

THE **KOHS** Voice

Kentucky Office of Highway Safety

March/April 2013

Construction season is here!

The Transportation Cabinet asks motorists to practice 10 work zone safety tips:

1. Expect the unexpected.
2. Slow down.
3. Don't tailgate. Keep a safe distance between vehicles.
4. Keep a safe distance from workers and equipment.
5. Pay attention to signs.
6. Obey road crew flaggers.
7. Stay alert and minimize distractions.
8. Keep up with the traffic flow.
9. Schedule enough time and call 511 or go to www.511.ky.gov for Kentucky traffic and travel information.
10. Be patient and stay calm.

Click [here](#) for more information and to hear the radio public service announcements.

Go to the [Transportation Cabinet's homepage](#) and click on the District map for local construction information.

Fatality numbers increase in 2012

For the first time since 2005, fatalities on Kentucky's roadways increased, with 25 more people killed in 2012 than in 2011.

Of the 746 total fatalities in 2012, 317 victims were not wearing seat belts, 146 died in crashes involving alcohol and 40 were motorcyclists with no helmets.

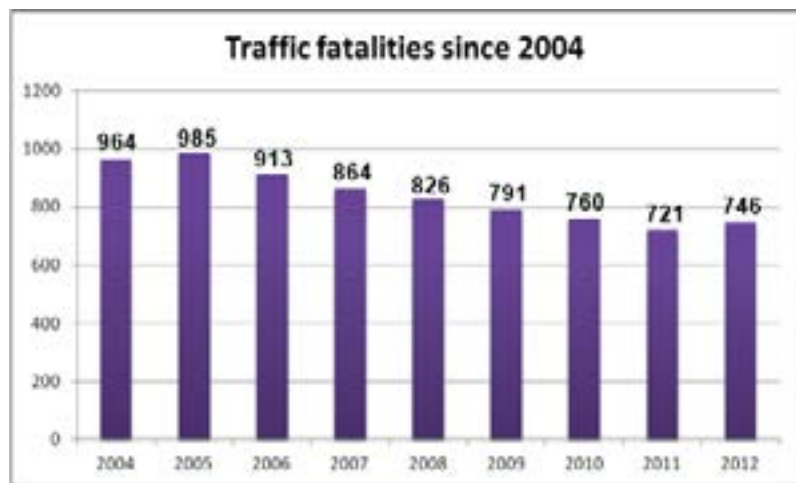
"With the decent winter weather, more people traveled our roadways, which might explain the fatality increase," said [Kentucky Office of Highway Safety](#) (KOHS) Director Bill Bell. "However, it does not explain why people are not making safe decisions when they get behind the wheel."

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA), regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect against and reduce

fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Also, according to NHTSA, helmets are estimated to be 37 percent effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcycle riders.

The KOHS offers various highway safety educational programs to the public and administers federal highway safety grants to law enforcement and other highway safety agencies. It annually partners with state and local law enforcement to promote the NHTSA "[Click It or Ticket](#)" seat belt campaign and "[Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over](#)" impaired driving campaign.

"Our office will continue working with agencies across the state to educate motorists on the benefits of safe driving habits," Bell said.



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Director's Message

— Bill Bell



Beyond the numbers

Last year is finally in the books. I'm not sure which was worse, the beginning or end. In a word, the results for 2012 were "mixed." Mixed, because fatalities were up by 3 percent, yet total crashes were down by 5 percent. We had the best August on record and one of the best Julys respective to crashes.

Two of the main categories for fatality increases were motorcycle and unbelted motorists. They were up by 5 percent and 4 percent, respectively. The trend of fatal motorcycle crashes with no helmet has remained more than 50 percent. We hear many excuses as to why riders refuse to wear helmets. However, when we ask those that do wear helmets, "Why don't people wear helmets?," the answer we get is "It's all about image." Tough and rugged is a pretty cool image, but it rarely helps you survive a crash.

Fortunately, younger riders and drivers are listening to our message and the numbers prove it. The younger drivers (age 16-24) had a slight decrease in fatalities as compared to total fatalities (5 percent), while the experienced drivers (age 25-54) saw an increase of nearly 3 percent.

We all know there is a direct correlation between belt usage and fatalities. Although our observed seat belt usage was up slightly in 2012, the unbelted fatalities mirrored our fatality increase.

Besides closing the highways, what do we do to prevent these crashes?

We talk about the four "E's" (Education, Enforcement, Engineering and EMS), and all four are vital for our move Toward Zero Deaths. However, when you talk about the single most vital tool, it has to be the seat belt. After all, we have seen the evidence and it is indisputable. Including last year, we have had a 4 percent average decrease in fatalities since 2005. The primary seat belt law went into effect in 2006.

The Division of Highway Safety Programs and many KOHS partners, such as the [Kentucky State Police](#) and [SafeKids](#), have continued to hammer into kids and young adults the importance of wearing seat belts. The KOHS completed 344 educational programs in 74 counties in 2012. We also attended 126 corporate events in 35 counties.

To amplify our message, we awarded approximately 200 grantees more than \$4.25 million in highway safety grants for overtime enforcement in the areas of speeding, occupant protection (seat belts and child seats) and impaired driving. For

the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2012, law enforcement grantees were asked to double the nighttime seat belt enforcement. If the grant was a speeding or impaired driving grant, we still required a goal for occupant protection.

