



## Catching Speeders along Lake Shore Drive

Based on data from the Chicago Police Department, speeding tickets along Lake Shore Drive have become more frequent. In fact, 4,344 high-speed tickets were issued along the road in 2017, an increase of over 300 percent from 2014.

It turns out, however, that speeding has always been a problem on Lake Shore Drive. In the past couple of years, the Chicago police began enforcing more aggressively after a state amendment updated the definition of criminal or aggravated driving by lowering the threshold for a Class A misdemeanor from 40 mph to 35 mph above the authorized speed limit.

Lake Shore Drive was originally designed to be a scenic route in between the Chicago cityscape and the Lake Michigan shoreline, but frequent drivers use it as a commuter route. Currently, the speed limits along the road are only 45 mph or less, but up to 95 percent of cars exceed the authorized speed limits. The increased enforcement, however, has not been producing benefits to the city in any measurable form; it did not particularly increase revenue for the city, nor did it necessarily decrease the crash rate along the route.

Currently, Lake Shore Drive between Monroe St and Grand Ave is under construction for repaving, on schedule for completion in time for the annual Chicago marathon.



Posted speed limits of Lake Shore Drive.

Source: IDOT, 2017.



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Source: Chicago Tribune. [Available online at [chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-biz-lake-shore-drive-speeding-20180822-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-biz-lake-shore-drive-speeding-20180822-story.html)]; FOX32. Available online at [fox32chicago.com/traffic/lake-shore-drive-repaving-project-begins-august-26-drivers-urged-to-take-detours](http://fox32chicago.com/traffic/lake-shore-drive-repaving-project-begins-august-26-drivers-urged-to-take-detours).]

## Deadly Greyhound Crash



Damage from the deadly collision between a semi-truck and the Greyhound bus. Image source: AZ Central.

A crash between a semi-truck and a Greyhound bus claimed nine lives, including a premature infant. The crash occurred on August 30th along Interstate 40 near Thoreau, New Mexico when the semi-truck apparently blew one of its tires and its driver lost control, colliding with the Greyhound on the other side of the median.

While the crash is still under investigation, lawsuits have already been filed against the truck driver and the trucking company. The truck driver sustained

minor injuries, but the Greyhound bus driver was killed. All nine deaths have been identified. Only eight of the identities have been released; one is still pending contact of next of kin.

Source: AZ Central. [Available online at <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-traffic/2018/09/10/2-preemie-babies-jordyn-rose-greyhound-bus-crash-new-mexico-has-died/1255913002>]; AZ Central. [Available online at [azcentral.com/story/news/2018/09/05/three-remaining-victims-new-mexico-bus-crash-identified/1201799002](http://azcentral.com/story/news/2018/09/05/three-remaining-victims-new-mexico-bus-crash-identified/1201799002).]

### Last Month's Traffic Digest August, 2018\*

Total Crashes: 17,723  
6,392 **fewer** than normal†

Total fatalities: 79  
23 **fewer** than normal†

\* Provisional, subject to change  
Source: IDOT

† Based on 2012–16 five-year means

### NEWS THIS MONTH...

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## Labor Day Traffic Enforcement Results

Over the Labor Day holiday weekend, the Illinois State Police (ISP) performed a statewide Combined Accident Reduction Effort (CARE) operation, enforcing traffic safety laws across the state. Their focus was on the “fatal four” indicators of a crash: Distracted driving, drunk driving, improper seat belt use, and speeding. The ISP reported a total of 4,999 traffic stops:

- Speeding: 3,001
- Improper seat belt use: 537
- DUI arrests: 101
- Crash reports: 391
- Other traffic stops: 1,191

Other traffic stops include stops made by ISP for safety inspections, felony arrests, and motor assists.

Provisional data from this year’s Labor Day holiday statistics show that seven fatal crashes during the holiday weekend resulted in seven deaths, the first time in at least five years that observed less than ten fatal crashes and less than ten fatalities over the Labor Day weekend. The holiday weekend starts on 6:00 PM Friday and ends on 12:00 AM Monday, covering 3.25 days.

Source: FOX Illinois. [Available online at [foxillinois.com/news/local/illinois-state-police-makes-almost-5000-stops-in-enforcement-period](http://foxillinois.com/news/local/illinois-state-police-makes-almost-5000-stops-in-enforcement-period).]; Illinois Department of Transportation.

