



# ***A Culture of Speeding: The Great American Pastime***

Recent Research  
on  
Speeding and Aggressive Driving

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# Overview

- Definitions
- Prevalence
- Impact
- Potential Solutions





# Aggressive Driving – What is it?

Diverse definitions, but consensus on key points:

- Involves driver action ***committed on purpose***
- Poses ***risk to others***
- Contextual: action might be “aggressive” in one context but not in another
- Road rage = different thing





# Speeding – What is it?

- Over limit (self explanatory)
- Too fast for conditions
  - Weather conditions
  - Traffic conditions
- Is it aggressive?
  - Sometimes (depends on context)





# Public Concern

- 35% of drivers say driving feels less safe now than it did 5 years ago

Why? (open-ended question)

→ 20% mention ***aggressive driving***  
15% mention ***speeding***

- 70% rate aggressive drivers as a very serious threat to their safety





# Prevalence of “Aggressive” Behaviors

- **44%** admit **speeding** 15+ mph over limit on **freeways** (inc. 15% “fairly often” or “regularly”)
- **24%** admit **speeding** 15+ mph over limit on **residential streets**
- **15%** admit they usually **drive somewhat/much faster** than most other drivers on the road
- **29%** admit **running red lights**
- **28%** admit **tailgating**





# Who Drives Aggressively?

More likely to admit higher levels “aggressive” driving behavior:

- Young
- Male
- Educated
- Urban/Suburban (vs. rural)

Most “know” it increases crash risk





# Aggressive Driving in Fatal Crashes

- FARS data (2003-2007) – contributing factors possibly indicating aggressive driving:
  - Speeding: 31% of fatal crashes
  - Failure to Yield: 11%
  - Reckless / Erratic: 7%
  - Run red light / other TCD violation: 7%
  - Various Others: 5%

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  - Any of these: 56%
  - Two or more: 8%





# The Toll of Aggressive Driving

- Deaths in [Possibly-] Aggressive-Driving Fatal Crashes (2003–2007 averages):
  - 13,445 “Aggressive” drivers
  - 5,159 passengers of aggressive drivers
  - 5,291 others (other drivers, pedestrians, etc.)





# What to Do About It?

## One Approach: Focus on Speeding

- More clearly defined than “aggressive driving”
- Benefits of reducing speeds are known and large
- Lots of known countermeasures
- May indirectly influence other aspects of aggressive driving





# Speed and Safety: A Rule of Thumb

1% change in **mean speed** →

~**2%** change in **overall** crashes

~**3%** change in **injury** crashes

~**4%** change in **fatal** crashes



# Little Change in Speed → **BIG** Change in Safety

Example:

- Speed Limit: 35 mph
- Average Speed: 40 mph

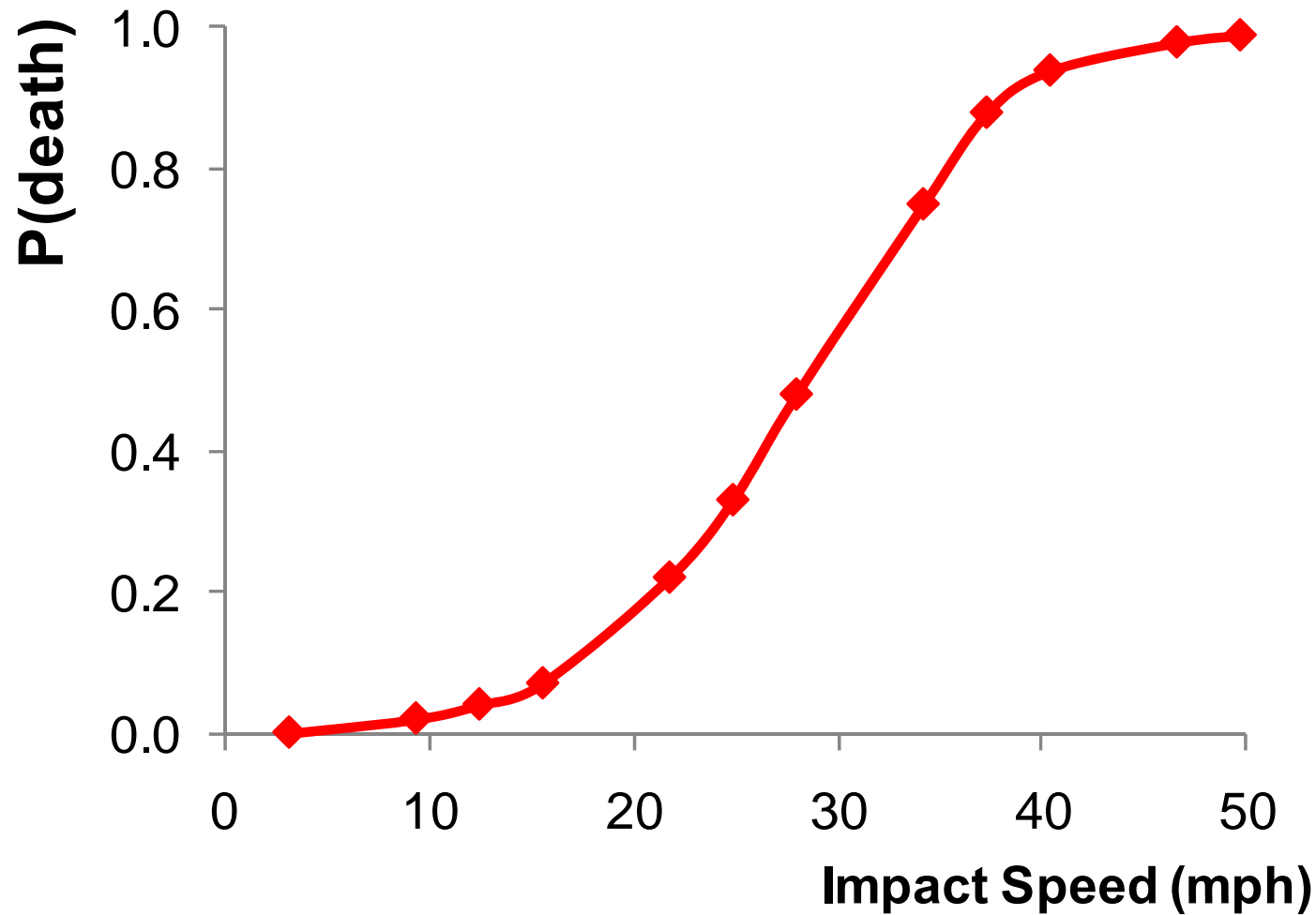
Reduce avg. speed by 2 mph  
(40 mph → 38 mph = 5% reduction)

- Injury crashes: **14%↓**
- Fatal crashes: **19%↓**





# Speed and Pedestrian Safety:



Adapted from Figure 2 in Institute of Transport Economics, 2004



# How to Reduce Speeding

- Engineering
  - Road should tell driver what to do
- Enforcement
  - Target real safety problems
  - Rational speed limits (?)
- Education
  - Use to support enforcement
  - Use to change “culture”





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# Thank You



Photo: The News & Observer ([www.newsobserver.com](http://www.newsobserver.com))

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