

## Driver Behavior Trends

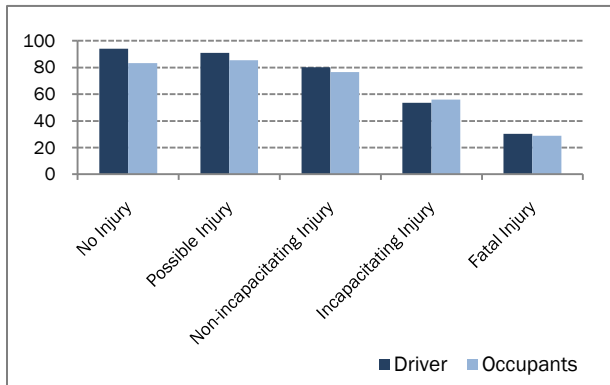
Unsafe driving behaviors can be categorized either as behaviors that mainly impact the individual (such as seatbelt or motorcycle helmet usage) and those that impact most often others (such as drunk, distracted, or aggressive driving).

### Seat Belt Usage

The use of safety belts tends to reduce the severity of injury. While 91 percent of people who escaped crashes with no injury were wearing safety belts, only 31 percent of people who died in crashes were wearing safety belts. The lack of restraint usage also seems to positively correlate with the number of partially or fully ejected people. While 5 percent of ejected people died, only 0.1 percent of non-ejected people died.

In the MORPC transportation planning area, more than 80 percent of the motorists involved in crashes were properly restrained. However, the more serious the injury, the less likely it is that safety belts were used (see Figure 1). In practical terms, this means that wearing a seat belt reduces the likelihood of serious injury or death if a crash occurs.

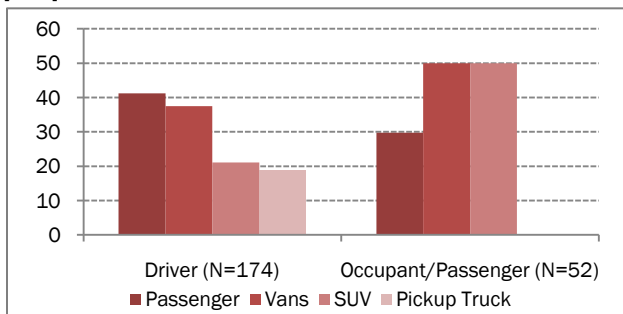
Figure 1: Motorists' Safety Belt Usage Rate by Injury Severity [in %]



Source: MORPC Crash Data 2005-2007; N=267,374

Of the various crash types, pickup truck occupants seem to show the lowest restraint usage (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Safety Belt Usage Rate in Fatalities by Vehicle Type [in %]



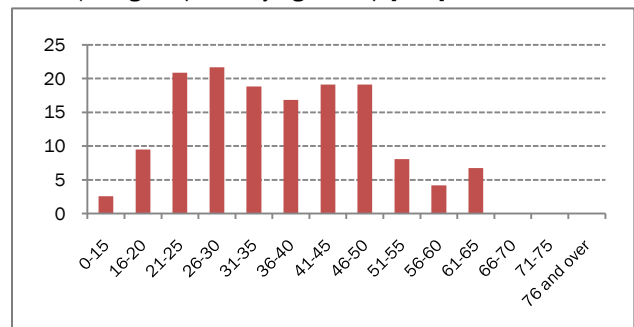
Source: MORPC Crash Data 2005-2007

29 percent of the fatally injured drivers and 35 percent of the fatally injured occupants were partially or totally ejected in the crash.

### Impaired Driving

Within MORPC's transportation planning area, 16 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Since crash reports only record suspected use and not the results of later tests, the true number is likely to be even greater. The majority of impaired drivers with incapacitating or fatal injuries were between the ages of 21 and 35 years (see Figure 3). Overall, more than twice as many men were impaired during a crash than women.

