

CASE Newsletter

California Association for Safety Education Volume XXXI, No. 1 - June 2020

COVID-19 Impacts Traffic Safety Planning

By Jerry Gaines, Past CASE President

The unprecedented health crisis focusing on the COVID-19 coronavirus nationwide and worldwide has impacted the planning process for developing conference agendas as well as proposed driver licensing legislation in our nation and state. Two examples are presented here.

The *American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association* (ADTSEA) was planning to hold its 64th Annual Conference in Wichita, Kansas in July. Traffic safety educators would have traveled from throughout the country via public and private transportation to participate in various workshops and general sessions. Some attendees seek professional development credit for their driving school license needs. Exhibitors and guest speakers as well as community outings are part of such conferences. Given the health crisis and *Centers for Disease Control* (CDC) health orders, face to face group conferences are not yet permitted nationwide. Social distancing requirements make it difficult to have group meetings, and as a result, ADTSEA has decided to switch to a virtual format to offer educational sessions for those members who need professional credit. Otherwise the depth of the agenda will be presented next summer in Knoxville, Tennessee where group gatherings hopefully will again be feasible.



California Dept. of Public Health

The efforts of the *Unintentional Injury Coalition* and *Impact Teen Driver* to seek graduated licensing for older teen drivers aged 18-20 has been impacted by the COVID-19 coronavirus (as has much proposed legislation in Sacramento). **AB 3067** by Jose Medina (D) was introduced and assigned to the Assembly Transportation Committee. Unfortunately, the state legislature was forced to stay in an extended recess due to the virus, so much of the pending legislation was held in committee without time to hold hearings. The author requested to have the bill heard; however, the chair of the committee did not agree to schedule it at this time due to time constraints. Therefore the sponsors and supporters of the older teen GDL licensing measure have worked out an agreement with Assemblyman Medina to reintroduce his bill again next January, 2021 in the new 2021-2022 legislative session. Plans are to maintain the contents of the bill as written, including time lines for collecting funds prior to an effective date to cover initial costs to the DMV in establishing process for the new license. The effective date for going into effect may change. There is strong support for moving on this legislation from an array of national, state, and related stakeholders. This expanded older teen license has been recommended by the *California State Strategic Highway Safety Plan* from 2015-2019. It is again being reviewed in the new SHSP task force.

Coronavirus vs. Driver Licensing

Thousands of California teens have been unable to get their licenses due to the shut-down of driving schools as “nonessential” businesses and the closing of DMV offices around the state. The DMV doesn’t know how many teens are waiting to take their driving tests, but according to spokeswoman Anita Gore, more than 120,000 behind-the-wheel tests for teens and adults had been canceled by April 30.

Drivers hoping to take their tests may be in for an extended waiting period. The DMV has to develop a safe way to conduct driving tests with the driver and examiner sitting side by side in a vehicle, since physical distancing is impossible for in-car testing. Spokeswoman Gore said the DMV will resume driving tests “when it is safe to do so and with appropriate protective equipment.” The same considerations will also be demanded of driving schools, since behind-the-wheel lessons are not possible with the physical distancing requirements recommended by health experts.

DMV has Reopened 71 Offices

The Department of Motor Vehicles has reopened 71 offices throughout the state that had been shuttered since March 27. The reopenings are part of a phase-in to assist customers with existing appointments and with limited select transactions that require an in-person visit. Because of the limited space in offices to maintain physical distancing and public health guidelines, the DMV is not offering new appointments. Customers are required to wear a facial covering to enter the office.

Continued on page 4

How to stay healthy and avoid the spread of COVID-19



Kansas National Conference Cancelled - to be replaced by a Virtual Conference

The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) has cancelled its scheduled July conference in Wichita, Kansas due to the coronavirus pandemic. After monitoring the current situation over the past few months, the decision was made to hold the conference virtually.

The ADTSEA Board of Directors and office staff have begun working on an agenda for a Virtual Conference to be held July 17-22, from 12:00—6:00 pm EDT (9:00 am—3:00 pm PDT). Details are being finalized as this newsletter goes to publication. For the latest information, visit the ADTSEA website at: www.adtsea.org



CASE Calendar

July 17-22, 2020 - ADTSEA Virtual Conference. Contact: www.adtsea.org

September 20-26, 2020 - Child Passenger Safety Week, sponsored by NHTSA. Contact: www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/child-safety/child-passenger-safety-week

October 18-24, 2020 - National Teen Driver Safety Week, sponsored by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and NHTSA. Contact: www.teendriversource.org

October 2020 - Pedestrian Safety Month, sponsored by NHTSA. Contact: www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/pedestrian-safety

December 2020 - National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3D), sponsored by Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Contact: www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp

Notice: Change in CASE Officers

Due to personal issues, Bart Schwarz presented his resignation as CASE president effective March 13, 2020. The CASE Board expressed its appreciation for Bart's leadership in the organization. He will continue to work with CASE on its activities where feasible. Also, Scott Fisher is no longer able to serve as vice president for health reasons.