## Lax Regulatory Landscape Suspect in CMV Crashes

Illinois is not the only state that is seeing an increase in the number of fatal crashes related to commercial vehicles (CMVs). Nationally, traffic deaths related to large trucks increased from 10,781 to 11,318 from 2015 to 2016, according to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

A common concern for drivers and road safety advocacy groups is the lack of initiative by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to address CMV safety measures. In the midst of vehicle manufacturers incorporating forward crash avoidance technology in consumer vehicles, the NHTSA stays quiet on whether to require the

new technology in trucks to enhance CMV safety.

CMVs are known for their large braking distance due to their size; yet, a federal mandate for modern crash avoidance technology has not been implemented.

The NHTSA often lets states’ transportation agencies develop standards for the state from the bottom up. While this approach encourages flexibility within the state, it does not facilitate nationwide standards that may be useful for a trucking industry that regularly performs business across state lines. In fact, some safety advocates accuse NHTSA of being in a “paralysis by analysis”

situation, wholly encouraging impressive automated technology competition between automotive industries rather than improving practical safety features.

Crash avoidance technology is not new. It has been in development since the 1990s and ready for use. It is only a matter of when truck manufacturers will follow the consumer vehicle industry and implement the technology into their CMVs.

Provisional data shows that as of September 25, there have been 13 more fatal CMV crashes this year than there were last year to date, although overall fatal crash counts are less than that of last year.

Source: The Kansas City Star. [Available online at [kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article217849815.html](http://kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article217849815.html).]; Illinois Department of Transportation. Fatality Analysis Reporting System.

## Commute Times Steadily Longer

New 2017 data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Study (ACS) suggests that the average commute time has increased by 16 seconds nationwide. This may be because there were more than 14 million workers whose commutes were one hour or longer. Larger metropolitan areas, like Chicago, were associated with the longest commutes. East Stroudsburg, PA, reported the longest average commute time of over 37 minutes, while Cheyenne, WY, and Grand Forks, ND, reported the shortest average commutes of less than 20 minutes.

Additionally, increased use of ride-sharing services (e.g., Uber, Lyft) may have contributed to the increased traffic volume. A recent study suggested that commuters who used to take their bicycle or public transportation have switched to ride-sharing services. Additionally, these ride-sharing service vehicles spend a lot of time stopping to pick up and drop off passengers.

The increased commute time of 16 seconds per day adds up to two and a half hours of commute for an entire year.



Commute times have steadily increased, with the average commuter spending over two hours per year longer in traffic than they did last year.

Image source: NPR Illinois.

Source: NPR Illinois. [Available online at [nprillinois.org/post/stuck-traffic-youre-not-alone-new-data-show-american-commute-times-are-longer](http://nprillinois.org/post/stuck-traffic-youre-not-alone-new-data-show-american-commute-times-are-longer).]



## Moving A Child Forward—Facing Too Soon Remains Common

By JESSICA HOPKINS

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

This month, results of the 2017 National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats (NSUBS) were published in a technical report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This survey provides restraint (e.g., car seat, booster seat, seat belt) use data for all children under 13, across various demographics. Major findings of the NSUBS include the following:

- 31.4 percent of children aged four to seven were unrestrained or not properly restrained, a decrease from the 37.4 percent observed in 2015;
- Rear-facing car seat use among children one to three years old increased from 9.4 percent to 13.7 percent; and
- Booster seat use among children four to five years old decreased significantly from 47.9 percent to 37.5 percent.

While the survey does show promising increases in correct car seat/booster seat use, it is worth noting that the practice of transitioning children to restraints that are not appropriate for their age or size continues to be a trend.



Parents are encouraged to take a safety seat check to ensure that your child safety seats work properly and are secured and facing the correct way.

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Premature transition, or early graduation, is recorded across all age ranges in the survey, but is especially troubling in the birth to one-year- and the one- to three-year-old age ranges when it is recommended that children ride rear-facing. Rear-facing car seats offer children the best protection in the event of a crash. A car seat's hard plastic shell is engineered to absorb crash forces, reducing the likelihood of serious injury to the head, neck and spine. Turning a child forward-facing too soon can increase the likelihood of injury

substantially.

Beginning January 1, 2019, children will be required to ride rear-facing until they are two years old, according to Illinois law. This law change will keep children rear-facing longer, but age should not be the only indicator of a child's readiness to transition.

According to NHTSA and the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should remain in their car seat or booster seat until they reach the top height or weight allowed by the car seat manufacturer. For many children, that can mean riding rear-facing beyond two years of age.

When a child outgrows their rear-facing car seat, a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether should be used. Once the child reaches the height or weight limit of their forward-facing car seat, they are ready to travel in a booster seat.

The Illinois Child Passenger Safety (CPS) program recommendations mimic those of this survey and countless studies—"Don't Leap Too Soon; Take Your Car Seat to the Limit". For more information, visit [BuckleUpIllinois.org](http://BuckleUpIllinois.org).