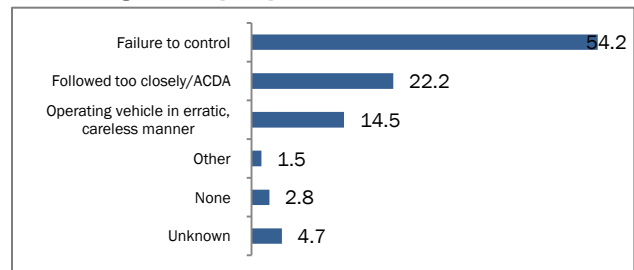
Figure 3: Drivers with Incapacitating and Fatal Injuries and Alcohol/Drug Suspicion by Age Group [in %], MORPC area



Source: MORPC Crash Data 2005-2007; N=2,279

The main factors that contributed to the crashes were "failure to control" (54 percent), followed by "following too closely" and "operating vehicle in careless manner" (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Persons with Alcohol/Drug Suspicion by Contributing Factors [in %]



Source: MORPC Crash Data 2005-2007; N=4,134

In Ohio, 0.08d/gL Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the legal driving limit.

## ***Speeding / Aggressive Driving***

Within the MORPC transportation planning area, a total of 8,018 crashes were speeding-related. As such, speeding contributed to 6 percent of all crashes and to 17 percent of all fatal crashes. A crash was considered speeding-related if the vehicle speed at the time of the crash was reported greater than the speed limit. Unsafe and exceeded speed was reported as a contributing factor in 1,249 cases. These statistics account for less than 1 percent of all contributing factors. However, it can be assumed that speed was involved also in other aggressive driving behaviors that contributed to crashes, such as operating vehicle in reckless manner, failure to control, following too closely, or driving off the road, making up 27 percent of all crash contributing factors.

## ***Distracted Driving/Cell phone use***

Unfortunately, no information is available on distracted driving for MORPC's transportation planning area since OH-1 records do not obtain this information and studies have not been conducted in the area. A new OH-1 report that is being introduced in 2012 will contain fields to provide this type of information.

As of April 2010, there are 23 states that ban text messaging while driving, 6 states that ban talking on a handheld cell phone while driving, and 24 states that ban cell phone use by novice drivers.<sup>1</sup> Ohio does not fall into any of these categories. However, the legislature is considering such a law for the state, and many communities in Central Ohio already have or are in the process of passing such legislation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) estimates that in 2008, distracted driving was involved in 21% of injury crashes and 16% of traffic fatalities.<sup>2</sup>

There are a variety of crash factors such as "failure to yield" or "following too closely" that could be closely related to inattentive driving.

## ***Young Drivers***

In the MORPC transportation planning area, a total of 28,898 drivers between the ages of 16 and 20 years were involved in traffic crashes. Of these drivers, 53 percent were male and 47 percent were female.

Although 7 percent (21) of all fatalities occurred within this age group, the majority of young driver crashes (83 percent) did not result in any injury.

55 percent of crashes involving young drivers occurred in clear weather, 73 percent during dry conditions, and 68 percent during daytime. 51 percent of the crashes happened at an intersection. The main contributing factors included "Following too closely" (24 percent), "Failure to yield" (12 percent), and "Failure to control" (11 percent). The majority of people involved in these crashes were not reported as alcohol or drug impaired.

Often, the young driver was at fault for the crash, demonstrating the need for improved driver education and training.

## ***Older Population (>65 Years)***

In MORPC's transportation planning area, a total of 14,931 people aged 65 or older were involved in crashes during the years 2005 to 2007, resulting in 4,607 injuries and 55 fatalities.

→ Nearly 77 percent of the older population involved in crashes were drivers, accounting for almost 5 percent of all drivers.

58 percent of these crashes occurred in clear weather, 79 percent during dry conditions, and 84 percent during daytime. 44 percent of the crashes happened at an intersection. The main crash types included rear-end (36 percent), angle (24 percent), sideswipe passing (13 percent), and left turn crashes (10 percent). "Failure to yield" (13 percent) and "Following too closely" (12 percent) were reported as the primary causes for these crashes. The majority of people involved in these crashes were not reported as alcohol or drug impaired.

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<sup>1</sup> Governor's Highway Safety Association, "Cell Phone and Texting Laws."

[http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone\\_laws.html](http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html)

<sup>2</sup> U.S.D.O.T., "Statistics and Facts About Distracted Driving."

<http://www.distraction.gov/stats-and-facts/#did>