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News Release

For Immediate Release

Traffic Report Card Shows Fatality Crashes Decrease

The City of Springfield Public Works department has released its most recent traffic crash report card, reflecting crashes occurring Jan. 1-June 30, 2013. There were seven fatality crashes during this time period, compared to 13 fatality crashes during the same time period in 2012.

The number of total crashes has increased by three percent and the number of injury crashes has increased two percent, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

According to Mandy Buettgen-Quinn, senior engineer for Public Works' Traffic Operations division, the change in season brings sun glare, fog, dew and ice – all of which affect visibility of motorists.

Dew

Cooler overnight temperatures allow dew and moisture to accumulate on vehicles parked overnight. Drivers should take time to clean windows and ensure the vehicle has warmed up to ensure good visibility.

Sun glare

Around Sept. 22, with the change from summer to fall, and around March 20 with the change from winter to spring, the sun is almost directly in an east-west alignment, called the equinox. Crash data indicates significantly more crashes on Springfield roads during these times of year.

Most sun glare-related crashes occur two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset, because during this time of day the sun is low on the horizon and the glare is very intense. Unfortunately, the peak of this phenomena falls right into the morning rush hour when people drive to work or drop their children off at school.

If the sun is behind the vehicle, it becomes more difficult to identify other vehicles' taillights and signals. If the sun is in front of the vehicle, drivers often have to shield their eyes to maintain visibility of other vehicles and pedestrians in their path.

Motorists should exercise special caution within a couple of weeks on either side of the equinox, as the sun's position impairs visibility – especially when traveling eastbound early in the morning or westbound in the late afternoon.

Safer driving tips:

- Glare obstructs vision just like fog. Slow down. If you can't see, don't drive. Find a place where you can wait for a few minutes without being a hazard to anyone. It is your responsibility to operate your vehicle safely.
- If the sun is directly behind you, make sure the traffic signal ahead is actually green and not just reflecting the sunlight, then proceed.
- Keep your windshield clean on the inside and outside and have a pair of quality sunglasses with polarized lenses handy. Those are designed to cut through glare.

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