

November 17, 2006

## **Increase in traffic deaths and collisions calls for joint action**

More driver responsibility a key to ensuring Traffic Safety Plan a success

Edmonton... A considerable increase in the number of traffic deaths and collisions should be a warning to both government and motorists, says the minister responsible for traffic safety in Alberta.

A total of 466 people died in traffic collisions in 2005 - 79 more than in 2004. During the same period, the number of traffic collisions increased more than 10 per cent to 124,206.

"This does not have to be the start of an irreversible trend," said Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "With full implementation of Alberta's new Traffic Safety Plan, we can reverse it. But we can't do it alone. Drivers need to take responsibility for their actions behind the wheel, and that means obeying the rules of the road, staying alert and sober, wearing a seatbelt and driving defensively."

Driver error was listed as a contributing factor in 90.6 per cent of traffic collisions, virtually unchanged from the previous year. Following too closely (26.1 per cent), running off the road (14.7 percent), and turning left across the path of an oncoming vehicle (12.6 per cent) were the most frequently identified improper driver actions contributing to collisions causing injury or death. Nearly two-thirds of all casualty collisions occurred when road surface conditions were dry.

In 2005, there were 124,206 reportable collisions. When accounting for population, licensed drivers and number of registered vehicles, the fatality rate increased, while the injury rate decreased. In terms of overall traffic levels, traffic increased by 5.35 per cent from 2004 to 2005. Of the 13 provinces and territories, four had a higher fatality rate than Alberta in 2004 (most recent comparison data), and seven had a higher injury rate.

The Traffic Safety Plan, which was released earlier this fall, details a comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing the number of deaths and injuries on Alberta's roadways. Many of the plan's initiatives are already underway, such as the hiring of traffic sheriffs to help the RCMP patrol highways and new legislation requiring drivers to slow down when passing emergency vehicles.

In addition to government's ongoing investment in enforcement, engineering safety enhancements, education programs, public awareness activities and other traffic safety initiatives, the Alberta government is committing \$65 million over the next three years to support the Traffic Safety Plan.

To view the 2005 Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics, visit:

[http://www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca/Homepage\\_Resources/Publications/Statistics/index.htm](http://www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca/Homepage_Resources/Publications/Statistics/index.htm)

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Editors Note: Backgrounder attached

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To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

## Backgrounder

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### During 2005...

- 466 people were killed as a result of traffic collisions.
- 24,504 people were injured in traffic collisions
- A total of 124,206 collisions occurred.

### Every day in 2005 approximately...

- 1 person was killed.
- 67 people were injured.
- 340 traffic collisions were reported.

## ALBERTA TRAFFIC COLLISIONS 2001-2005

Severity of Collision	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Fatal	392	339	321	322	341
Non-Fatal Injury	17,726	17,248	18,447	20,152	19,000
Property Damage	106,088	94,966	94,589	95,834	88,050
<b>Total Reportable Collisions</b>	<b>124,206</b>	<b>112,553</b>	<b>113,357</b>	<b>116,308</b>	<b>107,391</b>
Number Killed	466	387	385	372	404
Number Injured	24,504	24,249	26,426	28,989	27,583
<b>Total Number of Casualties</b>	<b>24,970</b>	<b>24,636</b>	<b>26,811</b>	<b>29,361</b>	<b>27,987</b>

## WHO WERE THE VICTIMS?

### Traffic Fatalities (%)

258 Drivers (55.4)

### Traffic Injuries (%)

14,792 Drivers (60.4)

110 Passengers (23.6)	6,697 Passengers (27.3)
49 Pedestrians (10.5)	1,247 Pedestrians (5.1)
5 Bicyclists (1.1)	631 Bicyclists (2.6)
21 Motorcyclists (4.5)	734 Motorcyclists (3.0)
23 Other road user class/unspecified (4.9)	403 Other road user class/unspecified (1.7)

## **Pedestrians**

Based on population, pedestrians between the ages of 15 and 19 were most likely to be involved in a crash. Pedestrian casualty collisions were most likely to occur during the evening rush hour. Of pedestrians involved in injury collisions 13.6 per cent had consumed alcohol, compared to 29.7 per cent of pedestrians in fatal collisions.

