1973

FATAL ACCIDENT FACTS

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

Planning & Research

Winfield Dunn
Governor

Claude A. Armour
Commissioner

Charles Danner
Colonel
To The Citizens of Tennessee:

One of the biggest problems facing this country is the tragic loss of lives and injuries that result from automobile accidents on its streets and highways.

The loss of any life in an automobile accident is a tragedy. It is a greater tragedy if that loss is the result of a needless and thoughtless act by a careless driver. Life is too precious a gift to be gambled with and perhaps lost in a traffic accident.

The Department of Safety is dedicated to the task of reducing deaths and injuries on the streets and highways of Tennessee. The Department has compiled a report illustrating fatal accident facts for 1973. This report constitutes an in-depth look at the causes and results of automobile accidents in Tennessee. Hopefully, it will make the public more aware of the results of fatal accidents. If only one life was lost in an automobile accident, it would still have been too great a price to pay. Slowing down to save gasoline is a commendable deed; slowing down to save lives is an even better deed.

It is our sincere wish that this report will serve as a guide to the motoring public to follow in trying to improve its driving habits. We hope that all citizens will join with the Department of Safety in a united effort to reduce deaths and injuries on our highways.

Sincerely,

[signature]
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### 1972-1973 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN TENNESSEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal Accidents</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1,431</td>
<td>1,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>38,315</td>
<td>42,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>133,626</td>
<td>140,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>264,899,000</td>
<td>285,695,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2,382,918</td>
<td>2,474,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DEATH RATE (Number Killed Per 100 Million Miles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INJURY PRODUCING ACCIDENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatals</th>
<th>Non-Fatals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>30,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>31,322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % of All Accidents Which Were Fatal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % of All Accidents Causing Non-Fatal Injuries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Fatal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LOCATIONS OF 1973 ACCIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fatal Accidents</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VEHICLE TRAVEL VS. DEATH AND DEATH RATES BY YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vehicle Miles Travel (100 Million)</th>
<th>No. of Fatal Accidents</th>
<th>Fatal Accidents per 100,000,000 vm</th>
<th>No. of Fatalities</th>
<th>Death Rate per 100,000,000 vm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>165,510</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>172,970</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1,077</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>185,400</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>198,660</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>207,938</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>225,588</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>224,193</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>224,262</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1,373</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>264,899</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1,431</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>285,695</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All 1973 figures are preliminary figures as of Jan. 10, 1974.*

All figures from Accident Records Section, Driver Control, Dept. of Safety, Statewide unless otherwise noted.
VEHICLE TRAVEL VS. DEATH AND DEATH RATES BY YEAR

Motor vehicle mileage increased 73% between the years of 1964 and 1973. There were 165,510 annual vehicle miles driven (per 100 million miles) in 1964 and 285,695 miles driven in 1973.

Despite the increase in fatalities and accidents the death rate of 4.9 per 100,000,000 vehicle miles traveled is lower than it has been in the ten year period covering 1964-1973.

Although fatalities seemingly always remain too high it can be seen from these facts that improvements in the design of automobiles, highways, improved planning, improved traffic control devices, building of more interstate Highways, improved traffic laws and more Highway Patrol officers does play a part in the reduction of fatal traffic accidents.

Of the total 1,427 persons killed in 1973, 499 were under the age of 25 or 35% of the total. Of the 499 persons under the age of 25, 458 were males, or 32.1% of the total. These facts show that age and sex have a distinct bearing on highway deaths.
Of the 1,798 drivers involved in fatal accidents, 611 drivers or 34% are under the age of 25. Licensed drivers, however, under the age of 25 accounted for only 22.9% of the total drivers. This clearly indicates the fact that the age of the driver of an automobile has a connection with death on the highway.
STATE OF TENNESSEE

Population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3,567,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>3,924,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4,456,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1973 FATAL ACCIDENTS BY TENNESSEE HIGHWAY PATROL DISTRICTS AND BY COUNTIES

1. Knoxville
2. Chattanooga
3. Nashville
4. Memphis
5. Kingsport
6. Cookeville
7. Lawrenceburg
8. Jackson
The highest number of fatal accidents occurred on Saturday with 273 or 22.1% of the total 1,235 fatal accidents.

