

Nearly 1,000 Died On Highways During First Six Months Of Year

RALEIGH — Nearly 1,000 drivers died or were parties to death on the streets and highways of North Carolina during the first six months of 1968.

- Your chances of being one of them rose substantially if:
- 1) You were between the ages of 25 and 34.
 - 2) You drove on a Saturday during the month of March.
 - 3) You drove between the hours of 7:00 and 10:00 p.m.
 - 4) You traveled on a U.S. highway or rural paved road.
 - 5) You exceeded the speed limit.
 - 6) You were driving under the influence.

These facts, based on accidents occurring in the State during the months of January through June, 1968, were released this week by the Driver Education and Accident Records Division of the Motor Vehicles.

During the period there were 715 fatalities attributed to traffic accidents in the state. Involved in those accidents were 991 drivers. A total of 245 of those drivers were in the 25-34 age group—the highest number for any of the standard age groupings used in computing accident statistics. Close behind were the 20-24-year-olds, credited with participation in 205 fatal accidents.

Saturday was clearly the most popular day for death on the highways during the first half of the year. Of the 715 fatalities, 184 were registered on this day of rest and relaxation. Sunday followed with 135 deaths, and Friday accounted for 106. Wednesday was the safest day to travel with 62 deaths.

March was the leading month for fatal accidents with 138 killed, followed closely by May with 135 and June with 129. January with 90 fatalities, was the safest month.

Traditionally, the early evening hours have been the most hazardous on the road. The year 1968 is proving to be no exception. The three hours between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. claimed 154 lives during the six-month period. Death came to 128 people between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and 118

died between 10:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. The safest time to travel was 4:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., when 31 deaths occurred.

With 221 fatalities recorded, U.S. highways were the bloodiest arteries of travel in the state during the period. They were rivaled closely by rural paved roads, credited with 213 deaths. N. C. highways claimed the lives of 129 motorists and 115 were killed on the streets of our cities and towns. Rural unpaved roads and interstate highways accounted for 19 and 18 deaths respectively.

Speeding easily led the list of causes contributing to fatal accidents. It was a factor in 217 deaths. Driving to the left of center line brought death to 170 people and failure to yield the right of way claimed 58. Driving under the influence was established as a major factor in 32 deaths.

In conjunction with the release of accident statistics for the first six months, Motor Vehicles Commissioner Ralph Howland warned that, on a basis of past experience, the last six months will be deadlier than the first six.

"In 1967," Howland said, "we averaged over 30 more traffic deaths in each of the last six months than in the first six. This was a decrease in fatalities over the same period the previous year, but it was still indicative of the fact that we have now entered the most dangerous period of the driving year."

"Every effort is being made to reverse this trend, but it can only be done with full cooperation from the public. The facts are simple and they should be frightening. There are probably as many as 600 North Carolinians alive today who will not celebrate New Years Day, 1969. They will be dead."

"If every driver will keep this in mind, if every driver will promise himself not to be one of these 600, and drive accordingly, the results could be dramatic."

Revival Series Opening Sept. 8

Revival meeting begins at Concord United Methodist Church Sunday September 8th, 7:30 p.m. and will continue through Friday September 13th.

Rev. J. C. Reynolds, pastor of the Harmony Charge of the United Methodist Church, Harmony, N. C. will be the evangelist. The Choir of Mary's Grove United Methodist Church will sing at the opening service Sunday evening at 7:30.

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