## **Motorcycles**

There were 21 people killed in collisions involving motorcycles. Motorcycle drivers under the age of 25 were most likely to be involved in casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, motorcyclists were more likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash. Compared to drivers in total casualty collisions, motorcycle drivers were more likely to run off the road or pass improperly.

## **Truck Tractors**

In 2005, there were 58 people killed and 802 injured in collisions involving truck tractors. Compared to drivers of other vehicles, truck tractor drivers were more likely to run off the road or make an improper lane change but less likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash.

## **Trains**

In 2005, five people were killed and 28 people were injured in crashes in which a train was involved.

## **Bicycles**

Young bicyclists, 10-14 years of age, were the group most frequently involved in bicycle casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, bicyclists were more likely to fail to yield the right-of-way at an uncontrolled intersection or disobey a traffic signal.

## **WHEN DID THE COLLISIONS OCCUR?**

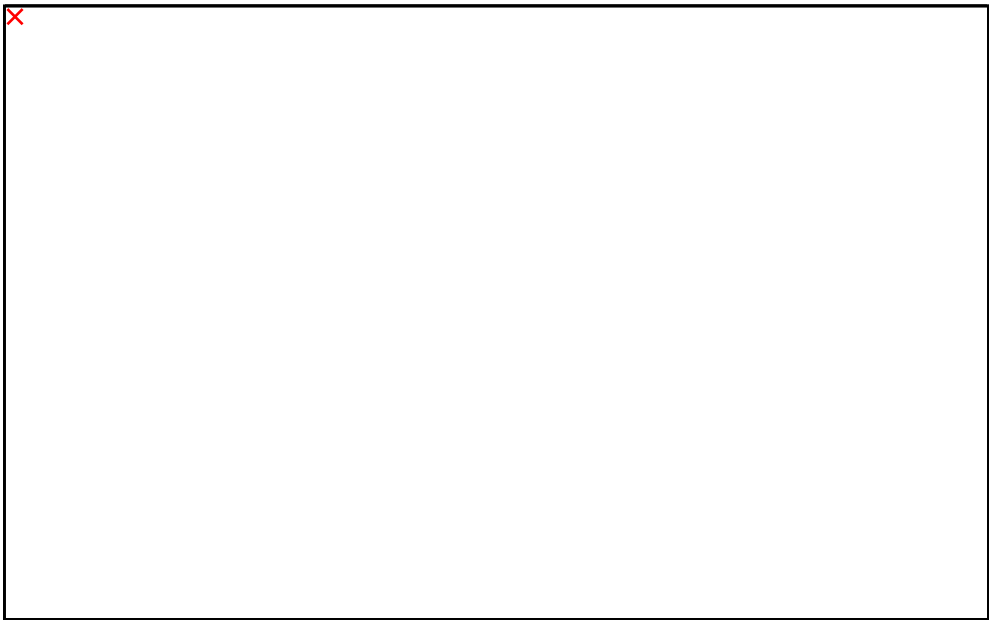
July saw more fatal collisions than other months. January recorded the highest number of injury collisions. The highest number of property damage collisions occurred during December. There are more collisions on Friday than any other day of the week. The afternoon rush-hour period accounted for the highest number of crashes.

## **WHAT ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING?**

Of all drivers involved in fatal collisions, 19.2 per cent had consumed alcohol before the crash. Of all drivers involved in injury collisions 5.3 per cent had consumed alcohol before the crash. The majority of

