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Michigan stepping up speed enforcement to address increase in fatal crashes

Though miles traveled are down, speed-related fatalities are up

For more than a year, law enforcement agencies across the nation have reported an alarming rise in speeding and fatal crashes despite a decrease in the number of road miles traveled.

To combat this deadly and dangerous trend, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is announcing that more than 100 municipal, county, and Michigan State Police (MSP) law enforcement agencies will focus on speeding drivers between December 1, 2021 and February 28, 2022.

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.

“Despite the fact there have been less miles traveled, the fatality rate rose. And crash data shows that speed may have been a factor in many of these preventable crashes,” said Michael L. Prince, OHSP director. “It’s no secret the faster you drive, the greater your risk of dying in a crash. We hope increased enforcement over the coming months will help change these dangerous driving behaviors and save lives.”

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a crash on a road with a speed limit of 65 mph or greater is more than twice as likely to result in a fatality than a crash on a road with a speed limit of 45 or 50 mph. Nationally in 2019, 9,478 traffic fatalities involved crashes in which one or more drivers were speeding.

According to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, in Michigan during 2020:

- Of male drivers involved in all traffic crashes, 6.4 percent were speeding.
- 15.2 percent of motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes were speeding.
- 11.2 percent of drivers aged 15 to 20 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 approximately 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.

The campaign is supported by federal traffic safety funds.