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Jan. 6, 2014

Year Ends with 257 Unrestrained Fatalities on Alabama Highways *An Increase from 2012 According to State Trooper Investigated Crashes*

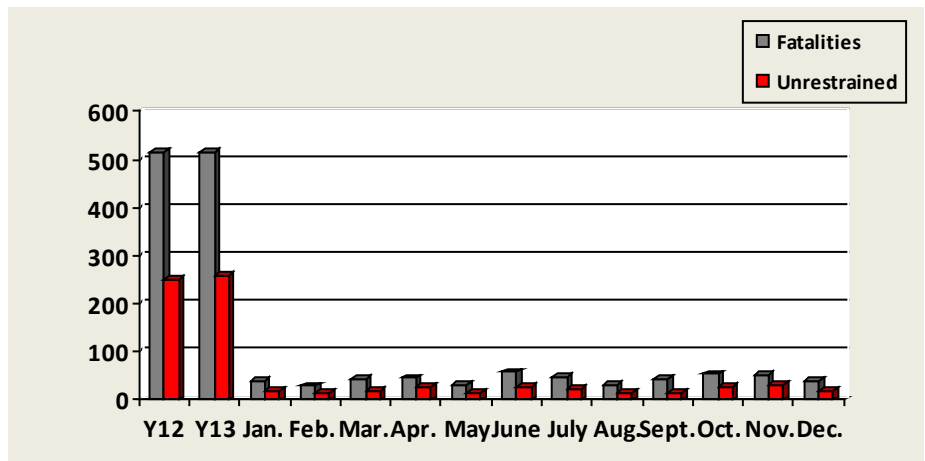
MONTGOMERY – Crash activity reports from the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS) show the number of victims who died in vehicle crashes where seat belts were available and were not wearing seat belts decreased from November. Unfortunately the total of victims not wearing seat belts in 2013 increased from last year.

According to preliminary traffic crash data, there were 40 victims killed in vehicle crashes investigated by Alabama State Troopers in December 2013, down from 52 in November. Of the December number, 36 were in vehicles where seat belts were available, and 19 victims were not wearing seat belts, down from 31 in November.

The latest information from DPS shows 515 victims were killed in 2013, a decrease of one from the same time period in 2012. However, of the 515 crash victims this year, 432 were in vehicles where seat belts were available, but 257 victims were not restrained, an increase of five from 2012.

“Seat belts (and child restraints) are the most effective safety feature in a motor vehicle and help to save hundreds of lives each year,” said Col. Hugh B. McCall, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the state’s highest-ranking trooper. “In Alabama, using seat belts and child restraints is not an option. It’s the law.”

Preliminary data from traffic crashes investigated by state troopers indicates there have already been five fatalities in 2014. Of that number, all five were in vehicles where seat belts were available, but three of the victims were not properly restrained.



“We must be more proactive in ensuring everyone buckles up every time they travel on the roadways,” said Transportation Director John Cooper. “Our goal for the new year is to decrease the number of crashes and fatalities, promote more seat belt use and work **Toward Zero Deaths** on Alabama’s highways.

Data from traffic crashes investigated by state troopers indicates 59 percent of all victims killed in 2012 were not wearing seat belts at the time of their deaths.

DPS and ALDOT jointly release to the public each month the number of unrestrained fatalities in crashes investigated by troopers in an effort to improve seat belt use and decrease deaths on Alabama highways.

For additional information, visit www.dot.state.al.us or www.dps.alabama.gov.

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