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2015 Ends with Highest Fatalities in Five Years

JANUARY 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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63 percent of fatalities were unbuckled

The year 2015 ended with an 11.4 percent increase in fatalities on Missouri roads. After two years of lower numbers, the fatalities in Missouri for 2015 were over 800 for the first time since 2012.

As of Dec. 31, 853 lives were reported lost in 2015 Missouri traffic crashes. Sixty-three percent of the drivers and passengers killed were not wearing seat belts.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the leading causes of fatal crashes continue to be speeding, driver inattention and impaired driving. A couple of new trends have emerged for 2015 including increases in improper lane use and substance-impaired driving. Those crash trends are showing a 100 percent increase in expressway intersection fatalities and an 82 percent increase in overturning vehicle fatalities when compared to 2014.

"Fifty percent of those not belted were also ejected from the vehicle," said Colonel Bret Johnson, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. "Seat belt use is the single most effective way to save lives and reduce injuries resulting from traffic crashes, so make sure everyone is properly restrained on every trip."

"Combined efforts in engineering, law enforcement, education, and emergency medical services aid in the reduction of roadway fatalities," says MoDOT Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger. "With lower gas prices in 2015, we are seeing an increase in the amount of overall travel on Missouri's roads. Drivers need to take a proactive role by wearing their seat belt and focusing on their driving,"

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