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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-March 31, 2013. There were two fatality crashes during this time period, compared to five fatality crashes during the same time period in 2012.

There were 1,658 crashes reported, which is 49 more crashes than in the same period in 2012. Also, there were 422 injury crashes, 26 more crashes than were reported in that time period of the previous year.

According to Mandy Buettgen-Quinn, senior engineer for Public Works' Traffic Operations division, seatbelt use is proven to be the best way to minimize risk of crash injury.

"Of the 34,080 people who died in traffic crashes across the United States in 2012, it is estimated that seatbelts could have prevented half of those deaths," Buettgen-Quinn says.

"Last year, two out of three fatal crashes in Springfield involved an unsecured occupant riding in a motorized vehicle (excluding motorcycles)."

Overall, the seatbelt usage rate in Missouri is estimated to be around 75 percent, compared to 84 percent nationwide. Unfortunately, many people choose not to wear a seatbelt for reasons like personal comfort.

Crash Facts

- The impact felt when crashing at a speed of only 15 mph is comparable with a person running into a wall without slowing down.
- If the impact speed is doubled to 30 mph in a crash, the impact force quadruples, which is comparable with the impact of a person falling the equivalent of three stories.
- Statistics suggest that you're 25 times more likely to die if you are ejected from your vehicle.
- Use a seatbelt each time you ride in a vehicle. About 80 percent of all traffic fatalities occur within 25 miles of the home and under the speed of 40 mph.

Seatbelt Tips

For best protection, seatbelts should be worn correctly. Both straps should snugly fit across the hip and shoulder bones, as those body parts can take the transferred impact the best. If the belt is worn too loose, the body has more time to accelerate forward until the belt catches it. The shoulder strap and lap belt work as a unit, and therefore it is important to wear both.

Doctors advise pregnant women to continue wearing a seatbelt and not to disable the airbag. Studies have shown that unbelted pregnant women are more likely to have excessive injuries than belted ones. The lap belt needs to be placed across the hips and below the belly, instead of across or on the belly. As the abdomen grows, the seat should be moved back accordingly. The breastbone should be at least 10 inches from the steering wheel or dashboard, while still allowing the driver to reach the pedals.

Children should be secured in a seat designed for their age/weight group, and need to sit in an upright position (except infants). A recent study in Europe has shown that a child lying across the back seat in a sleeping position, strapped down with only the lap belt, suffers crash injuries that are almost as deadly as those who are ejected from the car without seatbelt protection. The same is true for adult passengers who place their legs on the dashboard.

To view a calendar of child car seat check-up events in Springfield, go to:
www.safekidsspringfield.org.

For more information contact: Mandy Buettgen-Quinn Public Works – Traffic Operations, 864-1801.