



Personal Information Exposed on Traffic Records



Exposed personal information could be a violation of a privacy act.

Image Source: CBS2 Chicago.

A CBS investigation revealed that personal information was visible on Cook County traffic records for years. The Cook County Circuit Court Clerk is being sued for allegedly violating the Driver's Privacy Protection Act. The plaintiff alleges that following the act would have prevented personal

information from being publicly available.

Exposed personal information included full names, addresses, date of birth, and license plate numbers. For now the data system is shut down from the public, but the Cook County Commissioner admits that he was not aware that such data was open to the public to view.

The Driver's Privacy Protection Act was enacted after a stalker located actress Rebecca Schaeffer's private information from traffic records and murder her in 1989. Domestic violence and civil rights advocacy groups are concerned that this alleged breach in privacy significantly jeopardizes the safety of individuals who have a driving record in Cook County.

Source: CBS Chicago. [Available online at chicago.cbslocal.com/2018/07/26/traffic-records-personal-information/.]

Highway Bridge Collapse in Italy Kills Dozens

At least 39 people have been reported killed after a highway bridge collapsed in Genoa, Italy on August 14th, according to Italy's Civil Protection Department. Fifteen others have been injured, of which nine were seriously wounded. The collapse sent more than 35 vehicles falling over 150 feet onto the railyard and Polcevera riverbed beneath.

Genoa, located in the Liguria region in northwest Italy, is a popular tourist spot for its beaches. The highway is a major corridor along the western Italian coastline, connecting Genoa to the border with France. The bridge, built in 1967, had been under scrutiny in the past, with engineers and public officials raising concerns for the long list of repairs and maintenance already done on the bridge since the 1990s despite its relatively young age.

Public officials are also already pointing fingers, with one of the Deputy Prime Ministers of Italy



Crews clean up the bridge collapse scene.

Image Source: New York Times.

Luigi Di Maio alleging that the private operator company Autostrada, the company that oversees the highway's engineering, did not follow maintenance protocol. The collapse is being handled as a criminal investigation, according to the Genoa prosecutor's office.

Source: Source: NPR. [Available online at npr.org/2018/08/15/638793776/death-toll-in-genoa-bridge-collapse-rises-to-39/.]; New York Times. [Available online at nytimes.com/2018/08/15/world/europe/italy-genoa-bridge-collapse.html.]



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Last Month's Traffic Digest July, 2018*

Total Crashes: 17,303
6,800 **fewer** than average†

Total fatalities: 102
11 **more** than average†

* Provisional, subject to change
Source: IDOT

† Based on 2012–16 five-year means

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2017–18 Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge

The winners of the 2017–18 Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge (ITSC) were announced in mid-August. There are several categories of winners, mainly broken down by municipal, county sheriff, state police district, college campus police, and other police. The municipal and county sheriff offices were further broken down by size (number of sworn officers). Lake County won first place in the county sheriff's office division, and District 15 (Tollways) won first place from the state police division. A full list of winners is posted on the ITSC's home page at www.iltrafficchallenge.org.

The ITSC, an annual collaboration between the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and the Illinois Department of Transportation, emphasizes enforcing safe driving and raising awareness of driving under the influence (DUI), improper seat belt use, and speeding. All law enforcement agencies in Illinois are encouraged to participate.

Source: Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge. [Available online at iltrafficchallenge.org.]

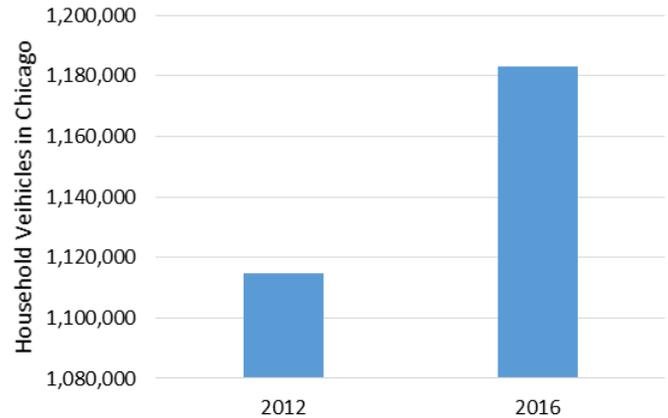


Ride-Hailing Services Exacerbate Traffic Congestion

A recent study by Schaller Consulting revealed that ride-hailing services such as Lyft and Uber exacerbate traffic congestion by adding more vehicles on the road nationwide, contrary to the visions of these companies.

While ride-sharing companies were hopeful that their services would eliminate the need for personal vehicles due to a rise in convenient carpooling, the study indicated that the ride-sharing services are instead replacing public transportation ridership, walking, or bicycling with hailing ride-sharing services, thereby adding new mileage driven on roadways. Furthermore, overall personal vehicle ownership has increased between 2012 and 2016, possibly indicating that the intended effect of obsolescing personal vehicle use has not become a reality.

The use of ride-hailing services is



Household vehicle ownership in Chicago increased six percent from 2012 to 2016.

