Quick Notes

from the Idaho Office of Highway Safety

February 10, 2012

Idaho Transportation Department - PO Box 7129 – Boise, ID 83707-1129 P: (208) 334-8100 F: (208) 334-4430 - - www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs

2012 Fatalities on Idaho Roads = 12

General Message from the Highway Safety Manager

Hi Highway Safety Partners:

A comprehensive highway safety program revolves around the "4E's" of Enforcement, Education, Engineering and Emergency Medical Services. In this edition of *Quick Notes* I would like to talk about speed limits and how they are set? I get this question periodically and thought I would share with you, from a general standpoint, how speed limits are determined and set in Idaho. Speeding is a component of aggressive driving behavior which contributes to 49% of the economic costs of crashes in Idaho.

Setting speed limits and speed zoning is a traffic engineering tool that has been employed for many years to try to influence motorist behavior. A wide variety of regulations and methods have been used to post speed limits; however, there is not a universally adopted procedure. Based on years of experience and observation, fundamental concepts have been used as guidelines in establishing realistic and reasonable speed zones; but first, a brief history you might find interesting.

In 1909, the state of Washington introduced a speed limit of one mile in five minutes (12mph) in "thickly settled areas and business districts" and at one mile in two-and-a-half minutes (24mph) for rural areas. In these early days, states could set their own upper limits and by 1972 the majority were 70 mph, although ten states had a limit of 75mph, and Montana had no upper limit at all. The fuel crisis intervened, and the country established a maximum speed limit of 55mph. In 1987, under mounting public pressure, the limit was raised to 65mph. In 1995, the federal government withdrew the national capping of the speed limits completely and again allowed states to set their own upper limits.

So again maximum speed limits now vary from state to state, ranging from 60mph in Hawaii, 65 mph in many of the north-east states and Oregon, 70mph in the south-east states and west coast, and 75mph in the rocky mountain western states. Texas is unusual in that sections of Interstate 10 and 20 in west Texas the speed limit was increased to 80mph. Utah has some 80 mph test sections on Interstate 15. So, how are speed limits determined?

The majority of motorists drive at a speed they consider reasonable, convenient, and safe for existing conditions. Posted limits which are set higher or lower than dictated by roadway and traffic conditions are ignored by the majority of motorists. A speed limit should be set so that the majority of motorists observe it voluntarily and enforcement can be directed to the minority. Physics tells us that crash severity increases with increasing speeds. The number of crashes, however, appears to depend less on speed and more on the variation in speeds. The lowest crash involvement rate occurs when vehicles are traveling at approximately equal to the 85th percentile speed or slightly above. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the vehicles are moving.

The major reasons for using the 85th percentile speeds in establishing maximum speed limits are:

- Widespread use and acceptance of the method by traffic professionals.
- The probability of crash occurrence is lowest for vehicles traveling at or slightly above the 85th percentile speed.
- The 85th percentile speed reflects a safe speed for existing conditions as perceived by the majority of motorists and is largely self-enforcing.
- When using the method, other factors such as crash rates, geometric features, etc., do not have to be considered separately or in combination with other data since the factors are reflected in the driver's choice of speed, which is altered to adjust for these conditions.
- Speed samples are easy to obtain and analyze for most roadways.

Speed limit zones established on the basis of the above-listed concepts using a realistic traffic engineering analysis have the following benefits. They:

- Provide a factual, scientific basis for determining limits.
- Invite public compliance by conforming to the behavior of the majority of motorists.
- Give enforcement officials a good guide as to what is a reasonable and prudent speed.
- Assist traffic courts by providing a list of established speed limits.
- Ensure that speed zones satisfy the requirements and intent of State and/or local laws and ordinances.
- Encourage motorists to drive at or near the same speed, resulting in smoother flow and a reduction in accident risk.

For further information, here is a link to a power point presentation is available on this subject.

http://itd.idaho.gov/michigan/

Setting and maintaining realistic speed zones based on good engineering does improve traffic flow and lower the incidence of crashes. Eliminating crashes works in everyone's favor as we continue *Toward Zero Deaths* in Idaho.

Brent Jennings, PE
Highway Safety Manager
brent.jennings@itd.idaho.gov

FFY 2013 Letter of Interest Deadline Approaching

The opportunity to apply for a year-long grant began on January 3 and ends on <u>February 17</u>. These grants begin October 1, or when we receive funding for FFY 2013. The link to the documents - http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/programs.htm

This is <u>not the Memorandum of Understanding process</u>. To participate in the high visibility enforcement campaigns, your agency will receive the documents during the summer for FFY 2013 to request participating in the mobilizations.

Year-long grants will be funded based on crash data, the OHS Highway Safety Performance Plan, and Idaho's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The data is used as a tool to guide funding recommendations for projects receiving the most benefit on investment.

