

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



Good News, Bad News

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Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced that 2017 highway fatality numbers are down following two consecutive years of large increases. In addition, preliminary estimates for the first 6 months of 2018 appear to show that this downward trend continues into this year.

Over the past 40 years, there has been a general downward trend in traffic fatalities. Safety programs such as those increasing seat belt use and reducing impaired driving have substantially lowered the traffic fatalities over the years. Vehicle improvements such as air bags and electronic stability control have also contributed greatly to the reduction of traffic fatalities. Yet more needs to be done and we must lead by example.

Behind these positive trends, lies a sobering reality – 37,133 people still lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes in 2017. Yes, the numbers are down 2% from 2016, (compared to the 6.5-percent increase from 2015 to 2016 and the 8.4-percent increase from 2014 and 2015) but one life lost is one life too many.

Fatalities decreased from 2016 to 2017 in almost all segments of the population: passenger car occupants (1.1% decrease), van occupants (5.8% decrease), pickup truck occupants (4.5% decrease), motorcyclists (3.1% decrease), pedestrians (1.7% decrease), cyclists (8.1% decrease).

In addition, alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities dropped by 1.1% and speeding-related fatalities declined by 5.6%.

Prying apart the numbers reveals further good news. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased by 1.2% from 2016 to 2017. Thus, the fatality rate per 100 million VMT decreased by 2.5%, from 1.19 in 2016 to 1.16 in 2017.

Unfortunately, fatalities increased in 2017 compared to 2016 in those crashes involving large trucks (9.0% increase). This figure comprises crashes involving combination trucks (tractor trailers), which were up 5.8%, and crashes involving single-unit straight trucks, which increased 18.7%.

“Dangerous actions such as speeding, distracted driving, and driving under the influence are still putting many Americans, their families and those they share the road with at risk,” said NHTSA Deputy Administrator Heidi R. King. “Additionally, we must address the emerging trend of drug-impaired driving to ensure we are reducing traffic fatalities and keeping our roadways safe for the traveling public.”

Every driver who shares the road has the responsibility to work harder to continue to reduce fatalities on the roads and to make our roads safer.

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](http://www.cpclogistics.com), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.