



Alabama Trucking Association  
Workers Compensation Fund



An OSHA Cooperative Program

*A Newsletter For Our Members Where Safety Is Our Primary Concern!*

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**US traffic deaths continue to rise!!!! 10.4 percent increase in first half of 2016!!!!**

U.S. traffic fatalities rose by an estimated 10.4 percent in the first half of this year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This continued an upward trend that started in late 2014 as the economic recovery accelerated.

The improving economy and reduced fuel cost means there are more drivers on U.S. roads than ever before. In the U.S., drivers put in a record 1.58 trillion miles on the road for the first half of this year, 3.3 percent more than during the same period in 2015, the Federal Highway Administration said this week.



The increase in total crashes is somewhat proportional to the increase in miles traveled. Last year, total U.S. traffic crashes rose by 4 percent to 6.3 million, while people injured rose 4.5 percent to 2.44 million. However, it is the fatality increase that is disproportionate. For the first half of 2016, 17,775 people died on the road, compared with 16,100 over the same period in 2015.

"We have an immediate crisis on our hands, and we also have a long-term challenge," said Mark Rosekind, head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The sharp increase in deaths this year follows a 7.2 percent jump in 2015, when there were 35,092 traffic fatalities.

The alarming trend is driving an initiative led by government agencies, the National Safety Council and other safety groups, whose ambitious goal is to eliminate traffic deaths and injuries in the United States within the next 30 years.

The Transportation Department said it is committing \$1 million a year for the next three years for grants for the zero deaths campaign. The rapid introduction of self-driving cars and other advanced technologies may make it possible to achieve the elimination of traffic deaths, the department said in a statement. Human choice or error account for 94% of crashes, which means we should focus our efforts on improving human behavior and using vehicle technology to protect people in crashes and help prevent crashes.

With a 4% increase in large truck crashes, industry leaders are looking for solutions. Hiring practices, orientation and continued focus on safety policies and training continue to be trademarks of a well-run company. Executives are now implementing technology such as in-cab/on-board cameras, and GPS units to drive safety. Information such as seat belt usage, speeding, hard brake/acceleration is being used to determine driver behavior and correct it before an accident happens. To have this data and not use it only hurts. It's not only good for our drivers, customers and equipment, but it is good for the safety of the general public too.

**Traffic Fatalities in 2015**





## Alabama Traffic Fatalities Up 30%!!!!

Sweet home Alabama is not immune to the national trends. The Southeast region (AL, TN, GA, SC, FL) posted a 14% increase in fatalities from 2014 to 2015, the second highest in the nation (out of 10 regions).

ATA Workers Compensation Fund		
Year	Fatalities	MV Accidents
2016	12	167
2015	5	192
2014	7	196
2013	8	220
2012	0	182
2011	2	185
2010	9	166

In Alabama, for the last year, the number of people killed in automobile wrecks is up 30% over last year. In raw numbers, 423 people have died in Alabama crashes through August, 2016. That number was 324 in 2015. This represents an increase in fatalities by 31% from one year to the next. This is higher than the regional percentage of 14%.



"We're washing blood off our highways every day," said Cpl. Jess Thornton of the Alabama State Troopers. He points out that the high percentage of those killed in car wrecks *were not* wearing seatbelts. In Alabama, Thornton said that between 60-70 percent of those who die in crashes were not buckled in. Data also indicates poor hiring practices, distracted driving, speeding and fatigue are key factors.

The trend is also relevant to professional truck drivers. From 2010 through 2015, the Ala-



**S**eatbelts  
**A**re  
**F**or  
**E**veryone

bama Trucking Association Workers' Compensation Fund has averaged 5.2 truck driver fatalities per



year (fund members). In the first 10 months of 2016, we have had 12 fatalities. That's a 131% increase and there are still 2 months to go. These aren't just statistics, these are our friends, our co-workers, people we know. Sometimes our drivers are at fault, sometimes they are not. Sometimes nothing could have been done, but most times something could have been done. The challenge is on the industry, executives, driver managers, safety professionals, mechanics, and drivers to do the right thing – practice safety – it's not



hard to do! Our goal should be to influence what we can to ensure ZERO fatalities involving large trucks within the ATAWCF. We can do it, and it won't take 30 years. If you make safety a strategic choice, this decision will have an immediate and positive impact upon your drivers. Start today!