If you are interested in a grant and have questions, please contact a one of the Program Managers shown below for more information:

Kevin Bechen	Kevin.bechen@itd.idaho.gov	334-4467
Margaret Goertz	margaret.goertz@itd.idaho.gov	334-8107
Lisa Losness	lisa.losness@itd.idaho.gov	334-8103
Donna Vasquez	donna.vasquez@itd.idaho.gov	334-8102

February Seat Belt Mobilization Enforcement Participation

Bonners Ferry PD
Domicisticity 1 D
Coeur d'Alene
Ponderay PD
Post Falls PD
Priest River
Rathdrum
Sandpoint
Spirit Lake
Bonner CSO
Kootenai County
ISP Region 1
District 1 Total = 11
Lewiston
Moscow
Orofino
Idaho County
ISP Region 2
District 2 Total = 5
Boise
Caldwell PD
Emmett PD
Fruitland PD
Garden City
Hamadala
Homedale
Meridian
Meridian
Meridian McCall PD
Meridian McCall PD Nampa PD
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Meridian McCall PD Nampa PD Payette PD Ada County
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Ucon Bonneville County Custer County Fremont County Jefferson County Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Rexburg
Bonneville County Custer County Fremont County Jefferson County Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	St. Anthony
Custer County Fremont County Jefferson County Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Ucon
Fremont County Jefferson County Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Bonneville County
Jefferson County Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Custer County
Lemhi CSO Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Fremont County
Madison County Teton County ISP Region 6	Jefferson County
Teton County ISP Region 6	Lemhi CSO
ISP Region 6	Madison County
	Teton County
District 6 Total = 14	ISP Region 6
	District 6 Total = 14



The February seat belt mobilization is underway. If you do not see your name on the left, but would like to participate in enforcement, please contact Lisa Losness lisa.lsoness@itd.idaho.gov (208) 334-8103.

The theme of the February seat belt mobilization is "Can't Imagine Life Without You". It is a simple social message to remind everyone to buckle up for those who love you. After all, Valentine's Day is right in the middle of this campaign. Billboards are up and the radio spots are on the air.

Idaho continues to have a large percentage of unrestrained fatal and serious injury crashes. Over the last 3 years (2008-2010), there have been 427 fatal crashes and 2,459 serious injury crashes that where a Passenger Motor Vehicle (PMV) occupant was killed or seriously injured: resulting in 488 fatalities and 3,302 serious injured. Of the 488 PMV occupant fatalities, 266 (55%) were unrestrained and of the 3,302 serious injuries, 994 (30%) were unrestrained. The unrestrained PMV occupants represent 40% of all of the people killed and 23% of all of the people seriously injured in traffic crashes from 2008-2010.



CHOP Debuts New Car Seat Safety - New Website for Car Seat Safety

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) recently launched a new website, *Car Seat Safety for Kids*, at www.chop.edu/carseat. A joint effort of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) and CHOP's Kohl's Injury Prevention Program, the new website provides a one-stop resource for child passenger safety (CPS) information. It replaces the prior *Keeping Kids Safe in Crashes* website. All new site content, including updated videos, supports the current American Academy of Pediatrics CPS recommendations. Spanish translations are expected to be released later this year. Other enhancements include expert commentary on car seat safety topics and a section to help expectant parents prepare for their first trip home from the hospital.

State Highway Safety Offices may wish to include links to the website among their CPS materials. Global Automakers provided funding for the site. *Visit the new site at www.chop.edu/carseat*.

State Farm® Survey Shows More Mobile Web Use While Driving

A new survey of nearly 900 drivers reveals that more drivers are using mobile web services than ever before. The State Farm* report presents the results of an online survey conducted to examine drivers' attitudes and behaviors related to distracted driving. It shows a startling increase in accessing the internet and reading or updating social media networks while driving over the past three years.

The research suggests that, although texting while driving is still a large problem, mobile web use while driving is a growing concern. Specifically, in 2011, 43 percent of younger drivers (defined as those ages 18-29) reported accessing the internet while driving, compared to 29 percent in 2009. Reading social media networks while driving grew to 37 percent, up from 21 percent; and updating social media while driving jumped from 20 percent to 33 percent.

The increase in mobile web usage while driving was not limited to younger drivers. Among all drivers, between 2009 and 2011, overall internet use went from 13 percent to 19 percent; reading social media grew from 9 percent to 14 percent; and updating social media, from 9 percent to 13 percent.

Other key findings from the survey are: drivers continued to be more likely to talk on a hand held cell phone than to text message while driving; drivers were more supportive of laws and regulations prohibiting text messaging while driving than they were of technology preventing these activities; and drivers continued to favor harsher penalties for fatal crashes involving a cell phone.