At the March 10 CASE Board of Directors Meeting, the Board approved the following changes in officer positions:

- Past President Genny Claxton will serve out Bart's term as president until June 30, 2021.
- Northern Region Representative Kristen Claxton will serve out Scott Fisher's term as vice president until June 30, 2021.



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Driver Education Resources

The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) has posted a comprehensive resource of Driver Education resources at www.adtsea.org/driver-ed-resources.phtml

ADTSEA is also offering tips for COVID-19 management and risk minimization within Driver Education. From the ADTSEA website @ www.adtsea.org select "COVID-19 Tips for Driver Educators April 2, 2020."

CHP Citations Jump by 113% for Violators Speeding More Than 100 mph

—but traffic safety benefits as more Californians stay home

SACRAMENTO — Caltrans announced a joint effort with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to urge drivers in the state to slow down given a recent 113% increase in citations for speeding in excess of 100 mph that coincides with decreased traffic volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From March 19 when the state's stay-at-home order began to April 30, the CHP reports issuing 4,000 citations statewide for speeding more than 100 mph. This increase in citations occurred as Caltrans has measured an average decline in traffic volume on state roads of approximately 35% as compared to this time last year.



“Excessive speed and unsafe driving threaten everyone using our highway system,” said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin. “Viewing less congested roads as an invitation to drive dangerously jeopardizes the safety of construction and maintenance crews who are working to maintain reliable access to our highways when people need it most.”

“It is alarming to see the number of citations officers are writing for excessive speeds on California roadways,” said CHP Commissioner Warren Stanley. “Higher speeds can lead to much more serious injuries and significantly increase the chance of death should a crash occur. Keep yourself and those on the road around you safe. Slow down and drive at a safe, legal speed.”

California's “Move Over” law continues to be in effect and requires all drivers to move over a lane or, if unable to do so safely, slow down when they see amber flashing lights on Caltrans vehicles, law enforcement and emergency vehicles, and tow trucks.

“Fewer cars on the road doesn't give drivers the green light to travel over the speed limit,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “Driving at a safe speed when you must go out is one way to keep you and your family safe during this pandemic.”

With traffic volume down, the number of incidents on California's roadways, including collisions and arrests for driving under the influence (DUI), continue to decline.

“People are adhering to the order, eliminating non-essential travel, and as a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of commuters on the highways,” said CHP Commissioner Stanley.

While Californians observe the stay-at-home order during the Coronavirus pandemic, the state's roadways and those who use them are seeing the impact.

According to preliminary data from the CHP's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS), there was a 75 percent decrease in the number of crashes in California this year from March 19 to April 30, as compared to the same period in 2019. Additionally, the same SWITRS data indicated an 88 percent reduction in the number of people killed and a 62 percent decrease in the number of people injured in crashes. The total number of truck-involved collisions also saw a 60 percent drop, with fatal truck-involved crashes down 88 percent.

California's crash reduction rate is not the only positive to come from the quieter roadways. The number of DUI arrests made by CHP officers has decreased during March and April, from 7,224 in 2019 to 4,223 in 2020; nearly 42 percent.

www.chp.ca.gov

Insurance Companies to Refund Premiums to California Drivers and Businesses Affected by the COVID-19 Emergency

On April 13, Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara ordered insurance companies to return insurance premiums to consumers and businesses and provide much-needed financial relief during the COVID-19 emergency. The order covered premiums paid for at least the months of March, April, and May and any type of insurance where the risk of loss has fallen substantially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commissioner's directive required insurance companies to provide a premium credit, reduction, return of premium, or other appropriate premium adjustment as soon as possible, and no later than August 2020. Commissioner Lara has already requested at least a 60-day grace period for policyholders to pay their premiums so that insurance policies are not cancelled for nonpayment of premium during this challenging time.

Currently, California is the only state to require car insurance refunds. Reduced driving has resulted in fewer accidents, injuries, and fatalities on public highways and roads. Falling payroll and receipts due to closure orders have also dramatically reduced risk of a liability loss for businesses.

