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Michigan stepping up speed enforcement during regional traffic safety campaign

State aims to stem troubling rise in speed-related fatalities

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began more than a year ago, law enforcement agencies across the nation have reported an alarming rise in speeding and fatal crashes.

To combat this disturbing and dangerous trend, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Region 5 Office are partnering with five other states on a regional traffic safety campaign. As part of the "Great Lakes, High Stakes" campaign, more than 30 municipal, county and Michigan State Police (MSP) law enforcement agencies will focus on speeding drivers between June 19 and 27.

Nationally in 2019, 9,478 traffic fatalities involved crashes in which one or more drivers were speeding.

"Despite the fact that there were less miles traveled in 2020, the fatality rate rose -- and speed may have been a key factor," said Michael L. Prince, director of the OHSP. "We've said for decades that 'speed kills,' and the alarming data for 2020 confirms that the faster you drive the greater your risk of dying in a crash.

"We hope increased enforcement over the coming weeks will help change these dangerous driving behaviors and save lives."

While Michigan has seen a 22-percent reduction in traffic crashes -- 245,432 in 2020 compared to 314,377 in 2019 -- there has been an increase in fatalities. Crash data from the MSP Criminal Justice Information Center indicates 1,083 people died from crashes on Michigan roads in 2020, a 10-percent increase over 2019, with 985 deaths reported. In 2020, there were 200 speed-related fatalities on Michigan roadways compared to 185 in 2019, an 8-percent increase.

Also in Michigan, according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, in 2020:

- Out of male drivers involved in all traffic crashes in 2020, 6.4 percent were speeding.
- 15.2 percent of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes were speeding.
- 11.2 percent of drivers in the 15- to 20-year-old age group involved in crashes (4,650 out of 41,685) were speeding.
- Out of all drivers who were drinking in crashes, 15.1 percent were speeding.

Recent insurance industry studies show that about 112,000 speeding tickets are issued each day, or about 41 million per year. The average fine for a speeding violation is between \$115-\$135.

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