**FATAL CRASHES INCREASE IN THE SUMMER**

Memorial Day marks the beginning of the ‘100 Deadliest Days’ for travel on Utah roadways. Historically, from Memorial to Labor day fatal crashes nearly double compared to the rest of the year - averaging nearly one death per day in the summer months.

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| 100 Deadliest Days Fatalities  |
| Year | Fatalities | Driver | Passenger | Pedestrian  | Bicyclist | Motorcyclist |
| 2014 | 97 | 38 | 26 | 6 | 2 | 25 |
| 2015 | 110 | 46 | 27 | 16 | 2 | 19 |
| 2016 | 94 | 44 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 18 |
| 2017 | 90 | 40 | 12 | 11 | 2 | 24 |

100 Deadliest Days over the past 10 years:

* On average, fatal crashes were 45 percent higher during the 100 Deadliest Days of Summer compared to the rest of the year.
* 2007 had the highest death rate per day (1.02) and 2012 had the lowest death rate per day (0.67) for the 100 Deadliest Days of Summer.
* 2017 saw a decrease in death rate per day over the 100 Deadliest Days.

**WHY AN INCREASE IN FATAL CRASHES OVER THE SUMMER?**

Research has shown that 94 percent of all crashes are caused by human error - and the top contributing factors are: distraction, speeding (traveling above the posted speed limit) and aggressive maneuvers, drowsiness, impairment and not buckling up. Driving behavior must improve if lives are to be saved.

Other possible contributing factors for an increase in fatal crashes over the summer:

* Increased travel on Utah roads in summer months.
* Over 80 percent of crashes happen on clear skies and dry roads. We assume drivers become complacent when traveling under ideal conditions. In that complacency, drivers are more likely make mistakes and take risks they might not when road/weather conditions are poor.
* In summer there are more trailers, RVs and large equipment traveling on our roads. These bulkier vehicles come with bigger blind spots and require greater stopping distances.
* More often, many drivers risk traveling at speeds higher than posted limit in summer.

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF, FAMILY, COMMUNITY THIS SUMMER:**

Zero Fatalities is asking everyone to improve their driving this summer, and always. AND encouraging passengers to take an active role by encouraging safe driving.

* **Buckle Up**
	+ A seat belt is the single most effective traffic safety device, reducing the risk of serious injury and death. Make sure everyone is buckled around you.
* **Drive Sober**
	+ Alcohol and drugs significantly alter a driver’s ability to react and process. Never risk impaired driving.
* **Obey the Speed Limit \***
	+ When drivers risk exceeding the posted speed limit, the risk for a serious injury or fatality in a crash increases. They needlessly put others on the road at risk, too.
* **Drive Alert - never drive distracted\*\* or drowsy**
	+ Never drive drowsy. The symptoms of being tired (yawning, heavy eye lids etc) are signs that your body has begun to shut down. If you find yourself tired behind the wheel, pull over to a safe place and rest or switch drivers.
	+ Never risk driving distracted. Distracted driving is anything that takes your attention away from driving safely. Stop distracted driving before you injure yourself or others.

**\*How to respond to speeding and aggressive drivers -** Speeding behavior and aggressive drivers may not only affect the speeder—it can also affect other drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Here are some [tips for encountering speeders on the road](https://exchange.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Road-Rage-Brochure.pdf):

* If you are in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move over and let them by.
* Give speeding drivers plenty of space as they can lose control of their vehicle more easily.
* Adjust your driving accordingly. Speeding is tied to aggressive driving. If a speeding driver is tailgating you or trying to engage you in risky driving, use judgment to safely steer your vehicle out of the way.
* Call the police if you believe a driver is following you or harassing you.

**\*\*How to respond to a distracted driver**

If your driver is distracted, do the same things you’d do if your driver picked up a beer. Take it away. If your driver is trying to text or change music playlists, ask if you can do those tasks for him/her.

If you see another driver being distracted in a vehicle near you, do your best to safely get away from that vehicle. If someone (not the driver) can safely contact 911, then report the distracted driver. The act of distracted driving may seem innocent, but we need to recognize it for what it is: deadly.

**DISTRACTED DRIVING**

**What is distracted driving**

Distracted driving is anything that takes the driver’s attention off the road. This could be texting or using a cell phone, watching a video, reading, talking to passengers, eating or drinking, grooming, using a navigation system, adjusting music players or tending to children.

**Research shows distracted driving is prevalent on our roads**

A [**Virginia Tech Transportation Institute**](https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2016/03/major-distractions-for-drivers/472656/) (VTTI) study found nearly 70 percent of the crashes analyzed, over a three year period, involved some type of observable distraction. Researchers of this study estimate that potentially 36 percent of crashes—4 million of the almost 11 million crashes that happen in this country annually—“could be avoided if no distraction was present.”

A new study published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/02/17/1513271113.abstract) concluded that “distraction is detrimental to driver safety, with handheld electronic devices having high use rates and risk.” The study’s author and director, Tom Dingus, said in a statement, “If we take no steps in the near future to limit the number of distracting activities in a vehicle, those who represent the next generation of drivers will only continue to be at greater risk of a crash.

Each year in the annual [AAA Foundation Traffic Safety Culture Index](https://www.aaafoundation.org/distracted-driving) more than 80% of drivers cite distraction as a serious problem and behavior that makes them feel less safe on the road. Nearly half of all people who say they feel less safe than they did five years ago say distracted driving by other drivers fuels their concerns. AAA also noted drivers spend more than half their time focused on things other than driving.

**Distracted driving is deadly**

University of Utah professor, Dr. David Strayer’s [research](https://archive.unews.utah.edu/news_releases/drivers-on-cell-phones-are-as-bad-as-drunks/) showed a distracted driving crash was twice as likely to occur than an impaired driving crash - stating texting and driving to be equal to someone who is twice the legal alcohol limit.

The average text takes a driver’s eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph a car can travel the length of a football field in this time period (NHTSA).

Nationally in 2015, 3,477 people were killed, and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers (NHTSA).

**SPEEDING**

**Speed is a leading contributing factor in fatal crashes and all crashes**

Speeding endangers everyone on the road. Over the past five years in Utah there were 111 deaths caused by speeding - and 40.7% of all crashes involve speeding. Nationally in 2016, speeding killed 10,111 people, accounting for more than a quarter (27%) of all traffic fatalities that year. We all know the frustrations of modern life and juggling a busy schedule, but speed limits are put in place to protect all road users.

**Speeding puts other innocent people on the road at risk.**

Speeding is more than just breaking the law. Speeding endangers not only the life of the speeder, but all of the people on the road around them, including other motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and law enforcement officers.

**Consequences**

The consequences of speeding are far-ranging:

* Greater potential for loss of vehicle control
* Reduced effectiveness of occupant protection equipment
* Increased stopping distance after the driver perceives a danger
* Increased degree of crash severity leading to more severe injuries

**The Causes**

Speeding is a type of aggressive driving behavior. Several factors have contributed to an overall rise in aggressive driving.

## TRAFFIC - Drivers may respond to traffic by using aggressive driving behaviors, including speeding, changing lanes frequently, or becoming angry at anyone who they believe impedes their progress.

## RUNNING LATE - Some people drive aggressively because they have too much to do and are “running late” for work, school, their next meeting, lesson, soccer game, or other appointment.

## ANONYMITY - A motor vehicle isolates the driver from the world. This can lead to some people feeling less constrained in their behavior.

## DISREGARD FOR OTHERS AND FOR THE LAW - Sometimes people speed because that’s just what they do, and have done “safely”, time and time again without consequence.