



## Thanksgiving Day 2017 Holiday Period Traffic Fatality Estimate

The 2017 Thanksgiving Day holiday period begins at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 22, and ends at 11:59 p.m., Sunday, November 26. Our estimate of traffic fatalities for this 4.25-day holiday period is **421** deaths with a 90% confidence interval (C.I.) of **383** to **461** deaths. Nonfatal medically consulted injuries, i.e. injuries serious enough that a medical professional was consulted, are estimated at 48,500 with a range of 44,100 to 53,100. The Thanksgiving Day holiday period is always 4.25 days in length. The estimated fatality total for 2017 is 7% higher than the average actual number of fatalities (393) that occurred during the previous six Thanksgiving Day holiday periods for which data are available. An evaluation of recent Thanksgiving Day holiday period estimates is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Evaluation of Recent Thanksgiving Day Holiday Period Estimates**

Year	Estimate	90% Confidence Interval	Actual
2011	434	368-509	375
2012	451	384-528	405
2013	436	365-517	360
2014	418	367-474	403
2015	433	371-502	386
2016	437	384-498	428

Studies have shown that seat belts, when used, are 45% effective in preventing fatalities among front-seat passenger car occupants. Although the reduction in the risk of fatal injury from wearing seat belts is higher for light-truck occupants at 50%, the lower figure for passenger car occupants is used in the calculations here as the more conservative measure. The most recent data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) indicate that seat belt use by fatally injured passenger car and light truck occupants was 47.4%. Based on this information it is estimated that **163** person's lives may be saved this Thanksgiving Day holiday period because they will wear their safety belts and an additional **100** lives could be saved if all wore safety belts.

The average number of traffic fatalities during the six most recent Thanksgiving Day holiday periods was 5.0% *lower* than similar non-holiday periods (393 vs. 413 deaths). The difference is not statistically significant.

The terms used in the above discussion were chosen carefully to reflect the level of accuracy of the quantities involved. *Estimate* is used because the fatality figures are calculated approximately, as opposed to the precision of calculation inferred by the use of the word *predict*. *May* is used to indicate the figures express a contingency, whereas *will* is used to express something that may be expected or is supposed to occur.

Details of the estimating methodology and a discussion of holiday deaths compared to non-holiday periods are included in the attached paper.

If you would like your name deleted from the distribution list for the holiday estimates, please let me know via return e-mail.