

National Safety Council Estimates More than 400 Fatal Crashes this Memorial Day Weekend

Council encourages drivers to use extra caution to keep our roadways safe

Itasca, IL – The National Safety Council today released its estimates of fatalities from traffic crashes for the upcoming Memorial Day holiday weekend, which begins at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 24, and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, May 27. The Council estimates 407 traffic fatalities and another 43,500 medically consulted injuries may occur over the traditional summer kick-off weekend from motor vehicle collisions. “NSC issues fatality estimates for major holiday periods to draw attention to the need for drivers to exercise safe driving practices, especially when a significant number of drivers are expected to be traveling on our roadways and highways,” said Janet Froetscher, NSC president and CEO. Based on the data gathered from 2006-2011, fatalities from crashes during the Memorial Day holiday period average 12.86% of the total fatalities in May. Even so, the estimated fatality total for 2013 is 7% less than the average actual number of fatalities that occurred during the previous six Memorial Day holiday periods for which data are available. This is likely due in part to the struggling economy. It also is estimated that 148 lives may be saved this Memorial Day holiday period by buckling up, and an additional 102 lives could be saved if all wore seat belts.

To ensure a safe Memorial Day holiday weekend, NSC recommends drivers:

- Refrain from all cell phone use - both hands-free and handheld - behind the wheel
- Always remember to wear your seat belt and place children in age-appropriate safety seats
- Allow plenty of travel time to avoid frustration and diminish the impulse to speed
- Drive defensively and exercise caution, especially during inclement weather
- Avoid driving while drowsy
- Don't drink and drive - even moderate consumption of alcohol impairs reaction time and driving judgment