

MEDIA RELEASE



Ohio State Highway Patrol and Ohio Turnpike Promote Roadway Safety at Cleveland Auto Show

CLEVELAND (Feb. 23, 2024) – State transportation and law enforcement officials teamed up today at the Cleveland Auto Show to urge motorists to be self-aware of dangerous behaviors behind the wheel – such as aggressive and distracted driving – to reduce vehicle crashes on Ohio’s highways.

“We utilize a data-driven approach to identify areas where our troopers can have the biggest impact on changing driving behaviors to make the Ohio Turnpike, and all of our state’s roadways, safer for everyone,” said Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Sgt. Ryan Purpura. “We can’t just enforce our way to a safer Ohio Turnpike. To truly create the safest driving environment, we need a commitment from motorists to drive in ways that are responsible and safe.”

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.

“Simple things like driving the posted speed limit, not sending a text message while driving, and ensuring everyone in the vehicle is wearing their safety belt, are all ways that will instantly enhance safety,” Purpura added. “Not committing to these simple things can potentially result in life-ending or life-long consequences.”

Chris Matta, chief engineer of the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission in Berea, said dangerous driving behaviors on the highway also put its maintenance crews, roadway construction workers, and others at severe risk in work zones.

“With the roadway construction season rapidly approaching, raising awareness of work zone safety is a top priority,” Matta added. “By eliminating dangerous driving behaviors, most vehicle crashes are preventable.”

Matta urged motorists to drive safely in-and-around work zones by:

- Establishing a safe following distance;
- Following the work zone speed limit (because of reduced lane widths, traffic lane shifts, and narrow shoulders);
- Avoiding distractions;
- Paying attention to signs; and
- Being prepared to slow down or stop.

The OSHP, the official law enforcement agency on the Ohio Turnpike, has three posts stationed along the 241-mile toll road.

“The motoring public can expect to see state troopers conducting high-visibility patrols on the Ohio Turnpike in 2024, focusing on distracted driving, speed enforcement and safety belt usage,” Purpura added.

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