Utah Fatal Crash Summary 2017

State of Utah
Department of Public Safety
Highway Safety Office

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Preliminary Totals as of 1/29/2018
Summary

Utah saw a decrease in motor vehicle traffic crash deaths in 2017 with 272 people killed, 9 deaths lower than in 2016. However, this total was the same as the three year average (2014-2016) of 272 deaths.

Some areas of concern in Utah during 2017:

- **Speed** was once again the leading contributing factor in deaths accounting for 41% of deaths. The speed category includes crashes where the driver exceeded the speed limit or traveled too fast for conditions;
- **Unrestrained occupants** accounted for 31% of deaths;
- **Older drivers** were involved in 8 more deaths than the three year average for the highest total in at least the last 20 years (60);
- **Pedestrian deaths** increased by 4 deaths over 2016, for the 2nd highest total since 1998;
- **Crashes occurring during Inclement Weather** saw an increase of 10 more deaths than the three year average.

Utah made progress in decreasing fatalities in 2017 when compared to the three year average in the following categories:

- Traffic deaths decreased after four straight years of increasing (although it was the same as the three year average);
- 8 fewer deaths involving drunk drivers;
- 7 fewer deaths involving drowsy drivers;
- 4 fewer deaths involving teen drivers;
- 4 fewer deaths involving drivers failing to yield;
- 3 fewer deaths involving distracted drivers.

All totals are based on preliminary data and may change slightly.
• Deaths decreased in 2017 for the first time in five years.
• After seeing record lows in 2012 and 2013, deaths have increased 24% from 2013.

• Salt Lake (69) and Utah (25) Counties had the highest number of deaths.
• Piute and Wayne Counties had zero deaths.
• Compared to 2016, Davis (16 fewer) and Tooele (12 fewer) Counties had the biggest decreases in deaths while Cache (9 more), Grand (7 more), and Iron (7 more) Counties had the biggest increases in deaths.

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• November (31) and September (29) had the highest number of deaths.
• January (17) and March (17) had the lowest number of deaths.
• Compared to 2016, June and October had the biggest decrease in deaths with 10 fewer while August had the biggest increase in deaths with 10 more.
31% of persons killed in 2017 were aged 15-29 years.

Compared to 2016, the 55-59 age group had the biggest decreases in deaths with 12 fewer while the 25-29 (17 more), 60-64 (8 more), and 80-84 (7 more) age groups had the biggest increases in deaths.

There were 83 deaths to unrestrained occupants.

It is estimated that 41 of these deaths would have been prevented had the occupant been restrained.
The 49 pedestrian deaths in 2015 were the highest total since 63 pedestrians were killed in 1987.

The last four years have seen pedestrian deaths increase to totals not seen since the 1990s.
The speed-related category includes crashes when the driver was exceeding the speed limit and when the driver was traveling too fast for conditions.

Of the 272 deaths, 157 (58%) speed was not known to contribute to the crash, 92 (34%) were attributed to exceeding the speed limit, 19 (7%) were attributed to traveling too fast for conditions, and 4 (1%) the role of speed was unknown.

In 28 of the deaths the driver was traveling 20 miles per hour (mph) or more above the posted speed limit. In 17 of these deaths the driver was traveling 30 mph or more above the posted speed limit.

In 11 of the deaths the driver was traveling 90 mph or more.
In the 246 fatal crashes there were 395 drivers, of which 46% were tested for alcohol and/or drugs with results available. Of the 181 drivers in fatal crashes tested for alcohol and/or drugs, 48% were negative for alcohol/drugs, 38% were positive for drugs only, 6% were positive for alcohol only, and 9% were positive for both alcohol and drugs. 25 drivers tested positive for marijuana in 2017 compared to 26 in 2016. 24 drivers tested positive for methamphetamine in 2017 compared to 14 in 2016. A positive drug test does not necessarily imply impairment. These results are preliminary and will change as test results may take several months.