

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS NORTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

JULY 2016 NEWSLETTER

World Peace and Motor Vehicle Fatalities

As you are likely aware, there are presently many concerning events taking place in our country and in the world. But for now, I am going to put those things aside and focus on one particular unpleasantness that we are able to do something positive about – motor vehicle fatalities.

The CDC has, alarmingly, recently reported that approximately 90 people die in motor vehicle-related crashes in the United States each day; that amounts to 32,850 lives cut short each year.

According to *Safety and Health* magazine, rudimentary actions such as wearing seat belts and putting our children in booster seats could reduce this number. Additionally, as you may guess, refraining from driving after or while consuming alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs could also help. And let's not forget about texting and

speaking on the phone while driving.

Disturbingly, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States has the highest rate of traffic deaths among 19 high-income countries. The CDC suggests that 18,000 lives could be saved each year if the U.S. could attain a rating that is merely equal to the average of this group of countries. Their [report](#), released on July 6 of this year, highlights these statistics.

For their report, the CDC analyzed research from the World Health Organization and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. This data showed that although traffic deaths in the United States fell 31 percent between 2000 and 2013, other high-income nations, to include the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, saw crash deaths decrease by an average of 56 percent during this same time period. Distressingly, the United States was found to

have the most traffic deaths per 100,000 people and per 10,000 registered vehicles. It also had the second-highest percentage of alcohol-involved deaths, 31 percent. Further, the U. S. had the third-lowest rate of front seat belt use, 87 percent. France had the highest rate of front seat belt use, 99 percent.

Let's take a look at statistics reported by the CDC for the year 2013:

- More than 9,500 vehicle crash deaths were attributed to lack of seat belt, booster seat, or car seat use.
- More than 10,000 vehicle crash deaths were attributed to driving while inebriated.
- More than 9,500 vehicle crash deaths were attributed to excessive travel speed.

There is, thankfully, positive data. Seat belt use prevented over 12,500 vehicle crash deaths in 2013. However, along with that good comes some bad. Compared to other high-income countries, the U. S.

had lower-than-average front and back seat belt use. And unfortunately, approximately half of the individuals that died in U. S. motor vehicle crashes in 2013 were not buckled up.

So as we go through each day hoping that we can do something to help stop the madness in our country and world, there are steps that can be taken to change things that are much more within our control. To decrease the number of

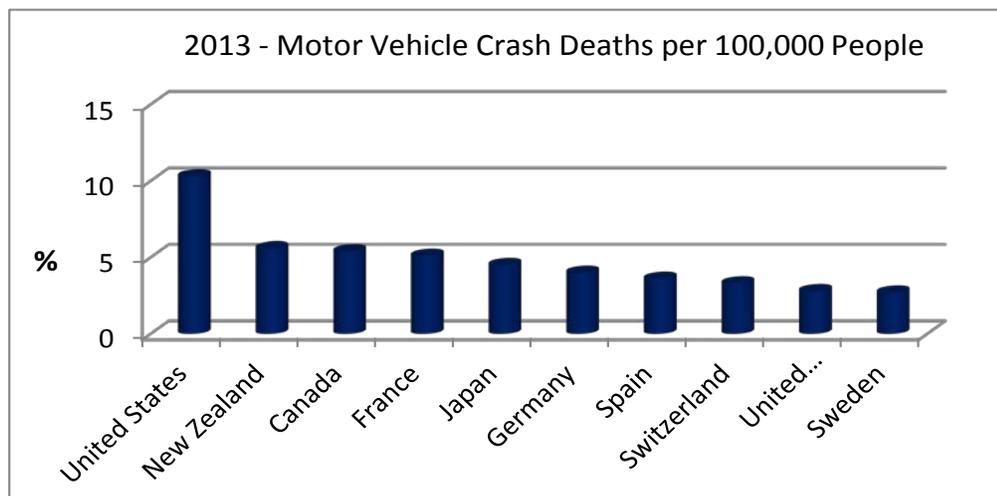
motor vehicle fatalities, for example, the CDC suggests moving towards proven measures currently utilized in the best-performing, high-income countries. Some of these actions would be to:

- Use advanced technology, such as ignition interlocks, for all individuals convicted of drunk driving.
- Lower the legal Blood Alcohol Concentration level from 0.08% to

somewhere between 0.02 to 0.05%.

- Increase the utilization of publicized sobriety checkpoints.
- Move to primary enforcement of seat belt laws that cover everyone in every seat of the vehicle.
- Require car and booster seats for child passengers through at least the age of eight years.

Bob Dooley



Article Sources and Hyperlinks of Interest

- http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/14381-proven-safety-measures-can-reduce-us-traffic-deaths-cdc-says?utm_source=newsalert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsalert
- <http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/13645-traffic-deaths-up-nearly-10-percent-after-years-of-decline-nhtsa-says>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2016-07-vitalsigns.pdf>

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ASSE Local Chapter Meeting Schedule

We are currently participating in summer break and hope that you and yours have a safe and fun-filled summertime.