**Critical Days of Summer 2013**

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**SPEED**

**Speed Kills -** The faster the speed of a vehicle, the greater the risk of an accident. The forces experienced by the human body in a collision increase exponentially as the speed increases. Smart Motorist recommends that drivers observe our 3-second rule in everyday traffic, no matter what your speed. Most people agree that going 100 mph is foolhardy and will lead to disaster. The problem is that exceeding the speed limit by only 5 mph in the wrong place can be just as dangerous. Traffic engineers and local governments have determined the maximum speeds allowable for safe travel on the nation's roadways. Speeding is a deliberate and calculated behavior where the driver knows the risk but ignores the danger. Fully 90% of all licensed drivers speed at some point in their driving career; 75% admit to committing this offense regularly.

**Consider this example:** a pedestrian walks out in front of a car. If the car is traveling at just 30 mph and the driver brakes when the pedestrian is 45 feet away, there will be enough space in which to stop without hitting the pedestrian. Increase the vehicle speed by just 5 mph and the situation changes dramatically. At 35 mph, with the pedestrian 45 feet away and the driver braking at the same point, the car will be traveling at 18 mph when it hits the pedestrian. An impact at 18 mph can seriously injure or even kill the pedestrian.

**Who are the bad drivers?** They are young, middle-aged, and old; men and women; they drive luxury cars, sports cars, SUVs and family cars. Almost every qualified driver I know admits to some type of risky driving behavior, most commonly speeding.

# **Excessive Speed Is A Factor In One Third Of All Fatal Crashes**



***Research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that when speed limits were raised by many states in 1996, travel speeds increased and motor vehicle fatalities went up significantly on Interstate highways in those states.***

Speed reduces the amount of available time needed to avoid a crash, increases the likelihood of crashing and increases the severity of a crash once it occurs. The public needs to be made more aware of the dangers of speeding. If we are to combat this dangerous, life-threatening behavior, we must devote increased resources to better enforcement, including more law enforcement officers to patrol the highways, and we must support technological advances, such as video cameras, to target aggressive, speeding drivers.

### SPEEDING FACTS

* Speed is a factor in a high percentage of traffic fatalities, second only to alcohol as a cause of fatal crashes.
* Crash forces on impact double with every 10 mile per hour increase in speed above 50 miles per hour. As crash forces increase, so does ones chances of being killed or seriously injured in a crash.
* Young drivers (under 30 years old) are more likely to speed than other drivers. Of all drivers involved in fatal crashes, young males are most likely to speed. The relative proportion of speeding-related fatal crashes decreases with increasing driver age.
* Alcohol involvement and speeding often go hand-in-hand. Drivers with a 0.10 BAC or higher who were involved in fatal crashes were speeding, compared with 14 percent of the sober (0.00 BAC) drivers in fatal crashes.

### SPEED LIMIT LAW FACTS

* Travel speeds increased on Interstate highways in the states that raised their speed limits after Congress repealed the National Maximum Speed Limit in 1995. Increased travel speeds historically have led to increased traffic fatalities. (IIHS, 1999)
* In the 24 states that raised their speed limits in late 1995 and in 1996, fatalities on Interstate highways increased 15 percent. Deaths on other roadways where speed limits were not raised were unchanged.
* The increased fatalities and fatality rates on Interstates where speed limits were raised translates to approximately 450-500 additional deaths a year on Interstate highways and freeways. (IIHS, 1998)
* As of October 1999, 28 states have raised speed limits to 70 MPH or higher on portions of their roads and highways. (IIHS, 1999)
* In a public opinion poll conducted by Louis Harris for Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety in May 1996, 64 percent of those polled said they were concerned that higher speed limits would contribute to even more aggressive driving. Sixty-six percent were concerned that highway crashes would rise again, and 52 percent were concerned that they will feel unsafe on the highways because drivers would go "much faster," exceeding even the posted limits.

**Stop Speeding Before it Stops You**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than 13,000 lives were lost across America in speeding-related traffic crashes in 2005.

* NHTSA considers a crash to be speeding-related if the driver was charged with a speeding-related offense, or if the responding officer indicated the driver was driving too fast for conditions at the time, or was exceeding the posted speed limit.
* In 2005, speeding was a contributing factor in 30 percent of all fatal crashes nationally.
* Crash data since 1995 shows a continuous increase in the number of deaths and injuries attributed to speed. Despite gains in vehicle safety and passenger protection, thousands of Americans still die each year in speed-related crashes.
* According to NHTSA, a crash on a road with a speed limit of 65 mph or greater is more than twice as likely to result in a fatality than a crash on a road with a speed limit of 45 or 50 mph and nearly five times as likely as a crash on a road with a speed limit of 40 mph or below.
* Speeding is usually defined as driving in excess of the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions and can have dangerous consequences including:
  + Reducing a driver’s ability to negotiate curves or maneuver around obstacles in the roadway;
  + Extending the distance traveled before a vehicle can stop;
  + Increasing the distance a vehicle travels while the driver reacts to a hazard;
  + Increasing the risk of crashes and injuries because other vehicles and pedestrians may not be able to judge distance accurately.
* Nationally, 86 percent of all speeding-related traffic fatalities occurred on non-Interstate roadways -- where the posted speed limits were 55 miles per hour or less. Only 14 percent of the nation’s speeding-related fatalities occurred on Interstate highways that year.
* Speeding was involved in more than one-fourth (27%) of the fatal crashes in construction or maintenance zones.
* Speeding was a factor in 28 percent of all fatal crashes on dry roads, and in 33 percent on wet roads. In wintry conditions, the numbers were even worse -- with speeding a factor in 51 percent of the fatal crashes when there was snow or slush on the road, and in 58 percent of the fatal crashes that occurred on icy roads.**]**

**Young Males and Motorcyclists Most Often in Speeding-Related Crashes**

Among drivers involved in fatal crashes, young males are the most likely to have been found speeding.

* Drivers of all ages may exceed posted speed limits, but the relative proportion of speeding-related crashes to all crashes decreases with increasing driver age.

**Speeding and Impaired Driving: A Deadly Combination**

* Driving impaired and speeding is a deadly combination.
* Between midnight and 3 a.m., 75 percent of speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.

**Help Save Lives by Obeying Posted Speed Limits**

Our goal is to save lives. Please join us in reminding all drivers to be alert, watch for speed limit signs and obey those signs.

* Drivers need to remember that there is a reason for posted speed limits. The roadways are a dangerous place and the speed limits are designed to protect everyone – drivers, passengers, pedestrians – everyone!

Please remember, *Stop Speeding Before it Stops You.*

SLOW DOWN

We encourage you to review the **“Marine Corps Traffic Safety Program”, (MCO 5100.19F).**

**The following PowerPoint’s may be accessed from the electronic version of this article.**

[**http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811751.pdf**](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811751.pdf)

[**http://www.safercar.gov/SummerDrivingTips**](http://www.safercar.gov/SummerDrivingTips)

[**http://www.ite.org/traffic/tcdevices.asp**](http://www.ite.org/traffic/tcdevices.asp)

[**http://trafficsafetymarketing.gov/**](http://trafficsafetymarketing.gov/)**.**