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U.S. DOT Announces 2017 Roadway Fatalities Down

Share:    **October 3, 2018 | Washington, DC**

Fatal motor vehicle crashes are down by almost 2 percent after 2 years of large increases

Today the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced that 2017 highway fatality numbers are down following two consecutive years of large increases. In addition, preliminary estimates for the first 6 months of 2018 appear to show that this downward trend continues into this year.

"Safety is the Department's number one priority," said Secretary Elaine L. Chao. "The good news is that fatalities are trending downward after increasing for the two previous years. But, the tragic news is that 37,133 people lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes in 2017. All of us need to work together to reduce fatalities on the roads."

In 2017, 37,133 people died in motor vehicle crashes, a decrease of almost 2 percent from 2016. While the full 2017 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data set will be available today, other notable changes include:

- Pedestrian fatalities declined about 2 percent, the first decline since 2013;
- For the second year in a row, more fatalities occurred in urban areas than rural areas;
- Combination trucks involved in fatal crashes increased 5.8 percent;
- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased by 1.2 percent from 2016 to 2017; and

- The fatality rate per 100 million VMT decreased by 2.5 percent, from 1.19 in 2016 to 1.16 in 2017.

“Dangerous actions such as speeding, distracted driving, and driving under the influence are still putting many Americans, their families and those they share the road with at risk,” said NHTSA Deputy Administrator Heidi R. King. “Additionally, we must address the emerging trend of drug-impaired driving to ensure we are reducing traffic fatalities and keeping our roadways safe for the traveling public.”

The 1.8-percent decrease from 2016 to 2017 compares to the 6.5-percent increase from 2015 to 2016 and the 8.4-percent increase from 2014 and 2015.

Earlier this month, NHTSA kicked off the agency’s, “If You Feel Different, You Drive Different” campaign in Nashville, which ran alongside the “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” message over the Labor Day weekend to remind drivers that alcohol is not the only form of impairment.

- [Click here](#) to view the 2017 fatal motor vehicle crashes; overview research note
- [Click here](#) to view 2018 preliminary data

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