit not listed on crash report

Time of Day – Updated as of 11/1/04

- ◆ 28.2% between Noon and 4 p.m.
- ◆ 24.2% between 8 p.m. and Midnight
- ◆ 18.5% between 8 a.m. and noon
- ◆ 15.3% between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- ◆ 8.8% between Midnight and 4 a.m.*
- ◆ 4.8% between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m.*
- ◆ * mostly alcohol, alcohol/speed, and fatigue

Deadliest Hours for Motorcyclists

- ◆ 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., with equal numbers Noon-2 p.m., 8-10 p.m., and 10 p.m. – Midnight.

What Day of the Week Did the Fatalities Occur?

- ◆ 22.5% on Saturdays
- ◆ 16.9% on Fridays
- ◆ 15.3% on Sundays
- ◆ 14.5% on Thursdays
- ◆ 11.2% on Tuesdays
- ◆ 9.6% on Mondays and 9.6% Wednesdays
- ◆ 54.7% occurred Fri-Sat-Sun (weekends)

Which Are the Deadliest Months for Fatalities?

- ◆ August is worst, January is in second place, June and July are tied for third place, May and October for 3rd place, and February and April have the least fatalities.

Deadliest Months for Motorcyclists

- ◆ June and August, with more than twice as many as May and July and one each in September and October

Type of Object Struck in Fatal Crashes –updated to 11/1/04

- ◆ 36.2% hit another motor vehicle
- ◆ 21.7% hit a fixed object
- ◆ 7.2% were motorcycles overturning
- ◆ 2.4% hit an animal
- ◆ 8/10ths of 1% hit a bicyclist
- ◆ 8/10ths of 1% went into water and submerged
- ◆ 27.4% of reports did not list the object hit!

Type of Fixed Object Struck in Fatal Crashes –as of 11/1/04

- ◆ 55.8% who hit fixed objects hit a tree
- ◆ 13.9% hit a rock or stone embankment
- ◆ 11.6% hit a utility pole
- ◆ 13.9% hit a guardrail or traffic sign or post
- ◆ 4.6% hit other fixed objects
- ◆ 0.2% unknown

Type of Motorcycle Fatalities by Vehicles Involved – to 11/1

- ◆ 53.8% were single-vehicle
- ◆ 46.1% involved multiple vehicles

Crash Causes – Human Factors – as of 11/1/04

- ◆ 25% unknown or pending cause
- ◆ 16% speed too fast for conditions
- ◆ Estimated 30%+ alcohol involved
- ◆ 3% combination of alcohol and speed
- ◆ 3% distracted driver
- ◆ 3% improper turn (usually a left turn)
- ◆ 4% fatigue or falling asleep at the wheel

Human Factor Causes (Cont'd)

- ◆ 4% inexperience (usually a motorcyclist)
- ◆ 5% medical event
- ◆ 8% centerline encroachment
- ◆ 9% failure to yield
- ◆ Note that alcohol and speed account for 48%
- ◆ Inattention, distraction and fatigue as much as 24%

Seat Belt Usage –as of 11/1/04

- ◆ 27% of persons killed were not wearing seatbelts
- ◆ In 38% of cases, no determination could be made if belts were worn or not
- ◆ In 35% of cases, belts were worn
- ◆ Potentially, belts could have saved 41 lives if worn!

Crash Causes - Alcohol

- ❖ Historically, 34.48% of NH crashes are alcohol-related, vs. 40% nationally.
- ❖ The most dangerous months for alcohol-involved fatalities are June; August/September/November (tied), and July. The least occur in January and February.

Impaired Drivers – Chance of Dying if Involved in a Crash

- ◆ .04-.07 BAC – 57% chance
- ◆ .08-.11 BAC – 80% chance
- ◆ .12-.14 BAC – 64% chance
- ◆ .16-.20 BAC – 80% chance

Where Did the Persons Involved Live? (As of 11/1/04)

- ◆ 77.7% were New Hampshire residents
- ◆ 14.3% were Massachusetts residents
- ◆ 4.5% were from Maine or Vermont (mostly Maine)
- ◆ 3.5% were from elsewhere in the United States

What Were the Ages of the Persons Involved?