Wednesday had the lowest number of fatal accidents, 137 or 11.1% of the total fatal accidents.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday accounted for 672 fatal accidents or 54.4% of the total.
July had the largest number of fatal accidents and fatalities, 134 and 162 respectively. February had the lowest number of fatal accidents and fatalities, 76 and 86 respectively. Fatal accidents were the lowest in the months of January through June, and highest in the months of July through December.

Speeding was the biggest contributing circumstance in fatal accidents in 1973 leading to 532 contributing circumstances or 35.9% of the 1,483 total contributing circumstances. Speeding and drinking together accounted for over 800 contributing circumstances or 53.9% of the overall total.
In 1973 there were 1,235 fatal accidents and 1,427 fatalities. Of these fatal accidents, 67.8% occurred in rural areas and 68.7% of the fatalities occurred in rural areas. Urban areas with populations between 25,000-50,000 had the lowest fatal accident rate with a percentage of 2.8% and a 3.0% percentage for fatalities. State routes had the most fatal accidents and fatalities. The Interstate System had the lowest number.
1973 FATALITIES BY MAJOR HOLIDAY PERIODS

Memorial Day (78 Hours)
(May 25-6:00 p.m.)-(May 28-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 26

Fourth of July (30 Hours)
(July 3-6:00 p.m.)-(July 5-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 6

Labor Day (72 Hours)
(Aug. 31-6:00 p.m.)-(Sept. 3-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 22

Thanksgiving (102 Hours)
(Nov. 21-6:00 p.m.)-(Nov. 25-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 23

Christmas (102 Hours)
(Dec. 21-6:00 p.m.)-(Dec. 25-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 22

New Years (102 Hours)
(Dec. 28-6:00 p.m.)-(Jan. 1-Midnight)
Total Deaths .................................. 12

OVERALL TOTAL .................. 111

Most Severe Accident During 1973:
July 27, 1973, 5:43 a.m., eight (8) persons were killed on I-65 in Davidson County when their vehicle struck a traffic island and went through a protective guard rail. The vehicle then plunged approximately 150 feet off the Silliman Evans Bridge in Nashville killing eight (8) of the nine occupants.
TEN YEAR COMPARISON (1964-1973)
REGISTERED VEHICLES AND LICENSED DRIVERS

YEAR

VEHICLES

DRIVERS

1964 1,669,886 1,650,860
1965 1,737,699 1,728,192
1966 1,846,563 1,805,524
1967 1,900,125 1,882,836
1968 1,922,711 1,960,188
1969 1,984,570 2,021,720
1970 2,113,065 2,083,251
1971 2,277,848 2,152,491
1972 2,382,918 2,297,496
1973 2,474,959 2,362,765
SUMMARY

This study indicated that traffic accidents and fatalities on our highways are increasing. 1,427 fatalities were recorded in 1973 on Tennessee streets and highways. In spite of this increase, the death rate of 4.9 per 100,000,000 vehicle miles traveled is lower than it has been in the last ten years. (1964-1973).

Speed continues to be the biggest single contributing factor to the cause of accidents, accounting for 35.9% of all contributing factors.

In 1973, a traffic accident was reported every 3 minutes and 45 seconds, one injury every 12 minutes and 1 second, and one fatality every 6 hours and 9 minutes.

Fatal accidents were highest in the afternoon hours of the day, on the last day of the week, and the summer and fall months of the year.

The age of the driver of an automobile, as well as the sex of the driver, affected the proportionate distribution of all fatal accidents. In proportion to age group and sex the male driver under 25 years of age accounts for the greatest number of fatal accidents.

The counties with the most population and the highest number of motor vehicle registration had the greatest number of fatal accidents.