TO: **Elected Officials, Police Departments, Fund Commissioners, Risk Management Consultants, and Safety Coordinators**

From: **Chief Keith F. Hummel (Ret.)**
J.A. Montgomery Risk Control
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RE: **Pedestrian Fatalities**
Article from Automotive Fleet News [i]

Pedestrian Fatalities Up 46% Over Eight Years

May 9, 2018

Nearly 6,000 pedestrians lost their lives in crashes in 2016, which equates to 16% of all crash fatalities. That's a 46% increase in pedestrian fatalities since reaching their lowest point in 2009, according to a new study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

Using federal fatality data and crash numbers from 2009 to 2016, the study explores where, when and how pedestrian crashes nationwide have become more prevalent and more deadly.

Data shows that while the number of pedestrian fatalities has declined 20% each year since 1975, the 2016 toll was the highest since 1990.

The study indicates that location of a crash plays a key role in whether or not a victim survives. For example, urban and suburban areas saw the highest increase in pedestrian fatalities — up 54% in 2016 over 2009 — compared to rural areas that experienced just a 25% increase.

Over the same time period, pedestrian fatalities also increased by 67% for crashes that occurred on arterials as opposed to local roads (up 9%) and interstates and freeways (up 49%).

The IIHS attributes the high volume of arterial-based pedestrian deaths to the fact that these roads often have a shortage of safe crossings and people on foot may be tempted to sprint across multiple lanes of traffic.

Fatal pedestrian accidents that took place at non-intersections increased by 50% while those that occurred at intersections were up 35%.

The study also examined the type of vehicles more likely to be involved in a fatal pedestrian crash. Fatal single-vehicle crashes involving SUVs increased by a whopping 81% in 2016 versus 2009.

The IIHS notes that SUV crashes may be more deadly for pedestrians because they have higher and often more vertical front ends than cars and are therefore more likely to strike walkers in the head or chest.

As with many crashes, the study also identified a link between driving in darkness and increased pedestrian deaths. Fatalities increased by 56% in 2016 over 2009 when the vehicle was operating at night on a dark road. Some 4,453 pedestrians were killed in the dark compared with 1,290 in daylight and 205 at dawn or dusk.

A successful pedestrian safety program requires constant effort and cooperation between all levels of government. Municipalities are encouraged to evaluate, engineer, educate and enforce traffic and pedestrian safety laws. This course of action can significantly reduce pedestrian accidents. Visit the NJMEL Website for additional information about pedestrian safety.

https://njmel.org/mel-safety-institute/resource-center/public-safety/pedestrians/

[i] https://www.automotive-fleet.com/301158/pedestrian-fatalities-up-46-over-eight-years