

Utah

Speeding-related Data

Utah collects data on speeding-related crashes including participant fatalities or injuries and those involving only property damage. The crash report data elements that are used to collect this data are exceeding the posted speed limit and driving too fast for conditions. Data on speeding citations is also available. Utah has a state statute that defines aggressive driving and reckless driving as “willful and wanton disregard” and includes three or more moving violations in one episode. Aggressive driving data related to vehicle crashes is collected through the information on the crash report. The officer must indicate on the report that the driver acted in an aggressive manner.

Proportion Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Speeding-related Fatalities (Percent Total)	Speeding-related Injury Crashes	State Patrol Citations Added to Driver Records
2003	1.1%	36.3%	21,208
2002	1.2%	37.2%	28,717
2001	1.0%	38.0%	37,728

Utah analyzed the speed-related data to determine if the data show over representation by any specific geographic area, race, ethnic group, gender, age or other grouping. Crash data reflects that drivers ages 15-24 are over represented in speeding-related injury and fatal crashes. Gender differences do not appear to be a factor in property damage and injury crashes, while the data sample for fatal crashes is not large enough to be conclusive.

Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding

Numerous educational campaigns have targeted speeding, and speeding-related information is included in media sources such as television, radio, newspapers and school programs for all age groups. Driver Education courses taught in both public and private schools include curriculum addressing speed reduction as a way to reduce crashes and the related fatalities, injuries and property loss.

Engineering for new roads and freeways has been a priority in Utah with design features and signage that have resulted in a crash reduction. However, this does not seem to have resulted in a correlated reduction in speed. Rather it appears to have given the motoring public a false sense of security with more numerous,

wider and smoother lanes in which to travel. Vehicle design and handling improvements also seem to encourage a false sense of security felt by many drivers.

Enforcement efforts continue with statewide highway patrol efforts and complementary local programs. The most visible effort is the “UHP: Putting the Brakes on Aggressive Driving” campaign with goals of identifying “trouble” spots by responding to aggressive driving complaints and targeting holiday periods when high traffic flow is expected. In ten months, this campaign resulted in over 3700 stops, 4300 citations and 1500 warnings for all violations, and more than 300 assistance stops for motorists.

In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2003, Utah continued a three-year project by committing \$100,000 to an aggressive driving enforcement campaign, with a focus on speeding. The project targeted State Route 6 (and adjoining routes). The project was terminated in FFY 2004 when the compliance rate among drivers (measured by the lower number of citations issued during overtime shifts) had increased and reauthorization funding was lower than expected. Utah continues campaigns directed toward aggressive driving enforcement with a much larger focus area than speeding alone.

Speed monitor trailers continue to be used on a regular basis statewide to make the motoring public aware of their speed and encourage them to slow down. Use of speed trailers is then followed by enforcement efforts. In FFY 2003, about 3 percent of Utah’s federal highway safety funds were used to acquire speed trailers, with about 1 percent used in FFY 2004. The percentage for FFY 2005 was unclear at the time of the report due to reauthorization uncertainties.

Utah reported a positive impact of speed reduction efforts and programs. The state measured the impact of programs by looking at the number of crashes and the number of complaints received before, during, and after blitzes and saturation patrol efforts. Utah reported a decrease in crashes during the blitzes while the number of complaints appears to remain about the same.

Public Perception

Utah’s state highway safety office felt the motoring public perceives there is a 5 mph buffer in most cases. Interestingly, highway patrol troopers state there are more than enough speeders at 10 mph or more above posted limits to keep them busy during blitzes, saturation patrols and regularly scheduled shifts.