

Wrong-Way Driving

Connecticut Department of Transportation
Bureau of Engineering and Construction

Traffic and Safety Engineering

Wrong-Way Driving Crash Statistics

Wrong-way driving crashes on Interstate Highways are a growing concern in the United States. These crashes occur when a motorist enters the Interstate Highway in the wrong direction and often result in fatalities and serious injuries due to the high speeds of vehicles involved.

Nationally, approximately 360 fatalities occur every year due to wrong-way driving crashes

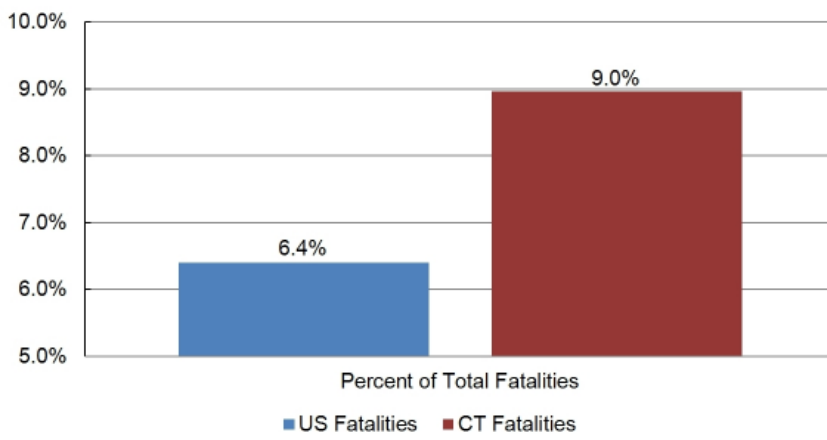
on Interstate Highways. In Connecticut between 2009 and 2011, approximately 5 fatalities and 38 injuries occur every year due to wrong-way driving crashes. Connecticut has a greater percentage of fatalities on Interstate Highways caused by wrong-way driving than the National average over the same period.

4 E's Approach



In order to reduce the number of wrong-way driving crashes on limited access highways in Connecticut, an approach utilizing the 4 E's: Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is necessary. Wrong-way driving crashes typically occur at nighttime and are most often caused by impaired drivers and older drivers. It is important for Engineering to provide safe entrance and exit ramps, Enforcement to provide deterrence for impaired drivers, Education to help new and older drivers navigate entrance ramps, and for EMS to have efficient response plans to wrong-way crashes.

Interstate Fatalities caused by Wrong-Way Drivers



US Data – 2009-2011 FARS
CT Data – 2009-2011 CAS



A Potential Solution

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has initiated State Project 170-3217 to upgrade and standardize the signing and pavement markings at the exit ramps for all limited access highways in the State. Currently, Connecticut follows National guidelines for wrong-way signing however the existing signing and pavement markings vary from ramp to ramp. More uniform standards have been developed for Connecticut

and will be applied throughout the State. The project will initially inventory the existing location of the signs, pavement markings and geometric design of every exit ramp. Next, a construction project will install



new signs and pavement markings at each exit ramp. The new signs will be larger and more visible due to the high retro-reflectivity of the sign material and the use of red post delineator strips on the sign posts. The new pavement markings will be more visible and help guide drivers towards the entrance ramps. The Department of Transportation will work with Connecticut's Division of State Police to determine which exit ramps have a history of wrong-way drivers and also identify exit ramps that may have a geometric design that could be confusing to drivers. These identified ramps will receive additional countermeasures to help prevent wrong-way drivers.

Future Wrong-Way Driving Endeavors

Once Project 170-3217 has been completed and a sufficient amount of crash data is available after the Project's completion, analysis will be performed to determine the effectiveness of the engineering countermeasures that were installed. Additionally, the Department of Transportation will reach out to Education and EMS stakeholders to involve them and have a continuing dialog regarding best practices for preventing wrong-way driving.

Further Information on Wrong-Way Driving

Additional information can be found at: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/safety> under Safety Engineering or contact Joseph Ouellette at (860) 594-2721, Trafficsafety.dot@ct.gov