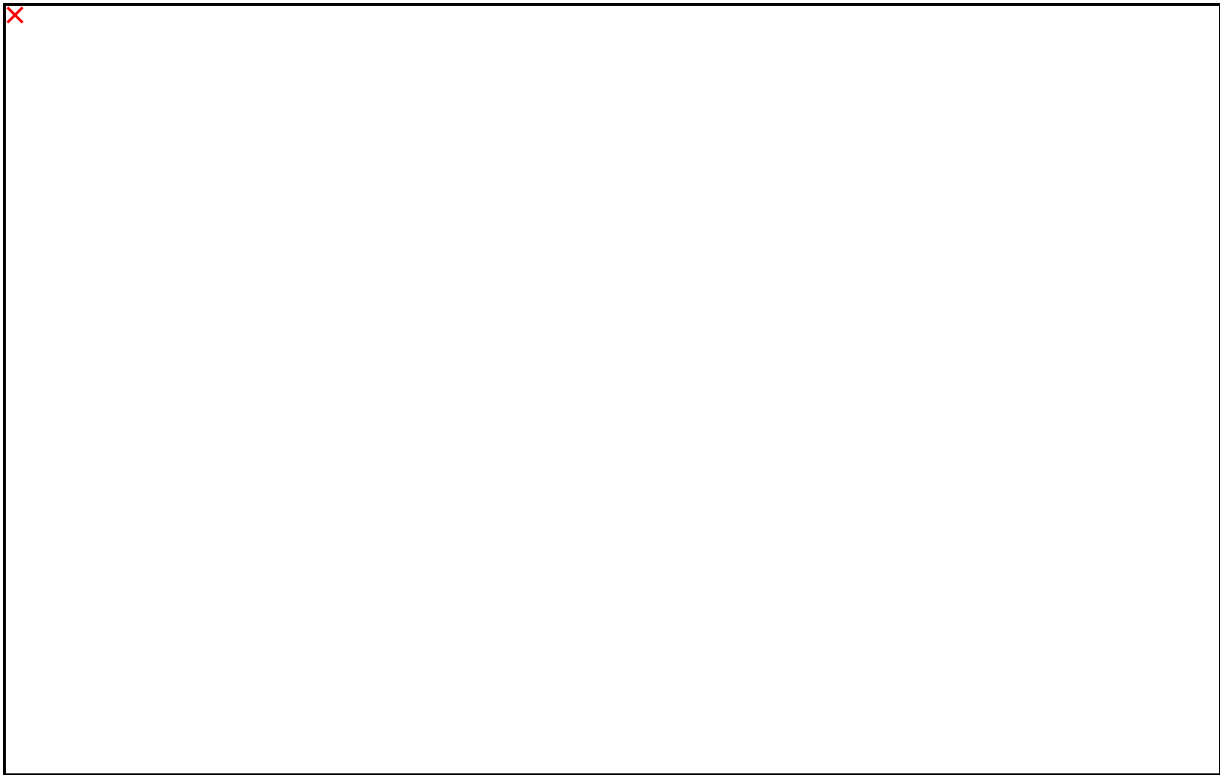
drinking drivers were males. In terms of involvement per 1,000 licensed drivers, males 18-24 years of age were more likely to have consumed alcohol prior to a casualty collision than any other age group. Alcohol related casualty crashes were most likely to occur in the months of August or November on the weekends and during the late night/early morning hours.

**WHO WERE THE DRIVERS INVOLVED IN CASUALTY COLLISIONS?**



**WHAT ABOUT SEAT BELTS?**

The data shows that occupants who were using restraints at the time of the collision were injured less often (10.7 per cent) than occupants who were not using restraints (34.7 per cent). Therefore, non-restraint users were over three times as likely to be injured as restraint users.



In 2005, 90.6 per cent of total collisions involved one or more drivers identified as committing a driver

error.

Other factors which contributed to the 124,206 reported collisions in 2005 were:

Driver Condition - 4.6 per cent of total collisions involved one or more drivers identified as having a physical condition which contributed to the collision (i.e. had been drinking, impaired by alcohol/drugs, fatigued/asleep or medical defect). 29.1 per cent of fatal collisions involved one or more drivers with a physical condition which contributed to the collision.

Speed - 7.7 per cent of total collisions involved one or more drivers indicated by the police as having been travelling at a speed too great for the given conditions. However, 24.7 per cent of fatal collisions involved unsafe speed.

Vehicle Condition - Only 0.6 per cent of total collisions involved one or more vehicles identified as having a vehicle defect which contributed to the collision.

NOTE: DOES NOT INCLUDE COUNTER-REPORTED PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY COLLISIONS.

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