**Speed Kills**

Since the pandemic was recognized and sheltering in place was ordered, there are now far less vehicles on the road. With less crowded freeways and streets, drivers are now exceeding the speed limits. Vehicles are travelling at excessively fast, at speeds of up to and exceeding 100 mph. This unsafe speeding can result in accidents and even death!

You and I can see this happening wherever there are vehicles moving. Additionally, many of us have likely also exceeded speed limits. A simple scan of the local news, police, and CHP traffic incident reports will reveal plenty of evidence of accidents caused by speeding.

There are additional factors that have been reported in the media. It appears that some people have forgotten to use seat belts, many drivers are distracted by illegal use of cell phones while driving. Alcohol, drugs, cannabis and other bad habits have added to the rise in fatal accidents.

One other issue is also pertinent, there are many more cyclists on the road, many of whom are adults who have not used a bike in years. Main point, whenever we see a senior on a bike, watch out. They cause accidents because they are slower and likely are not as alert as younger bike riders. Middle age bikers are also a problem too, mainly because they are not youngsters anymore, (this means most of us).

And while Covid-19 continues killing humans of all races and ages, people are being killed by new road conditions that encourage speeding and has resulted in hundreds of deaths that would not have happened in normal times.

**All of us need to realize that anyone behind the wheel who is speeding may kill someone!**

***Sources:***

[***https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/coronavirus-increased-rate-of-crash-deaths-on-u-s-roads-11601582215***](https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/coronavirus-increased-rate-of-crash-deaths-on-u-s-roads-11601582215)

**Rate of Crash Deaths on U.S. Roads Rose During Coronavirus Pandemic**

**In first half of 2020, traffic volumes fell but speeding and other risky behaviors were up**

***Rate of Crash Deaths on U.S. Roads Rose During Coronavirus Pandemic***

***In first half of 2020, traffic volumes fell but speeding and other risky behaviors were up***

***A highway in Pasadena, Calif. in March.***

**By, Scott Calvert, WSJ, Oct. 1, 2020**

The rate of crash deaths in the U.S. rose as the coronavirus pandemic erupted this spring, fueled by an increase in risky behaviors like speeding and by a reduced police presence on roadways, according to federal highway safety officials.

The traffic fatality rate jumped to 1.25 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up from 1.06 during the same period in 2019. In the second quarter, the fatality rate hit 1.42, officials said. While traffic volumes dropped more than 16%, crash deaths fell just about 2% in the first half of

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[***https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexledsom/2020/10/14/emptier-roads-but-traffic-fatalities-soaring-why/amp/***](https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexledsom/2020/10/14/emptier-roads-but-traffic-fatalities-soaring-why/amp/)

**Riskier Behaviour During Pandemic Is Causing More Accidents**

**Alex Ledsom, *Forbes*, Oct 14, 2020**

**The picture of road safety during the pandemic is complicated**

It could be assumed that during a pandemic there would be fewer people driving and fewer accidents and road deaths. Actually, the picture is much more complicated—research suggests that the inverse has actually been true.

**There were fewer cars on the road, everywhere, but …**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced unsurprisingly that there were fewer cars traveling during the height of the pandemic—total traffic volume fell 16% on U.S. roads during the first half of 2020, according to Axios.

**So accidents initially decreased...**

In France, one of the largest car assurers Maif, announced on April 12 that it was to return €100 million ($117 million) to 2.8 million members who had assured roughly 3.8 million cars because the number of car accidents on the road had dropped by 80% in the first three weeks of the pandemic (when France enacted one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe). As Le Monde pointed out, this amounted to roughly €30 ($35) per insured car.

According to Autoplus, 250 people died on the roads in France in 2019 (an increase of 7.3% compared to March 2018) but in March 2020, this figure had decreased to 130.

... but not for professional drivers

However, it is worth noting that the number of road deaths for professional drivers of commercial or heavy-goods vehicles didn’t change–as reported by The Huffington Post. It’s another example of how frontline professions haven’t been protected from Covid-19

**The pandemic, it seems, has pushed drivers to speed**

But risky behavior increased...

Anecdotally, lots of people have talked about how **people appear to be driving more carelessly and much faster and this appears to have translated into actual statistics.**

A NHTSA study found that drivers who were seriously injured or were victims of fatal crashes had taken risks such as speeding, or not using seatbelts or had been driving while impaired. More drivers took alcohol, cannabinoids, and opioids during the second quarter 2020, than they apparently had done prior to the pandemic.

The Huffington Post reported that in France, excessive speeding (faster than 50km/h more than the authorized speed) increased by 12% when lockdown began (compared to the weeks before). Three weeks after France’s déconfinement (when it emerged from lockdown), 20 Minutes reported that there was an “alarming increase in fatalities” and a 15% increase in excessive speeding.

David Juillard, in the department of Road Safety at the Ministry of the Interior suggested that it could have been due to drivers wanting to feel liberated after lockdown but Juillard also suggested it was due to a lack of rule-following.

