

West Traffic Division Captain's Message
July 2020

It's Not a New Problem

Over one hundred and 16 years ago, in 1904, the horse-less carriage had only been around a few years.

Alcoholic beverages had been around for centuries.

There was trouble when the two got together.

And there still is, *well over one hundred years later!*

An editorial in the Quarterly Journal of Inebriety dated 1904 included that of 25 fatal collisions involving "automobile wagons," fifteen persons occupying the "wagons" (automobiles) were killed the day and time of the collision and five more died two days later. Investigations determined that in 19 of these 25 collisions the drivers had consumed alcohol prior to the disaster. The other six drivers were all moderate drinkers, but it was not determined whether they had consumed alcoholic beverages prior to the collisions.

In 1904 there were very few automobiles on very few roadways. Today there are over 280 million vehicles on the nation's roads. Approximately 40,000 people will die in vehicle collisions this year. Alcohol will be a major factor in approximately half of these deaths. Distracted driving (cellphone and electronics use, and other distractions) will contribute to another large percentage of deaths.

Special Summer Safety Alert

During the warmer summer months, many individuals consume beverages containing alcohol more frequently than what they normally would during the cooler months. Although many individuals have not seen the devastating results of alcohol or drug related traffic collisions, the reality is that this is a serious problem facing the members of our communities. When an individual is operating a vehicle while impaired, he or she becomes a very significant threat to the lives of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as other motorists. Statistics indicate that the problem of impaired drivers operating vehicles on our roadways is extensive. Consuming alcoholic beverages or drugs severely hinders a driver's ability to observe traffic conditions, make the appropriate driving decisions, take the necessary actions when operating a vehicle, and can have disastrous results. Impaired drivers cause severe injuries, including paralysis and death, to thousands of innocent people every year.

It is estimated that two-thirds, or two out of every three, of the over 280 million drivers on our roadways drink alcoholic beverages at one time or another before driving. When the weather becomes warmer, some people consume alcoholic beverages more frequently. Even one drink can cause a driver to become dangerous.

Please remember that when you take control of a vehicle, the safety of the public including other drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists is dependent upon your ability to operate your vehicle in a safe manner. Please also watch for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists since their smaller overall size can be more difficult to see as we share the road.

In addition to the enforcement efforts of all officers assigned to West Traffic Division (WTD), a special unit of officers is assigned to the Driving Under Influence (DUI) Task Force. Their primary function is the direct enforcement of laws prohibiting driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. The combined enforcement efforts of all West Traffic's officers serve to both educate the public and decrease the number of tragic collisions that could have occurred.

West Traffic Division also supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and other traffic safety related entities' special events. These events include "*Vehicle Theft Prevention Month*" throughout July, and the following events. Some of the following information is excerpted from NHTSA's Website.

* *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* is NHTSA's Primary Message.

* *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving* is NHTSA's Secondary Message.

* *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different* is NHTSA's "*Drive High – Get A DUI*" Message.

* *National Child Heatstroke Prevention campaign starts July 1, 2020*

National Heatstroke Prevention Day is July 31. During 2019, at least 52 children died in hot vehicles. Children have died in cars where the outside temperature was in the low 50's. Any enclosed vehicle such as a car, truck, or SUV, can become deadly within just a couple minutes. Any well-meaning person can accidentally leave a child in a vehicle without realizing it until it is too late. This tragedy is 100% avoidable. Check out: **Hashtags: #HeatstrokeKills #lookbeforeyoulock and #CheckforBaby**

For more information, please access the NHTSA calendar via the Internet at: <http://www.nhtsa.gov>.

Additional information can be viewed at www.nhtsa.gov/impaired.

Community Traffic Services Unit (CTSU) is one of the specialized units operating as a part of West Traffic Division that works to resolve certain community concerns. If you have traffic safety concerns in a specific area, you may contact CTSU at (213) 473-0215 or West Traffic Division at (213) 473-0222 to voice your concerns. Also, please see CTSU's WebPage under "About West Traffic," listed under the West Traffic Division WebPage.

Operations-West Bureau consists of West Traffic Division, Hollywood, Wilshire, West Los Angeles, Pacific, and Olympic Areas. Any of the geographical areas' WebPages can be accessed via our homepage. You are encouraged to monitor the Crime Prevention Circular for the Areas that are of interest to you.

Captain Brian Wendling
Commanding Officer
West Traffic Division

Traffic Tips

Look both ways before crossing the street.

Wear your seatbelt.

Don't drink and drive.

Don't use hand-held devices while driving.

Please slow down. Speed kills.

Focused Traffic Enforcement Locations include, but are not limited to:

Hollywood Area

Sunset Blvd

Hollywood Blvd

Santa Monica Blvd

Highland Avenue

Melrose Avenue

Consumption of alcoholic beverages, excessive speed, red light and unsafe left turns are the primary violations in these areas. West Traffic Division officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the Hollywood Area patrol officers.

Wilshire Area

Western Avenue

Olympic Blvd

Pico Blvd

Wilshire Blvd

La Brea Avenue

Excessive speed, red light and unsafe left turns are the primary violations in these areas. Drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs have also caused collisions. Our traffic officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the Wilshire Area patrol officers.

West Los Angeles Area

Sunset Blvd

Santa Monica Blvd

Wilshire Blvd

Pico Blvd

Pacific Coast Highway

Excessive speed, red light and unsafe left turns are the primary violations in these areas. West Traffic Division officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the West Los Angeles Area patrol officers.

Pacific Area

Venice Blvd
Lincoln Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd
Centinela Blvd
Century Blvd

Excessive speed, red light, unsafe left turns and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are the primary violations in these areas. West Traffic Division officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the Pacific Area patrol officers.

Olympic Area

Olympic Blvd
Pico Blvd
Wilshire Blvd
Normandie Avenue
Vermont Avenue

Excessive speed, red light and unsafe left turns are the primary violations in these areas. Drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs have also caused collisions. Our traffic officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the Olympic Area patrol officers.

Please remember to always make staying safe a priority!