- ◆ 21% were under the age of 20
- ◆ 17.1% were age 21-30
- ◆ 14.8% were age 31-40
- ◆ 14.1% were age 41-50
- ◆ 13.4% were age 51-60
- ◆ 8% were age 61-70
- ◆ 10.4% were age 71-90+

Ages of Motorcyclists Involved in Fatalities

- ❖ Largest number 30-59, spike in the 18-23 age group and only small numbers in the under 18 and over 60 age group.
- ❖ 64.4% of the fatal injuries to motorcyclists were head injuries, 57% were not wearing helmets, 36% were, and in 7% of the cases it was unknown.
- ❖ 32% of the drivers had held a motorcycle license for one year or less, 25% for 11-15 years.
- ❖ Only 4% had taken a motorcycle safety course

Fatal Motorcycle Crash Conditions

- ❖ 14.2% were unlicensed
- ❖ 75% had one or more previous moving traffic violations on their MV records
- ❖ The MC operator was at fault 64% of the time
- ❖ Alcohol was the most common cause, with speed, and inexperience tied, accounting for 71% of cases where the cyclist was at fault.

Motorcycles on the Road

- ◆ Motorcycle registrations increased by 12,378 (23.3%) from 2003 to 2004, and are up 62.9% since 1999.
- ◆ Motorcycle fatalities increased by 211% this year, compared with a 23.3% jump in motorcycle registrations.

Gender of the Persons Involved (As of 11/1)

- ◆ 63.7% were males
- ◆ 32.3% were females
- ◆ In 4% of the cases, gender was not reported

What are the Deadliest Towns in the 2 Deadliest Counties?

- ◆ In Belknap – Meredith, Gilford, and (tied) Laconia and Sanbornton, with Alton and New Hampton close behind.
- ◆ In Strafford – Rochester, Dover, Milton, Barrington, and Farmington

What Can Law Enforcement Do About It?

- ◆ The best way to provide sufficient enforcement with stretched resources is for several agencies to partner together and each contribute one or more officers a day to “task forces” that operate several hours a day or several days a week, concentrating on the most dangerous roads at the most dangerous times of day and days of the week.

What Else Can We Do?

- ◆ Administrators and Supervisors need to make sure that every officer regards traffic work as an important part of their job, and one of the things they are evaluated on.
- ◆ Individual Patrol Officers (and street Supervisors) should be expected to make a reasonable number of motor vehicle contacts every shift.

The Importance of Traffic Contacts

- ◆ 52% of contacts between police and citizens occur at traffic stops
- ◆ Every person who has a contact with an officer averages to discuss that contact with 4 other people
- ◆ Every driver that passes by a traffic stop reexamines their own "driving conscience", however briefly

The Police Cruiser is a "District Station" All Its Own

- ◆ A strategically parked police cruiser watching traffic is more effective than placing a police substation in neighborhood
- ◆ Criminals, terrorists, and suspended or revoked drivers are on the road 24/7.
Proactive traffic enforcement deters crime, detects crime, and apprehends criminals!

Steady, Daily Effort Beats Periodic Enforcement Drives

- ◆ The public relates best to, and is least resentful of, consistent, everyday, highly visible enforcement and tends to resent it most when the police swoop down out of nowhere, write some tickets, and disappear not to be seen again for days, weeks, or months.

Reducing Speed and Inattention-Related Crashes

- ◆ Try reducing at least your warning threshold by at least 5 mph.
- ◆ Become familiar with the Negligent Driving statute as it applies to distracted drivers.
- ◆ “Stake out” a few stretches of road with solid lines, stop intersections, etc., for your high-visibility patrols.

And Most Important....

- ◆ Stay alert and stay alive out there.
- ◆ 16.4% of officers feloniously killed were killed while on traffic stops or pursuits.
- ◆ 10.5% of officers assaulted were assaulted on traffic stops or during or after pursuits.
- ◆ Traffic crashes are the largest single cause of death of police officers.