

Washington FARS*

March 2015

Issue 8



2015

TRAFFIC SAFETY CONFERENCE

Save the Date!

When: **October 13-15, 2015**

Where: **DoubleTree by Hilton, SeaTac**

Keynote Speakers:

- ♦ **Professor Nicholas Ward**, Director for Health & Safety Culture at the Western Transportation Institute
- ♦ **Director Anders Eugensson**, Volvo Cars Active Safety, Connected Vehicles, Self-Driving Cars
- ♦ **American Writer Matt Richtel**, Winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for a series on distracted driving

The conference begins Tuesday afternoon at 1 PM with a motivational plenary session followed by a number of workshops and an evening welcome reception. Workshops will be offered over the 3-day conference providing opportunities to network and learn.

You'll come away, at the very least, with new ideas for your work towards Target Zero; understanding of new technologies; and new connections and partnerships in traffic safety.

Registration will be open in May 2015.

For more information, visit www.wtsc.wa.gov or call Kathy Droke at (360) 725-9883.

Seat Belt Use Remains High in Washington

The WTSC has been surveying statewide seat belt use in Washington State since 1986. This first survey resulted in a mere 36% seat belt use rate. One year later, after the passage of the *secondary* seat belt law, the rate jumped to 52%. The seat belt use rate continued to slowly rise over the next decade and eventually came to rest at approximately 80% where it remained for several years. In 2002, Washington conducted the first **Click It or Ticket** campaign, and also passed a *primary* seat belt law. These strategies boosted the seat belt use rate to almost 93%.

In 2014, this progress continued. The seat belt use rate in 2014 was **94.5%**, the same estimate as in 2013. Washington contin-

ues to be a national leader in seat belt use. However, even with this high rate of use, over 20% of traffic fatalities are unrestrained. Furthermore, the statewide seat belt use estimate is for front seat occupants. A recent study conducted by the WTSC showed that only 80% of child occupants were restrained, and 20% illegally ride in the front seat. In order to reach Washington's vision of Target Zero, we must remain innovative to continually increase our seat belt use rate to 100%!

To view the full 2014 Seat Belt Use report, Statewide Estimates of Child Restraint Use report, and other traffic safety reports, please visit <http://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/traffic-safety-studies/>.

Legislative Update

Following is a snapshot of proposed legislation for which WTSC has provided testimony

Bill ID	Topic	Bill Status	Status Date	WTSC Position	Brief Summary
SSB 5623	MCs on laned roads	SRules	2/27/15	opposed	Allows for lane splitting when traffic is moving at 25 mph, MCs may travel at 35 mph between lanes of traffic.
SSB 5816	Traffic safety education	SRules	2/27/15	support	Requires driver training for ages 18-24 who are receiving their first license: 10 hours, 3 behind the wheel. Current 16-17 driver training requires 31 hours, 6 behind the wheel; no current requirement for age 18+.
SB 5656	Distracted driving incidents	SRules	2/27/15	support	WTSC request bill: allows hands-free use of cell phones only. Violations would go on the driver's record and a second or subsequent violation in five years would mean a doubled fine. Distracted driving questions would be asked on the driving test.
SHB 1159	Teen driving safety	HRules	2/27/15	support	Proposes to reduce the high rate of young driver crashes by requiring a new driver decal to the vehicle's rear window any time a young driver is operating the vehicle.
SSB 5002	Open container marijuana	SRules	2/27/15	support	Makes it illegal to consume marijuana in a motor vehicle or to keep marijuana in a motor vehicle unless the marijuana is in the trunk of the vehicle or other area not normally occupied by the driver or passenger, or in a sealed container that has not been opened.
SSB 5105	DUI 4th offense Felony	SRules	2/27/15	support	A DUI becomes a felony if the person has had 3 or more (instead of 4 or more) prior offenses within 10 years. An additional \$50 fee is assessed on all persons convicted, sentenced to a lesser charge, or given a deferred prosecution as a result of a conviction for DUI, vehicular homicide, or vehicular assault.

Curious, Unique & Unreported

Is it a traffic crash? Sometimes, when a death occurs in relation to a public road, the circumstances are so unusual that a police traffic crash report (PTCR) is not completed and submitted.