The refunds vary in size, how they'll be delivered, and when funds will be available. The refunds or discounts range from 25% from Farmers, 21st Century and State Farm, to 15% from GEICO, Liberty Mutual, and Travelers, among other insurers. Most insurers don't require any action from customers to get the money, but consumers should contact their insurance company for more information about the refunds and how much can be expected in the form of a refund or discount.

www.insurance.ca.gov

Coronavirus vs. Driver Licensing (continued from page 1)

Extensions of Driver Licenses and Permits

With only select DMV field offices currently open to the public during the COVID-19 emergency, many Californians are unable to renew their driver licenses at field offices and may not be eligible to renew online or by mail. The DMV has extended driver licenses that expire between March and July 31, 2020 and has expanded eligibility to renew online. Drivers 70 years and older are receiving a 120-day temporary paper extension in the mail, and drivers 69 and younger can request a free temporary paper extension online.



Driver license permits expiring between March and August 31, 2020 are extended six months or to a date 24 months from the date of application, whichever is earlier. The DMV is extending permits for those who may not be able to get a driver license while behind-the-wheel drive tests are suspended. Those holding permits will not receive a new card or an extension in the mail. Drivers may continue to drive with their expired permits. The DMV has alerted California law enforcement of the extensions.

Bumper Snickers



National Teen Driver Safety Week

The next National Teen Driver Safety Week takes place October 18 to 24, 2020. Now in its 13th year, National Teen Driver Safety Week is dedicated to raising awareness and seeking solutions to prevent teen injuries and deaths on the road. This grassroots movement has brought millions of teens, parents, schools, law enforcement, advocates, and policymakers from across the country together to tackle the number one cause of death for teens in the U.S. – car crashes.

From seeking change on the local level with a seat belt check or safe driving pledge wall to meeting with elected officials, teens and others are using National Teen Driver Safety Week as a platform to create positive change.

Many people, including teens, think that the best way to reach young adults is to “scare them straight.” This rarely works. In fact, it can be overwhelming and cause teens to shut down. Research shows that teens understand they are vulnerable and are well aware of many risks. So, focusing on positive actions that teens can take to be safe and to keep their friends safe, can be powerful messages for teens. In fact, the best way to change behavior over time is messaging that promotes positive action.

Get the conversation started about safe driving behaviors during National Teen Driver Safety Week in your community, school, or workplace. Get involved by sharing safety messages with others during the next National Teen Driver Safety Week -- October 18 to 24, 2020. For more information visit:

www.teendriversource.org/advocacy-education/national-teen-driver-safety-week

Record Number of U.S. Pedestrian Deaths in 2019

—a 50% increase over the past 10 years

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A new report from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) predicts that 6,590 pedestrian fatalities occurred in 2019, the highest number in more than 30 years.

GHSA asked states to report pedestrian fatalities for the first six months of 2019. After adjusting the raw data based on historical trends, GHSA projects a 5% increase in the number of pedestrians killed during the full 2019 calendar year. In 2018, 6,227 people on foot lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes.

Pedestrians are projected to account for 17% of all traffic deaths in 2019, compared to 12% in 2009. While pedestrian deaths have been increasing significantly over the past decade, the number of all other traffic deaths has increased by only 2%.

A number of trends offer insight into the many causes behind the rise in pedestrian fatalities:

- Most pedestrian fatalities take place on local roads, at night and away from intersections, suggesting the need for safer road crossings and increased efforts to make pedestrians and vehicles more visible. During the past 10 years, the number of nighttime pedestrian fatalities increased by 67%, compared to a 16% increase in daytime pedestrian fatalities.
- Many unsafe driving behaviors – such as speeding, distracted and drowsy driving – pose risks to pedestrians, and alcohol impairment by the driver and/or pedestrian was reported in nearly half of traffic crashes that resulted in pedestrian fatalities in 2018.
- Pedestrians struck by a large SUV are twice as likely to die as those struck by a car. Although passenger cars are the largest category of vehicles in fatal pedestrian crashes, the number of pedestrian fatalities over the past decade involving SUVs increased at a faster rate – 81% – than passenger cars, which increased by 53%.

“Each year, thousands of additional people are dying in pedestrian crashes compared to a decade ago” said report author Richard Retting. “Following 30 years of declining pedestrian fatalities, there has been a complete reversal of progress. Pedestrians are at an inherent disadvantage in collisions, and we must continue to take a broad approach to pedestrian safety.”