

Serving the Cities of Kent, SeaTac, Covington, and King County Fire District 37

Professionally and Compassionately Helping People

Vehicle Related Deaths Up in 2015

On pace for a record number of deaths

Kent, Wash. - August 18, 2015- According to CNN and the National Safety Council, there were more than 18,600 motor-vehicle deaths nationally from January through June this year, compared to 16,400 deaths for the first six months of last year. This is an increase of over 13%.

To put the number of deaths in perspective, this is approximately the entire population of the City of Covington.

Lower gas prices and higher numbers of people commuting due to a robust economy are major contributing factors. Increased use of cell phones and texting are also part of the problem.

In April of this year, the Kent Fire Department RFA responded to a fatality crash on 148 Ave. SE where a possibly distracted driver crossed the center line and killed the driver of the other car. In 2014, four people were struck by a pickup truck as they tried to run across Pacific Hy. S. One of the four was killed. In 2013, firefighters were dispatched to a vehicle crash that took the life of a Kentridge High School student after another driver pulled into traffic triggering the three-car crash. That same year two drivers died in two separate crashes after leaving the road and hitting trees.

As a driver, what can you do to help avoid becoming a statistic?

- **Slow down.** Increasing your speed by 5 - 10 miles per hour for the average commuter only saves a few minutes of time but greatly increases the chances of a crash.
- **Drive defensively.** Assume others are going to do something unexpected and be ready for it.
- **Pay attention.** When you are driving, that is not the time to be texting, putting on makeup, or reading the newspaper. In addition, watch for pedestrians, people on bikes, and animals.
- **Be patient.** All too often road rage leads to crashes and innocent people getting hurt.
- **Drive sober.** Medications, alcohol, and legal/illegal drugs can all affect your ability to drive safely.
- **Be alert.** Avoid driving when tired or fatigued.

Not all records are something to be proud of. The Kent Fire Department RFA asks that you do your part by driving in a safe and responsible manner.

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