

Speeding Wrecks Lives Kickoff Event

Ann Carlson, NHTSA Acting Administrator

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Good morning. I'm Ann Carlson, NHTSA's Acting Administrator, and I'd like to welcome everyone joining us in person and virtually for today's "Speeding Wrecks Lives" national paid media campaign kickoff.

We are partnering with safety advocates, state experts, law enforcement, and public health experts – some of whom are here today – to remind everyone that speeding is dangerous and completely avoidable.

Our campaign starts today and runs through the end of the month. And we are targeting drivers ages 18 to 44, who data show are most likely to be involved in speeding-related fatal crashes.

Data are the lifeblood of our safety campaigns, and today we are releasing new data on the impact of speeding. Our new numbers show that speeding fatalities reached a 14-year high in 2021, making up almost one-third of all traffic fatalities.

This campaign is one of many ways that NHTSA and the U.S. Department of Transportation are working to address our nation's traffic safety crisis. It's also part of the Department's National Roadway Safety Strategy, which adopts the safe system approach. The strategy builds multiple layers of protection with safer roads, safer people, safer vehicles, safer speeds and better post-crash care.

Speeding is an inherently risky driving behavior. When you speed, you have less time to react. You also have less stopping distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.

In fact, we're releasing a new observational study today examining efforts used by law enforcement officers to reduce speeding. That study shows that it can be just as safe to have more cars on the road, as long as those drivers aren't speeding. Speeding increases your risk of a crash.

That new study also looks at law enforcement countermeasures for speeding. The study found that decoy – or unoccupied – law enforcement vehicles provide the most successful speed reduction activity. When folks slow down automatically when they see a police vehicle, that's a win – and it's equitable too.

Another successful countermeasure that is enforcement without engagement, the study found, was the use of digital speed signs. And the final countermeasure that proved successful was the one that hurts the pocketbook, and that's a police-issued speeding ticket.

There are other ways to address the speed crisis too. States and localities should examine whether their speed limits are set at safe levels. And if localities don't have the authority to set their own speed limits, states might consider allowing them to lower limits where speeds are set too high. The Department has also released a guide to using cameras for speed enforcement, one that thoughtfully addresses how to engage communities in using cameras in a fair and equitable way.

Our new data show why it's so important for drivers to slow down and to attack the speed problem from multiple angles. Speeding-related fatalities increased by 8% from 2020 to 2021, with 12,330 people killed. And speeding injured more than 328,000 people in 2021, a heavy burden for those injured, their families, first responders, and our medical system.

Speeding also doesn't have to be at the very highest speeds to be fatal, especially if vulnerable road users are involved. The difference for a pedestrian being hit at 40 miles per hour as opposed to 25 can mean the difference between life and death. That's why it's so important to respect speed limits.

It's also why our proposed automatic emergency braking rules, including pedestrian AEB for light-duty vehicles, will save so many lives.

Unfortunately, the data released today show that many drivers in speeding-related crashes also engaged in other risky driving behaviors. In 2021, drivers between the ages of 35 and 74 who were speeding and involved in fatal crashes were found to be alcohol impaired twice as often as non-speeding drivers. Additionally, more than half of speeding passenger vehicle drivers were not wearing a seat belt, compared to 23% of non-speeding passenger vehicle drivers.

That's why NHTSA is also working on measures to attack impaired driving and increase seat belt use.

The message is clear – *Speeding Wrecks Lives*. Speeding has many consequences. You could get a ticket, and your insurance rates could go up.

You could even lose your license or face criminal charges.

And most importantly, speeding could cost you your life, the life of someone else you love, or the life of a pedestrian, cyclist, motorcyclist, or other driver or passenger.

Slow down. It's the safe thing to do – and the right thing to do.