

JANUARY 2021
Captain's Message
West Traffic Division

Happy New Year!

As we wait for the statistics for the Year 2020, following are a few statistics for the Years 2016 and 2017.

- Drunk driving deaths in the United States during 2016 totaled a minimum of 10,497.
- The number of deaths in verified distracted-related crashes (cell phone, GPS use, etc.) during 2016 totaled at least 3,450.
- The number of lives lost on U.S. roadways in 2016 totaled at least 37,461.
- The number of lives lost on U.S. roadways in 2017 totaled over 40,100.

Neither the Year 2016, nor the Year 2017, was a very happy year for the families and friends of the decedents those years.

With all the new technology to limit drivers' use of hand-held devices and lower the likelihood of collisions occurring, why has there been an increase in fatalities? Drivers still too frequently divide their attention away from the safe operation of their vehicles and concentrate on using their devices instead.

Many collisions have resulted in death due to unsafe speed or the non-use of seatbelts. Using a seatbelt properly is a very easy way to help you and your loved ones live longer.

Please don't become a "statistic." Don't Drink and Drive.

The focus of the West Traffic Division (WTD) Education Enforcement Calendar for January 2021 is Passenger Safety and Seat Belts. The National Highway Transportation Safety Association's (NHTSA) *Click It or Ticket Mobilization*, *Operation America Buckles-Up Children ("ABC") Mobilization*, and *Operation CARE Mobilization* are all special traffic safety and enforcement details that are supported by the efforts of WTD officers during the year. "*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest. National Crackdown*" continues into January 2021. Also, during the week of Super Bowl Sunday, the first week of February, WTD officers will be supporting NHTSA's '*Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk*' impaired driving enforcement event by enforcing laws prohibiting driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Remember, Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving. Please see www.stopimpaireddriving.org for additional information.

Catastrophic and Wet Weather Driving

Wet roadways can contribute to a decrease in the coefficient of friction between a vehicle's tires and the roadway. This means the percentage of tire traction on the roadway surface can decrease and the direction and movement of the vehicle can become more difficult to control. Water can accumulate on the roadway on rainy days or nights, particularly during the "rainy season" and can be a contributing factor in reducing tire traction, particularly at higher rates of speed, during turning movements, and while slowing or stopping the vehicle. Every motor vehicle operator must remain aware of roadway conditions and operate their vehicle accordingly, in a safe manner.

Catastrophic wet weather conditions can affect your travels or commute as follows:

Flooding and flash floods:

- Watch for flooding conditions any time there has been heavy rain or snow melting, even in areas where water does not often accumulate. The ground can become saturated and additional water can flood the roadways.
- It may not be raining where you currently are, but flash flooding can occur when water comes from torrential rains in another location and accumulates at your location.
- Never drive through moving or standing water on the roadway. Even if you are familiar with the road, don't take risks. You cannot see dangerous items such as tree branches, debris, or power lines under the water.
- Even if you are level with the roadway, the roadway itself or bridges, may have been washed away.

Before you drive:

- Check the weather report for storms and flash flood watches or warnings both for your location and upstream to help determine if a flash flood has occurred or may be approaching.
- If a flash flood is approaching, stop and seek higher ground. Call your local emergency provider and ask for assistance.
- You should stop in a safe place off the roadway, preferably on high ground so as not to risk placing yourself and your passengers in further danger.

It is estimated that two out of every three of the approximate 200 million drivers on America's roadways drink alcoholic beverages at one time or another before driving. When there is a special event to celebrate, such as New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, some people consume alcoholic beverages more frequently. Even one drink, especially on an empty stomach, can cause a driver to become dangerous. Remember to be cautious of other possible DUI drivers on the roadway and don't drink and drive.

The NHTSA website provides additional information and releases various reports containing information regarding different types of traffic collisions. This website can be accessed via the internet at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> .

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

The areas within Operations-West Bureau and WTD are Hollywood Area, Wilshire Area, West Los Angeles Area, Pacific Area, and Olympic Area. Excessive speed, red light, unsafe left turns, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are the primary violations in these areas. Our West Traffic Enforcement and Collision Investigation traffic officers are regularly patrolling these streets, as are the Area patrol officers. Any of the geographical areas' Web Pages can be accessed via LAPD Online. Please check the Crime Prevention Circular for the areas that are of particular interest to you.

Captain Brian Wendling
 Commanding Officer
 West Traffic Division

Traffic Tips

- * **Teach children to look both ways twice before crossing the street.**
- * **Wear your seatbelt.**
- * **Don't drink and drive.**
- * **Don't text or use handheld equipment such as a cell phone or GPS while driving**
- * **Please slow down. Speed kills.**