Jurisdictional definitions of “traffic fatality” may vary, but the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) is required to comply with the federal definition of traffic fatality:

“To be included in FARS, a crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic-way customarily open to the public and result in the death of a person (occupant of a vehicle or a non-motorist) within 30 days of the crash.”

All traffic fatalities that occur on public roadways in Washington must be reported to the federal fatality data base. When no PTCR is submitted, FARS staff must nevertheless report the crash with a great many “unknowns” and “not reporteds” in the data fields.

Without a narrative and diagram it’s not possible for traffic safety planners to identify crash causes and address existing or new traffic safety issues. Missing data gives us an incomplete picture of our state’s fatal crashes.

Three deaths took place in 2014 for which no PTCR was completed:

Pierce County, 6/11:

—a vehicle occupant jumped from a moving vehicle and subsequently died.

Mt. Rainier National Park:

—7/12; motorcycle fatal crash; no info available.

—9/13; motorcycle fatal crash; no info available.

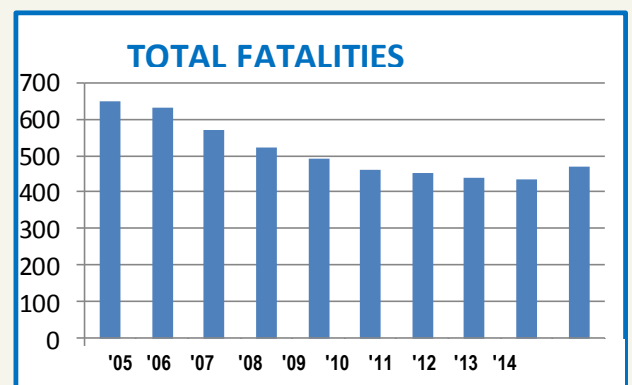
If you are contacted by WSP to complete a PTCR for a fatal collision, please do so! The WTSC will use any report that was created, however having a PTCR ensures the information, even if incomplete, is included in all the state’s various collision data bases and is considered in all data-driven decision making.

2014 HOLIDAY SEASON FATALITIES & OVERALL FATALITIES

Snow, ice, extreme cold plus long hours of darkness can challenge the safest drivers. Add the celebrations and gatherings that occur during the holidays, plus inevitable over-celebrating, and crashes may increase.

In 2014’s holiday season, November 1 - January 4 (New Year’s Eve weekend), our state had 79 traffic deaths. For the same period in 2013, there were 66.

In spite of the combined efforts of Target Zero agencies, the preliminary number for 2014 show a slight increase in overall fatalities. Some fluctuation is inevitable, of course. Research and data folks continue to track elements of fatal crashes that include impairment, speed, and seat belts. Data from 2014 fatal crashes will be added to the FARS data base (and subtracted, when death certificates determine the person died of natural causes) until the end of December 2015.





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*Fatality Analysis Reporting System

2014 FARS

As Washington's FARS analysts hasten to complete 2014 data, we thank our investigators for diligently submitting their supplemental fatal crash reports.

The 2014 data year will close on December 31, 2015, but the earlier our data is complete and accurate the earlier we will be able to analyze the previous year's data and address traffic safety program planning appropriately.

RCW 46.52.030 requires fatal crash reports to be submitted to the State Patrol within four days. Incomplete reports are fine; additional information can be added until the end of the next calendar year.

2015 STATEWIDE MOBILIZATIONS

4/1-15/2015:	Distracted Driving
5/11-24/2015:	Click it or Ticket
8/21—9/7/2015:	Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over/DUI

In addition to the statewide mobilizations, local jurisdictions will schedule and conduct mobilizations based on specific traffic safety issues and needs.

TRAFFIC GIS WORKGROUP

Meeting **April 8, 2015 @ WTSC**
621 8th Ave SE, Olympia
Suite 409
1:00pm - 3:00pm

Presentation:

Traffic Crash Data 101:

Where's it come from, what's it tell us?

plus snacks, caffeine, roundtable

Welcoming GIS types from local government,
law enforcement, public safety

RSVP to Gary Montgomery by April 6
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YOUR FEEDBACK IS INVITED: This newsletter is intended to open discussion between investigators, data analysts, and other members of the traffic safety community. Please let us know what topics are of interest to you. contributors are welcome! Contact Mimi Nickerson (nickerson@wtsc.wa.gov), (360) 725-9892.