Researchers Explore Dangers of Pedestrian Headphone Use

A new article published in *Injury Prevention*, an international peer review journal, examines vehicle crashes with pedestrians who were wearing headphones in an attempt to determine the safety risks associated with headphone use by pedestrians. The article was first published online in January 16, 2012. Researchers searched pedestrian injury and fatality reports from 2004 and 2011, extracting and summarizing the 116 reported cases of death or injury involving pedestrians wearing headphones. Key findings include: two thirds of the victims were male and two thirds were under the age of 30; more than half of the vehicles involved were trains; and 89 percent of cases occurred in urban counties. Many cases noted that a warning was sounded before the crash. The article concludes that the use of headphones with handheld devices may pose a safety risk to pedestrians, especially in environments with moving vehicles, but more research is required define the specific risks.

To read the full article abstract, visit: http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/early/2012/01/03/injuryprev-2011-040161.short?q=w injuryprevention ahead tab.

Passengers Jeopardize Teen Drivers' Safety

Attention paid to the dangers of texting and driving, overlooking the most dangerous distraction of all for teen drivers: friends riding in the car. Studies show that teens driving with peer passengers have a significantly higher risk for fatal crashes than those who drive alone. . . Read more <u>Passengers Jeopardize Teen Drivers' Safety</u>

When are teens ready to drive?

Driving is a privilege and it's up to parents to decide whether their teens are ready to get behind the wheel. Here's a guide to making that call. Read more When are teens ready to drive?

Wrong-way driver nearly strikes Wisconsin Cop

An officer had a near miss Sunday when his cruiser was nearly struck by a teen driver going the wrong way. Read more Wrong-way driver nearly strikes Wis. cop

Do you want to become a car seat tech?

Or do you know of someone who is interested in becoming a car seat tech? Safe Kids Treasure Valley is offering the four day course Monday, May 14 through Thursday, May 17th at Meridian Fire Station #1. Click here for details and registration information.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

If you would like to add an event to the calendar, please send an e-mail with the event details to lisa.losness@itd.idaho.gov

Date	Event Description, Location	
Feb 7 – 20, 2012	Seat Belts, Statewide Traffic Enforcement Mobilization	
Feb 11, 2012	Alive at 25, Meridian Police Dept., www.idsafedriver.org	
Feb 12, 2012	Alive at 25, Middleton Fire Station, www.idsafedriver.org	
Feb 17, 2012	Grant "Letter of Intent" Deadline, http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/programs.htm	
Feb 18, 2012	Alive at 25, Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, www.idsafedriver.org	
Feb 18, 2012	Alive at 25, Nampa Fire Training Facility, www.idsafedriver.org	
Feb 20, 2012	Alive at 25, Boise Police Dept., <u>www.idsafedriver.org</u>	
Feb 25, 2012	Alive at 25, Kootenai Fire Station #2, www.idsafedriver.org	
Feb 25, 2012	Alive at 25, Meridian Police Dept., www.idsafedriver.org	
Mar 10, 2012	Alive at 25, Meridian Police Dept., www.idsafedriver.org	
Mar 10 – 18, 2012	Impaired Driving, Statewide Traffic Enforcement Mobilization	
Mar 29, 2012	Alive at 25, Meridian Police Dept., www.idsafedriver.org	
Apr 19-30, 2012	Aggressive Driving, Statewide Traffic Enforcement Mobilization	
May 7-8, 2012	2012 Highway Safety Summit, Boise Centre on the Grove	
May 14-17, 2012	Child Passenger Safety Car Seat Technician Certification course, www.safekids.org	
June 14-16, 2012	Lifesavers Conference, Orlando, Florida, www.lifesaversconfeence.org	
July 18, 2012	Alive at 25 Workshop, Boise, Idaho	
July 19-20, 2012	Northwest Alcohol Conference, Boise, Idaho www.northwestalcoholconference.org	

Quick Reference Guide – click on the topic to go directly to website.

OHS, Office of Highway Safety

ITD, Idaho Transportation Department

NHTSA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

FHWA, Federal Highway Administration

2010 Idaho Crash Report

Program Area	Idaho State Links	Federal Links
Impaired Driving		http://www.nhtsa.gov/Impaired
Distracted Driving	http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/DistractedDriving.htm	http://distraction.gov/
Teen Drivers	http://www.idahoteendriving.org/	http://www.nhtsa.gov/Teen-Drivers
Bike & Pedestrian Safety	http://www.itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/index_new2.htm	http://www.nhtsa.gov/Pedestrians http://www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles
Seat Belt Safety	http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/ClickIt/ClickIt2.htm	http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Occupant+P rotection
Child Passenger Safety	http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/ChildSafety/index.html	http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS
Aggressive Driving		http://www.nhtsa.gov/Aggressive
Motorcycles	www.idahostar.org	http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/Motorcycles
Senior Driving		http://www.nhtsa.gov/Senior-Drivers