Transportation Cabinet engineers, as well as contracted engineers, are constantly working on designing safer highways whether it's new construction or retrofitting existing roadways. More will be done in the near future to prevent cross-over crashes and roadway departures.

Lastly, our EMS and other first responders are doing an excellent job in the Commonwealth, helping those in crashes and preventing secondary collisions. For example, our [SAFE Patrol](#) helped more than 13,000 travelers in Kentucky, from anything as small as changing a tire up to administering CPR.

So, where are we headed?

Despite the bad November and December in 2012, we did have a fatality-free New Year's Eve and seven consecutive zero fatality days in Kentucky (Dec. 28 through Jan. 3, 2013). We have continued this positive momentum and we now have 40 fewer fatalities than the previous year at this time. But, these numbers represent real people and we must keep that in mind as we continue our quest Toward Zero Deaths.





APRIL IS DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH

Fourteen facts you need to know

In 2010, a [resolution was passed](#) by the U.S. House of Representatives designating April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. This national effort focuses on ways to change the behavior of drivers through legislation, enforcement, public awareness and education – the same activities that have curbed drunken driving and increased seat belt use. For more information, visit the [National Safety Council](#) and [FocusDriven](#).

FACT #1: Forty-nine percent of drivers with cell phones under age 35 send or read text messages while driving. (2011, Harris Poll)

FACT #2: Sixty percent of drivers use cell phones while driving. (2011, Harris Poll)

FACT #3: An online survey of 1,999 teens ages 16-19 found 86 percent had driven while distracted even though 84 percent know it's dangerous. (2010, AAA and Seventeen Magazine)

FACT #4: Thirty-four percent of teens who drive while distracted simply say they're used to multi-tasking. (2010, AAA and Seventeen Magazine)

FACT #5: Thirty-two percent of teens who drive while distracted don't think

anything bad will happen to them. (2010, AAA and Seventeen Magazine)

FACT #6: Twenty-two percent of teens who drive while distracted say it makes driving less boring. (2010, AAA and Seventeen Magazine)

FACT #7: Fifty-five percent of young adult drivers agree that it's easy to text and pay attention to driving at the same time. (Ad Council, 2011)

FACT #8: Eighty-five percent of respondents who text while driving agree that texting while driving is a problem and 89 percent recognize that the behavior reduces reaction time. (Ad Council, 2011)

FACT #9: Brain power used while driving decreases by 40 percent when a driver listens to conversation or music. (2008, Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging at Carnegie Mellon University Study)

FACT #10: Forty-nine percent of adults say they have been passengers in a car when the driver was sending or reading text messages on a cell phone. (2010, Pew Research Center)

FACT #11: Thirty-six percent of teens say they have been involved in a near-crash because of their own or someone else's distracted driving. (2010, Pew Research Center)

FACT #12: While more than 90 percent of teen drivers say they don't drink and drive, 9 out of 10 say they've seen passengers distracting the driver, or drivers using cell phones. (2006, National Teen Driver Survey)

FACT #13: Distracted driving is the No. 1 killer of American teens. Alcohol-related accidents among teens have dropped, but teenage traffic fatalities have remained unchanged because distracted driving is on the rise. (2007, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Study and NHTSA Study)

FACT #14: In an 18-month study, college students using a sophisticated driving simulator showed a crash risk eight times higher when texting than when not texting. (2009, University of Utah Study)

Additional distracted driving resources:

[AT&T: It Can Wait](#)

[End Distracted Driving](#)

[NOYS: Under Your Influence](#)

[NHTSA: distraction.gov](#)

[NHTSA and the AdCouncil: Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks](#)

Did you know?

Hands-free isn't brain-free

A [Canadian study](#) may explain statistics that show drivers using hands-free phones are just as likely to be involved in collisions as those using hand-held phones.

Has distracted driving worsened?

The [American Automobile Association reports](#) that nine in 10 people surveyed felt that distracted driving is worse now than it was three years ago.

The safest fleets are cell free

The largest [fleet management survey by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety](#) found that the safest fleets are the ones with written policies restricting the use of cellphones.

U.S. vs. European drivers

Distracted driving is more widespread in the U.S. than in Europe, [according to a study](#) released by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).



YourLetters

I would like to commend the performance of John Smoot and Tiffany Duvall with the KOHS Division of Highway Safety Programs. They gave three presentations at Butler Traditional High School and their performance was full of enthusiasm and excitement. The message they sent was serious and compassionate.

Our students really enjoyed the day.

Thanks,
Mike Campbell
Butler Traditional
High School
Business Law Teacher



©The Courier-Journal. Photos of distracted driving simulator story by Alton Strupp published on Jan. 21, 2013 on A1

EventCalendar

An up-to-date and detailed listing will be on our [Events Facebook page](#)

Did you know?

Learn about preventing underage drinking

The [Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking](#) is developing a series of webinars called Preventing Underage Drinking. Click [here](#) for information

Congress restores highway safety funding

U.S. Congress has included full funding for federal behavioral highway safety programs in its FY 2013 funding bill. Read [the reaction](#) from the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#).

Memorial Day Click It or Ticket coming soon

The annual [Memorial Day Click It or Ticket](#) enforcement campaign is May 20 - June 2. Law enforcement will cite anyone caught driving or riding unrestrained.

NHTSA unveils 'SaferCar' app for iPhones

The [free mobile app](#) provides real-time information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's [SaferCar.gov](#) site, helping customers to "Buy Safe, Drive Safe, and Stay Safe."

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet



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Cooperative Agencies



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