



VITALS

For Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Traffic Fatalities

May 25, 2007 –US Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters today announced that traffic deaths on U.S. roads were down slightly in 2006 according to preliminary figures, but cautioned that far too many lives continue to be lost.

While the number of road deaths is projected to have declined slightly nationwide from 43,443 in 2005 to 43,300 in 2006, “even one death is too many,” Secretary Peters said. And over half of passenger vehicle occupants killed died unbuckled, the preliminary data shows.



The preliminary 2006 fatality numbers released today project a 2006 fatality rate of 1.44 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), down from 1.45 in 2005. During the same period, injuries dropped 6% from 2.7 million in 2005 to 2.54 million in 2006. Previous estimates show that highway crashes cost society \$230.6 billion a year, about \$820 per person.

The preliminary figures also show that between 2005 and 2006, overall alcohol-related fatalities increased 2.4% from 17,525 to 17,941; pedestrian deaths dropped slightly, from 4,881 to 4,768; and fatalities from large truck crashes dropped from 5,212 to 5,068, a 3.7% decline.



Distractions

At some time, you might have witnessed a driving situation in which an accident was avoided when one driver was distracted and committed an error (crossed the center line, strayed from his/her lane, pulled into an intersection before looking, or another driving error), but the other driver was attentive and took evasive action to avoid an accident. There might be more distracted drivers today and fewer who are focused on driving, simply because there are more drivers using their cell phones while driving. If both drivers are distracted in a situation such as the above, an accident might not be avoided.

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