This particularly resulted in a spike in accidents involving cyclists (many of whom were new out onto the roads) not wearing helmets, not signalling when changing lanes and drivers not giving them enough due care.

In the U.S., fatality rates increased 30% in the second quarter, reversing a three-year downward trend in road fatalities. The NHTSA believes that the pandemic pushed people towards riskier behavior but also that a lack of road safety messaging during the pandemic could have contributed.

Economic downturns generally lead to a decrease in traffic, people move less and there are fewer accidents. However, the impact of Covid-19 is unknown and there are theories that it might have the opposite impact on road safety. Research suggests that increased stress, more idle time, increased consumption of drugs and alcohol and "greater opportunities for speeding and stunt driving" would probably lead to more accidents rather than less.

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[**https://www.trantololaw.com/law-firm-blog/car-accidents/fatal-increased-pandemic/**](https://www.trantololaw.com/law-firm-blog/car-accidents/fatal-increased-pandemic/)

**Fatal Car Accidents Have Increased During the Pandemic**

Earlier this year, the National Safety Council uncovered a concerning trend: Mile for mile, the number of motor vehicle accident fatalities increased 14 percent from March 2019 to March 2020. Shelter-in-place measures have kept many Americans off the road, decreasing the average number of miles traveled by 18 percent, so this uptick was unexpected.

In an interview with National Public Radio, one of the NSC’s statisticians explained that, during a recession, motor vehicle accidents typically decline proportionally with the number of miles driven.

With states across the country slowly opening up, this concerning trend is expected to increase with more drivers venturing back out onto the roads.

**The Trend is Not a Fluke**

What could have been nothing more than an abnormal month for the NSC has carried through the pandemic and can be seen across the country, including in Connecticut.

**The Washington Post reported on this nationwide trend and found that more drivers are speeding or engaging in reckless behavior.**

**The types of fatal accidents recorded have not all increased evenly. Instead, many appear related to driving at high speeds – in some cases, over 100 miles per hour**. In certain states like Minnesota, roadways have half as much traffic compared to 2019 but motor vehicle fatalities have doubled by mile and total number.

Overall, the report found that US road traffic has declined 41 percent year-over-year, closer to 70 percent in urban areas like New York City and Washington, D.C. However, fatal motor vehicle accidents have decreased only 21 percent. A few sources point to this trend.

**Speeding On the Rise**

Sources speaking to the Washington Post claim that average speeds during the pandemic have gone up 250 percent in some parts of the country. Fewer vehicles on the road have led some motorists to believe they now have the freedom to drag race or attempt to break speed records.

Urban areas, where streets and highways typically see regular congestion, have experienced a more significant shift. In turn, law enforcement has been handing out more speeding violations in these areas.

Beyond traffic tickets, a report in The Detroit Bureau found that the number of crashes where the vehicle cannot be driven from the scene – a clear indicator of a high-speed collision – have increased two percent nationally. By contrast, auto claims for fender-benders and similar low-level collisions have actually declined during the pandemic.

**More Distractions**

In addition to speeding, the Washington Post reports nearly 40 percent more drivers are using their cellphones and hard braking has increased 25 percent, relative to the number of drivers on the road.

**One speculated reason is that people are spending more time on their devices and think nothing of carrying on this habit behind the wheel.** **It’s also thought that, due to the anxiety surrounding social distancing guidelines, many drivers are not giving their full attention to the road.**

**Taking Risks for the Sake of It**

**The Washington Post’s report further discovered drivers have been taking more risks behind the wheel, simply because they can.** Fewer cars creates a false sense of freedom and many are looking for a form of stress release. If a speeding driver is not expecting to see another vehicle or obstruction, failure to react in time could make these accidents deadly.

**What About Connecticut?**

Although the NSC and Washington Post reports indicate these trends span the nation, certain states have been harder hit than others. PoliceOne.com reported that Connecticut experienced a concerning jump in car accident fatalities year-over-year.

While the number of crashes declined by 10,000 over this period, the number of accident-related fatalities has remained flat. Crash-related injuries also declined by over 2,000 incidents. Citing figures from the Connecticut Transportation Institute, the Hartford Courant further found the number of overall car accident fatalities increased by 25 individuals compared to the same period last year. Inexperience may also play a role: In some of the cases cited, the drivers killed were under age 20.

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[***https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/coronavirus-increased-rate-of-crash-deaths-on-u-s-roads-11601582215***](https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/coronavirus-increased-rate-of-crash-deaths-on-u-s-roads-11601582215)

**Rate of Crash Deaths on U.S. Roads Rose During Coronavirus Pandemic**

**In first half of 2020, traffic volumes fell but speeding and other risky behaviors were up**

**By** [**Scott Calvert**](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/scott-calvert)**. *WSJ*, Oct. 1, 2020**

**The rate of crash deaths in the U.S. rose as the** [**coronavirus pandemic**](https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-latest-news-10-01-2020-11601538655?mod=article_inline) **erupted this spring, fueled by an increase in risky behaviors like speeding** **and by a reduced police presence on roadways, according to federal highway safety officials.**

The traffic fatality rate jumped to 1.25 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up from 1.06 during the same period in 2019. In the second quarter, the fatality rate hit 1.42, officials said. While traffic volumes dropped more than 16%, crash deaths fell just about 2% in the first half of the year, as states locked down and the economy stalled, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Thursday.

