

Part II - Collision Characteristics

There are many characteristics associated with traffic collisions. Patterns in these characteristics can provide insight into the cause of collisions and may ultimately lead to effective countermeasures for reducing the number of collisions that occur and minimizing the severity of those that will still occur. The data provided on the following pages may raise interesting questions for those interested in highway safety. These questions may in turn lead to research, which addresses a particular collision characteristic. Here are some examples of traffic collision characteristics for 1999:

A. Driver

- ◆ Male drivers between the ages of 20 and 24 continue to be over represented in fatal collisions.
- ◆ More than two-thirds of all drivers involved in traffic collisions were not charged with any violation.
- ◆ The leading traffic violation in 1999 was “Speeding less than 10 miles over the limit”.

B. Time

- ◆ Fatal collisions occurred slightly more often at night than during the day.
- ◆ The month of October had the most fatal collisions (98), July the most traffic fatalities (107) in 1999.
- ◆ For the first time in at least thirty years the four week days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) had more traffic deaths than the three weekend days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday).

C. Location

- ◆ More fatal collisions and deaths occurred on state secondary routes than on any other route category.
- ◆ One out of 13 traffic collisions occurred on the interstate. Nearly 1 out of 8 *fatal* collisions occurred on interstates. Both proportions are higher than in past years.
- ◆ More than 4/5 of the fatal collisions occurred on rural roadways in 1999.

D. Environment

- ◆ Over 5/6 of all traffic collisions occurred during clear or cloudy weather conditions.
- ◆ More than 4/5 of all collisions occurred on a dry road surface.

E. Vehicles

- ◆ Automobiles made up over two thirds of all units involved in traffic collisions during 1999.
- ◆ A total of 5.4% of the traffic collisions involving railway trains, 11.7% involving pedestrians, 4.7% involving motorcycles, 2.8% involving bicycles, 1.7% involving mopeds and 2.4% involving truck tractors resulted in fatalities.