

# JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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Ohio Department of Public Safety · Ohio Department of Transportation · Ohio State Highway Patrol

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## **Ohio Adopts Statewide Plan to Reduce Fatalities** *Plan Targets Rising Alcohol-Related Fatalities*

COLUMBUS – Ohio is one of the first states in the nation to adopt a new statewide plan that identifies the greatest threats to motorists and outlines strategies to lower the number of injuries and deaths that occur on Ohio roadways each year.

Last year there were 358,127 total crashes in Ohio – 1,326 people were killed and 88,583 people were injured. As part of the plan, Ohio has adopted the goal to reduce fatalities to no more than 1,100 by the end of 2008.

“Ohio has become a national leader in combating highway fatalities and crashes,” said Dennis Decker, division administrator for the Federal Highway Administration. “The state has the seventh largest highway network and the fifth highest traffic volume, yet it has the ninth lowest fatality rate in the nation.”

State officials attribute the low rate to better crash analysis techniques, improved coordination between agencies and innovative approaches to addressing problems, which are institutionalized in the plan.

“The plan recognizes that we have to make the roadway safer *and* improve the quality of driver using the road,” said Gordon Proctor, director for the Ohio Department of Transportation. “Many high-crash locations are being targeted for public awareness and law enforcement – as well as roadway improvements – to save lives.”

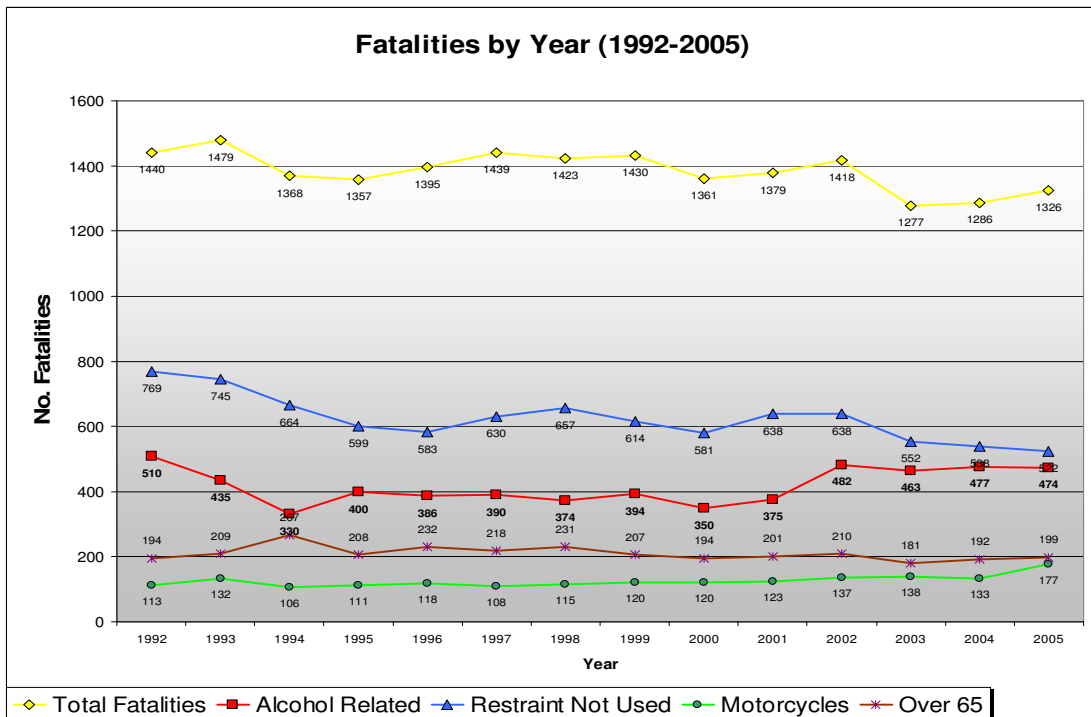
**The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan**, which was developed by local, state and national safety advocates, uses data to analyze Ohio’s worst crash problems. It **identifies five areas where the state intends to focus its resources to reduce fatalities over the next three years.**

Targeted areas include:

- Improving the quality and accuracy of crash data
- Reducing the occurrence and severity of run-off-road, intersection and head-on collisions
- Addressing high risk behaviors such as low seatbelt use and impaired driving
- Targeting motorcycles and commercial vehicles, which are more likely to be involved in serious crashes
- Reducing the high number of rear-end collisions caused by congestion

**One of the most troubling trends identified in the plan is the rising number of **alcohol-related fatalities.****

In 2000, there were 320 alcohol-related fatal crashes compared to 446 last year. In 2005, 474 people were killed and 10,510 injured – there was at least one death and 28 injuries per day.



In addition:

- Most alcohol-related fatal and injury crashes occurred between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m.
- 81 percent of the drivers had a blood-alcohol level (BAC) of .10 or higher. The legal limit is .08 in Ohio.
- 42 percent of the drivers had a BAC of .20 or higher
- 79 percent of drivers were male

To combat the problem, the Department of Public Safety recently moved to **low-manpower checkpoints** statewide. By using fewer officers, the number of annual checkpoints will increase by nearly 70 percent to as many as 400 locations in 2007.

“These checkpoints are designed to not only deter impaired driving, but to proactively remove these dangerous drivers from our roadways.” Colonel Paul D. McClellan, superintendent of the Patrol, said. “If people plan to consume alcohol, we ask them to designate a driver or make other travel arrangements before they drink. Don’t let another life be lost for the senseless and selfish act of getting behind the wheel impaired.”

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