



Adopt a New Mindset Behind the Wheel – Be Safe Together

By Ferzan M. Ahmed, P.E.

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To reduce vehicle crashes on roadways everywhere, tolling agencies from across the globe have issued a call-to-action urging motorists to be self-aware of unsafe driving behaviors behind the wheel – such as speeding, distracted and impaired driving, and not wearing a safety belt.

It is part of a new global roadway safety campaign, **Be Safe Together**, led by the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA).

IBTTA's first Global Road Safety Week, which runs from June 24-28, 2024, is highlighting the steps the tolling industry is taking to make our highways safer as well as urging motorists to drive in ways that are both responsible and safe.

In 2023, there were nearly 400 roadway fatalities in Ohio resulting from vehicle crashes from Memorial Day to Labor Day, known as the "100 deadliest days of summer." Nationwide, car crashes surge by more than 40% over this period.

Over a five-year period (2019-2023) on the Ohio Turnpike, there were:

- 3,800 speed-related crashes resulting in 16 fatalities and 1,518 injuries;
- 348 crashes where a distraction was a contributing factor, causing one fatality and 148 injuries; and
- 27 fatalities where a safety belt was available, but not in use.

Most vehicle crashes are preventable and underscore the need for greater self-awareness when operating a motor vehicle whether it is on two wheels, four wheels, or 18 wheels.

Avoid speeding, stay off your phone, and give space to roadway workers in construction zones. Your commitment to roadway safety can make a life-saving difference and prevent injuries.

This summer and throughout the year, we urge every motorist to adopt a new mindset: drive with empathy.

Let's **Be Safe Together** so that everyone reaches their destination safely.

Ahmed is executive director of the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission in Berea, Ohio, and chair of IBTTA's safety committee. The turnpike commission is an IBTTA member.