

By the Numbers: Gross safety distortions go mainstream.

The Oregon Department of Transportation and State Police initiated a propaganda blitz based on invented data to garner support for Oregon's speed laws and increased OSP staffing. Release inferred 49 percent of their highway fatalities were caused by speed in excess of the posted limit; whereas, its data shows it to be 8.5 percent if you accept their procedures, we don't, and less than 1 percent of the state's attributed cause for all accidents.

[Speed kills more drivers in Oregon](#)

by Joseph Rose, *The Oregonian*

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Oregon State Police

Speed was a contributing factor to this fatal crash on U.S. 26 near Elsie on July 20.

Speeders killed more Oregonians than drunken drivers in 2008, according to a new study showing that the state far outpaces the rest of the nation when it comes to deaths caused by heavy-footed motorists.

Quote from another Oregon paper – “Speeding to death?”

“Statewide, speed played a role in more than half of last year's of fatal crashes, according to the TSD data. Of the 416 people who died in roadway accidents in 2008, 210 resulted from speed-related crashes.

ODOT spokeswoman Sally Ridenour hopes those numbers open some eyes.”

This propaganda campaign was picked up at face value, without a single journalist in the state reviewing the purported supporting documentation.

If you read the story and accept the headlines, “speeds in excess of the posted limit” are inferred to cause half of the state’s fatal accidents, and by association all accidents.

Compare that to the facts: Oregon's crash summary report cites "excess of posted limit" as less than 1 percent of the attributed cause of accidents, and this too is overstated because of the way the data is collected and attributed.

Oregon's crash summary book.

http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/car/docs/2008CrashSummaryBook_web.pdf

Accidents:

Exceeding Posted - Statewide for year 378 incidents out of 41,815 reports, or 00.9% of the accidents attributed to speed in excess of posted limit

Fatals:

Exceeding Posted - Statewide, all roads 35 out of 416 fatalities, or 10.7 percent attributed to drivers or 08.5% of state total

Now you can see how distorted the headline is from reality. Or stated in another way, 90 percent plus of Oregon’s enforcement efforts are targeting less than 1 percent of the attributed cause of accidents. Disagree, let's raise it 3 or 400 percent and say 90 percent of their resources are targeting 4 percent of the cause.

Oregon attributes all accidents to driving behavior and none to poor engineering practices, the 30 percent or more where public policy could reduce accident rates. In Oregon, because of its poor practices, this 30 percent preventable number is probably much higher.

As a matter of practice most speed limits in Oregon are intentionally under posted, with most being posted without a study and when a study is done, the postings are often at or below the 15 percentile speeds. Oregon’s procedures and resulting studies are designed to meet the perfunctory requirements of their non-conforming laws, for the uninformed, not the safety or due process needs of the public.