

Ohio's Safety Plan

2009 Update

Emphasis Area 2 Serious Crashes: Intersections

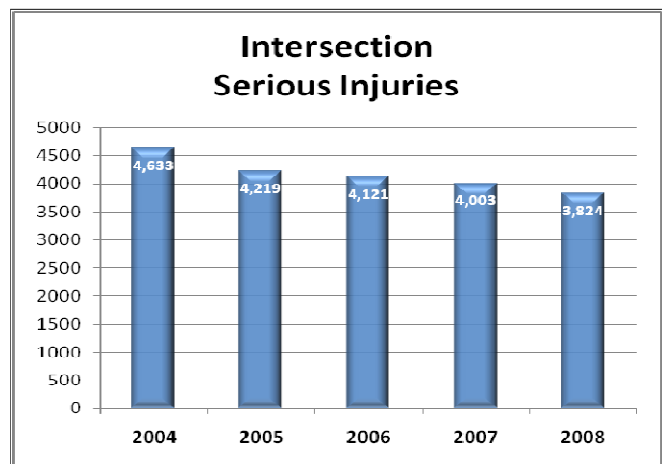
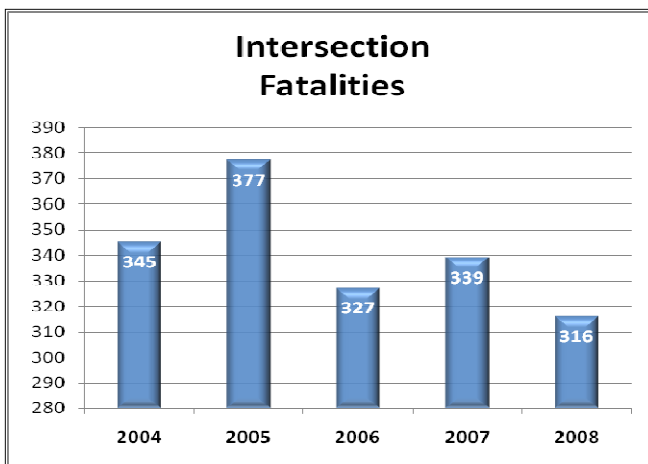


In 2008, 316 people died and 3,824 people were seriously injured in crashes that occurred at intersections. These crashes represented 27 percent of all fatalities and 38 percent of all serious injuries in that year.

About 35 percent of the intersection fatalities each year involve drivers between the ages of 15 and 25. Young drivers are typically less experienced, easily distracted and more likely to take unnecessary risks.

Intersections make up a small part of the highway system, yet the vast majority of all crashes occur at intersections because of the multiple crossing and turning movements that create opportunities for vehicles, bikes and pedestrians to collide. In general, about half of all urban and 30 percent of all rural crashes occur at intersections. Nationally, about 25 percent of all fatal crashes occur at intersections.

Some of the common ways to improve intersection safety are through proper signing and signal timing, good sight distance, pavement markings and access management that limits the number of driveways on heavily-traveled roads. Education and enforcement are also critical to improve driver compliance with speed limits and traffic signals.



Driving Tips:

- **Don't tailgate.** You never know when the driver ahead may turn or stop.
- **Watch for other vehicles changing lanes abruptly.** Sideswipe collisions are common at intersections.
- **Watch for pedestrians in all directions before turning.** Also keep an eye out for cyclists going straight through an intersection, either on your right or on the sidewalk.
- **Don't enter an intersection if traffic is backed up on the other side.** You may get stuck in the middle and block traffic.
- **Watch for cross traffic.** Running a red light is a leading cause of intersection crashes.
- **Treat a non-functioning traffic signal as a four-way stop.**

State and local governments are also using various strategies to improve safety at intersections.

Those strategies include:

Identify, review and address areas with a disproportionate number of intersection crashes.

ODOT compiles the information each year to share with internal staff and local governments. Many locations are addressed through annual safety work plans that identify the top high-crash, severe-crash locations statewide. ODOT also provides \$72 million in safety funding each year that can be used to improve safety on any public road.

Conduct Roadway Safety Audits (RSA).

ODOT is working with local governments to develop multi-disciplinary teams that conduct RSAs at problem locations statewide.

Improve signs and visibility at intersections by installing sign post delineators, dual stop and stop ahead signs and flashing LED or beacon enhanced stops signs.

ODOT has completed installation of sign post delineators on all state routes and approaches to state routes. The department is considering expanding the program to local governments. In addition, each year the department identifies those locations with a high number of serious angle crashes and installs enhanced stop signs (LED lights) where appropriate.

Improve signal timing.

ODOT is working with local governments and metropolitan planning organizations to identify high-crash corridors that could be improved through better signal timing and equipment. The department provides technical expertise and funding.

Install LED signal bulbs, reflective signal back plates and battery backups at intersections to improve signal visibility and reliability.

2010-2011, ODOT will invest about \$10 million to retrofit this equipment on ODOT-maintained signals statewide. In 2009, ODOT also adopted a policy that requires the installation of back plates on all new signals.

Improve access management.

ODOT is conducting safety studies in high-crash areas to improve access by consolidating driveways and spacing them farther from intersections and other drives where they can lead to more crashes.

Support legislative and educational programs that encourage safer driver behaviors, especially among youths.

In 2007, Ohio adopted new restrictions for young drivers that increased penalties for driving violations and limits the number of passengers and early morning driving.