The pandemic created “unique conditions in traffic safety history,” the agency said, noting that decreases in driving and crash deaths are typically more aligned during economic downturns.

NHTSA’s findings, laid out in a pair of reports, also point to a **lack of seat-belt wearing** as a factor, **along with increased drug and alcohol use**. The analysis fills out a picture that began to emerge in April, when highway traffic safety officials around the country saw [a surge in crashes and fatalities](https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-roads-are-quieter-due-to-coronavirus-but-there-are-more-fatal-car-crashes-11588152600?mod=article_inline).

“It’s still a stunner,” said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety offices. **“There are less people driving. People don’t have money. We haven’t been going to visit grandma. We’re not going to bars because they’re mostly closed. We would have expected big, big reductions in traffic deaths.”**

He said several states have experienced an increase in crash deaths this year, not just a higher rate. One of those is Minnesota, where officials reported 291 traffic fatalities as of Thursday, compared with 264 at that point in 2019.

**“The number of people dying on our roads is alarming and gets scarier each day,”** Michael Hanson, director of Minnesota’s Office of Traffic Safety, said in a statement.

**Evidence shows a higher share of people involved in crashes were ejected from a car,** suggesting they weren’t belted, NHTSA officials said. **The trend was “heavily tilted” toward males, people age 18 to 34 and rural areas**, the agency said.

In addition, **speeding became more prevalent during the pandemic, with roads often wide open and officers making fewer traffic stops to protect them from the virus.**

Drug-related impairment also appears to be a factor, NHTSA said**. Research from five trauma centers showed that crash victims had a higher prevalence of alcohol, cannabinoids and opioids in their systems during the pandemic than before it**. The agency said **survey research indicates many Americans have used drugs and alcohol to help cope with pandemic-related stress.**

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**Traffic Down, Dangerous Crashes Up During Pandemic**

**By Carolyn Crist, *WebMD,* April 29, 2020**

**shelter in place for the** [**coronavirus**](https://www.webmd.com/lung/coronavirus)[**pandemic**](https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/features/what-is-pandemic)**, dangerous car crashes have increased as the enticing open roads allow drivers to speed, according to** [**Newsy**](https://www.newsy.com/stories/covid-19-watch-danger-of-the-open-roads/)**.**

Based on car collision data, the news outlet found that car crashes and injuries were down in many places. In some cities, however, the number of motor vehicle deaths is still the same — and in some cases, the number of deaths has increased. **In Minnesota, for instance, traffic fell by half during the weeks of stay-at-home orders, but crashes with fatalities doubled, according** [**to *The Star-Tribune***](https://www.startribune.com/fatal-crashes-surge-despite-sharp-drop-in-traffic-across-minnesota/569473872/)**.**

“COVID has brought a whole new set of circumstances to those of us in the highway safety industry,” Michael Hanson, director of the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety, told Newsy. “**What really alarmed us in the two weeks following our stay at home order ... we experienced twice as many fatalities in 2020 than we have in any year going back to about 2015.”**

The national rate of emergency calls for car crashes decreased from 62 out of 1,000 calls in February to 38 out of 1,000 calls in April, Newsy reported. Yet some of those calls are for fatalities.

**“We’re now seeing, literally on a weekly basis, dozens of drivers who are being stopped and cited for traveling more than 100 miles an hour,”** Hanson said.

Based on the data, collisions and injuries in Memphis have remained the same as usual, according to Newsy. In Chicago, the number of injuries is down overall, but the number per crash is higher.

In Denver, traffic is down but speeding tickets have gone up, according to [*Westword*](https://www.westword.com/news/covid-19-colorado-major-speeding-tickets-up-despite-stay-at-home-order-11696614), and the Colorado State Patrol has issued more citations for driving 20-40 miles per hour over the speed limit than in the same period last year. Also in San Diego, multiple drivers have died in high-speed collisions, according [to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/story/2020-03-18/chp-sees-less-traffic-more-speeding-drivers-on-freeways-as-covid-19-concerns-keep-people-home).

**Traffic safety experts and highway patrol officers are asking drivers to slow down, both to protect themselves and to keep hospital beds open for COVID-19 patients, according to** [**CCX Media**](https://ccxmedia.org/news/traffic-down-during-covid-19-restrictions-but-crashes-up/)**.**

“These crashes that happen at high speeds, you’re taking away a hospital bed from someone else that may need it that has a COVID issue,” Lt. Gordon Shank of the Minnesota State Patrol told CCX Media. “This is a team effort. Make sure that you are going the speed limit, so we all get to go where we need to go safely.”

**April 29, 2020 -- Although traffic has decreased across the country as people**