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation.

## Farm Equipment On the Road for Harvesting

### ***Traffic Safety and Business***

It is harvest season, and many rural roads will be populated with farm vehicles and farm equipment. Some equipment may travel on public roadways at slow speeds, so the Illinois State Police and county sheriffs are urging drivers to remain patient. Drivers are discouraged from passing farm equipment, even if conditions may be safe to pass. Keep an eye out for turn signals on the vehicle, and avoid distracted driving.

Meanwhile, farm equipment operators are also encouraged to move their machinery only during the daytime when the visibility is good, and to have the slow-moving vehicle emblem attached to the rear end of the equipment.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, there were 424 traffic incidents related to farming equipment, including three fatal crashes, in 2016.



Drivers should be on the lookout for farm equipment like this combine harvester. Image source: Wikimedia Commons.

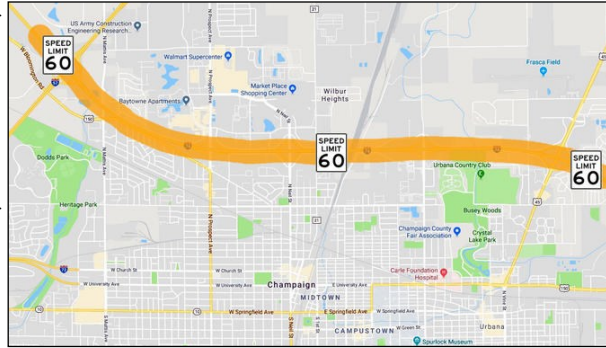
Source: KFVS12. [Available online at [kfvs12.com/2018/09/19/watch-out-farm-equipment-this-busy-harvest-season.](http://kfvs12.com/2018/09/19/watch-out-farm-equipment-this-busy-harvest-season/)]



# TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

## Urbana-Champaign Speed Change

Drivers along Interstate 74 should be wary of decreased speed limits through the Urbana-Champaign area. On August 31st, speed limits were lowered from 70 mph to 60 mph between mile posts 178 and 184. Additionally, the Illinois State Police increased enforcement as a part of raising awareness of the speed limit change.



I-74 reduces the speed limit from 70 mph to 60 mph between mile posts 178 and 184. Source: The News Gazette.

According to an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) study, even though the previous speed limit was 70 mph, the average driver ended up driving around 68 mph through Urbana-Champaign. Furthermore, the five exits within a seven-mile span and a high density of crashes along the route gave IDOT reason to lower the speed limit altogether. Meanwhile, a prior study also determined that the 70 mph speed limit of Interstate 57 through Champaign remained appropriate.

Illinois raised its maximum allowable interstate speed limit from 65 mph to 70 mph in 2014.

Source: The News Gazette. [Available online at [news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-08-29/accidents-exits-played-key-role-decision-lower-i-74-speed-limit.html](https://news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-08-29/accidents-exits-played-key-role-decision-lower-i-74-speed-limit.html).]

### Year-To-Date Fatal Crash Snapshot

September 27, 2018

714 Fatal Crashes\*  
**765 Fatalities\***

On this day last year:  
765 Fatal Crashes\*  
**835 Fatalities\***

**59 Below**  
Fatalities change

\* Provisional, subject to change  
Source: IDOT



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## Illinois Rail Safety Week in September



Many crossings like this one in Champaign County do not have electric signals or gates. Always look both ways before crossing. Image source: Wikimedia Commons.

September 23rd through the 29th marks the state's fifth Illinois Rail Safety Week campaign. This campaign, a partnership between the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (ILACP) and Metra, pro-

motes education, enforcement, and engineering to minimize the risk for injury or death along railroad tracks. The Illinois State Police increased enforcement near railroad crossings to raise awareness of rail crossing violations that could mean the difference between life and death.

Nationally, rail crossing deaths have been increasing in the past few years, rising from 237 in 2015 to 272 in 2017. During this time period, Illinois has consistently ranked the second state in the nation in terms of total annual in grade crossing fatalities. At the same time, however, annual in grade crossing fatalities in Illinois has decreased from 31 to 21 from 2015 to 2017.

Source: Illinois Rail Safety Week. [Available online at [illinoisrailsafetyweek.org](http://illinoisrailsafetyweek.org).]; The News Gazette. [Available online at [news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-09-21/state-police-turning-enforcement-railroad-crossing-safety.html](https://news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-09-21/state-police-turning-enforcement-railroad-crossing-safety.html).]; Illinois Department of Transportation.