Data Source: Schaller Consulting.

greatest in urban tracts, including the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Seattle, and Miami metropolitan areas. Almost all users of ride-hailing services own a smartphone and have an annual income of \$50,000 or greater. Many of the users also have a college degree and are mostly aged 25 to 34 and do not

own a personal vehicle. Most of the ride-sharing services are used for commutes, but up to 20 percent is used for social or recreational purposes as well.

The study is a literature review of a collection of studies that each performed city-wide analyses of ride-hailing services' impact on different major metropolitan areas, including Chicago.

Source: Schaller, Bruce, 2018: *The New Automobility: Lyft, Uber and the Future of American Cities*. Schaller Consulting. 37 pp.

Wider Roads Exacerbate Traffic Congestion

The Active Transportation Alliance (ATA) released a study indicating that wider roads exacerbate traffic congestion rather than relieve it, stating that wider roads invite more people to drive personal vehicles instead of taking public transportation or bicycles.

According to the study, bus and train ridership in the Chicago suburbs decreased from 32.4 to 28.2 percent between 1980 and 2016. ATA executive director Ron Burke stated that, meanwhile, \$7.4 billion was invested in expanding Chicago area interstates and tollways from 2011 to 2015, while only \$12 million

was spent on bicycle routes in the same time frame.

In Lake County, municipal leaders like Hawthorne Woods Mayor Joseph Mancino agree with the study's call to action, adding that the planned IL-53 extension will only invite more people to drive, eventually leading to more clogged roads.

While investing in roadway infrastructure is important to keep Illinois roads safe, ATA hopes that the findings will encourage the state to invest more in making mass transport and bicycling more attractive in addition to the roads.

Source: Chicago Tribune. [Available online at chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/wisniewski/ct-biz-road-congestion-report-getting-around-20180807-story.html.]

Despite Reductions in Deaths, Impaired Driving Still Deadly Problem

By SHANNON ALDERMAN,

Illinois Department of Transportation

Alcohol-impaired (drunk driving) fatalities have declined steadily over the last decade, reaching an all-time low in 2011. However, impaired driving on Illinois roads remains a very serious problem that is far from being solved, with drunk driving still killing 300 people each year in Illinois and drivers involved in fatal crashes who test positive for cannabis on the rise.

Motor vehicle crash data estimates for the year 2016 from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show alcohol-impaired (blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or greater) fatalities are 28 percent lower than the 2007 alcohol-impaired fatality number.

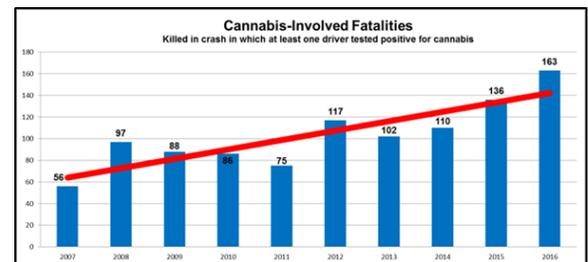
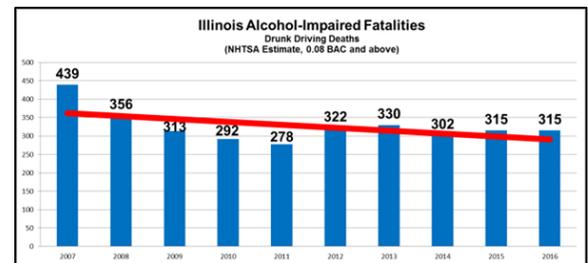
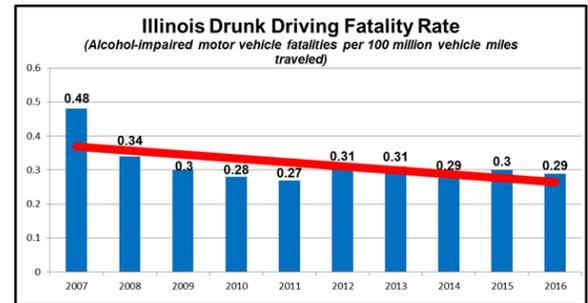
Looking at those same numbers in relation to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), we see that Illinois' alcohol-impaired fatality rate in 2007 was 0.48 (alcohol-impaired deaths per 100 million VMT), compared to 0.29 in 2016. This rate reached an all-time low of 0.27 in 2011.

The greatest reduction in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in recent years took place between 2007 and 2008 when a decline of 83 fatalities or 19 percent occurred. This reduction outpaced the 16 percent reduction in overall fatalities during those same years.

Though no proof of impairment, it's worthy to note that drivers testing positive for cannabis who were involved in fatal crashes has increased steadily in the last decade; nearly 200 percent when comparing 2007 to 2016.

More recently, after a steady drop from 2004 through 2011, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities increased in 2012 by 16 percent over 2011 and have remained above 300 in each year since.

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation



Alcohol-related fatality rates (top) and fatalities (middle) have decreased from 2007 to 2016, but fatalities involving cannabis (bottom) have increased in the meantime.

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

The Tornado Warning That Never Was

Traffic Safety and Business

Metra trains along the BNSF and Union Pacific West railroads were delayed on August 20th after a tornado warning was issued. But, there wasn't one.

It turns out, an internal warning specifically for railroads was mistaken for a public tornado warning and was announced as such. Out-of-state companies like Union Pacific and BNSF regularly issue their own warnings based on recommendations by private fore-

casting service AccuWeather. It is presumed that Metra BNSF's tweets of "tornado warnings" refer to these internal warnings.

The "tornado warning" stopped all traffic, including Metra traffic, for at least an hour. Commuters quickly noticed that no such tornado warning had been publicly issued.

Metra does not make the decisions on whether to stop train traffic. Instead, the owners of the respective railroads, BNSF and Union

Pacific, do based on AccuWeather's weather information. AccuWeather confirmed that an internal warning for weather conditions favorable for tornadoes was issued between 7:05 PM and 7:20 PM.

While erring to the side of caution is important for broader safety of commuters, it is important to communicate a distinction between internal weather warnings and public weather warnings to avoid confusion.

Source: Chicago Tribune. [Available online at chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-biz-metra-tornado-warnings-20180821-story.html.]; ABC7 Chicago. [Available online at abc7chicago.com/traffic/multiple-metra-trains-stopped-delayed-due-to-weather/4012020.]

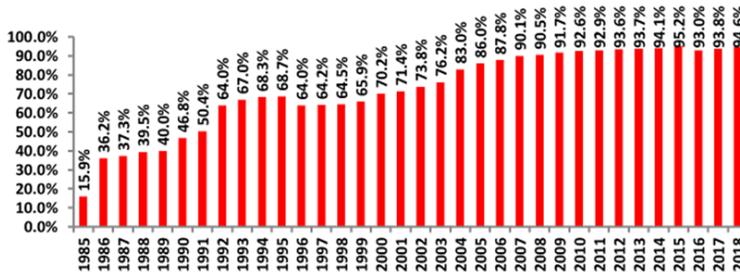


In the Spotlight! TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

2018 Seat Belt Observational Survey

By REBECCA DIEKEN AND
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Front Seat Occupant Restraint Usage Rate in Illinois
(1985-2018)



Source: 2018 Observational Survey, IDOT

Seat belts save lives. Since the first seat belt law went into effect in 1985, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has been conducting seat belt surveys to track usage rates of front seat occupants of passenger vehicles (passenger cars, sport utility vehicles, taxis, vans, and pickup trucks). The 2018 survey, which was conducted in June, observed belt status of drivers and front seat passengers on Interstates, state highways, local roads, and residential streets between the hours of 7:00 AM and 6:30 PM so

light was adequate for viewings. Of the 153,844 front seat occupants observed, 94.6 percent were estimated to be belted, an increase of 0.8 percentage points as compared to the rate of 93.8 in 2017. The margin of error for the safety belt usage rate was 0.5 percent.

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation



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Raising Awareness for Bicycles, Texting and Driving

Two changes to the rules of the road were introduced in August. On the 10th, the Governor Bruce Rauner signed a bill to require the Illinois Rules of the Road to teach the “Dutch reach” method of opening doors after parallel parking. The new act raises awareness of dooring accidents, in which drivers open their doors onto oncoming traffic and a collision occurs. Dooring accidents are common in Chicago, where many bicyclists run into doors opening in their path.

On the 14th, Governor Rauner signed an amendment to a law, heightening penalties for texting and driving. The first offense will automatically be considered a moving violation instead of the a non-moving violation. This means that even the first

texting and driving offense will appear on the driver’s traffic record, and the driver may be fined. In Illinois, three moving violations within a one-year timespan means a suspended driver’s license.

Both acts are effective July 1, 2019.

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, up to a quarter of traffic crashes involve distracted driving nationwide. With the explosive rise of smartphone use in the past decade, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White substantiated the need for law enforcement to help facilitate safer driving environments.

Governor Rauner also proclaimed August 17th to be Traffic Fatality Awareness Day .

Source: HB 4846 Enrolled. Illinois General Assembly; HB 5143 Enrolled. Illinois General Assembly; WSPD6. [Available online at wpsdlocal6.com/2018/08/16/illinois-to-impose-tougher-penalty-for-texting-while-driving.]; WIFR. [Available online at wifr.com/content/news/Gov-Rauner-names-August-17-as-Traffic-Fatality-Awareness-Day-in-Illinois-491141971.html.]; Chicago Tribune. [Available online at chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-biz-distracted-driving-bike-safety-getting-around-20180816-story.html.]

Year-To-Date Fatal Crash Snapshot

August 29, 2018

631 Fatal Crashes*
684 Fatalities*

On this day last year:
671 Fatal Crashes*
733 Fatalities*

49 Below
Fatalities change

* Provisional, subject to change
Source: IDOT