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When it comes to motor vehicle accidents, nothing emphasizes the risks we face every time we get behind the wheel like hard data. And while cars are arguably safer than ever, the statistics indicate that we have a long way to go to make our roads truly safe. Whether the numbers are up or down, the fact is that there are far too many accidents that result in serious injuries and death.

Too many of these accidents are the result of negligence. If you have been injured in an accident or have lost a loved one, the responsible party should be held accountable for your losses. An experienced car accident attorney can help you get the compensation you need to rebuild your life.

A Discouraging Trend

The North Carolina Department of Transportation recently released its 2021 report concerning motor vehicle accidents. The following statistics are a snapshot of the overall situation on North Carolina's roads:

- There were 276,026 accidents reported, an 11.7% increase over the prior year
- These accidents included 1,783 fatalities rose, a 7.5% over the prior year
- 114,772 people were injured, an increase of 8.9% over the prior year
- Motorcycle accident fatalities increased by 14.8% with 202 motorcycle riders killed
- 2,972 motorcycle riders were injured, a 6% increase over the prior year
- 262 pedestrians were killed, a 5.2% increase over the prior year

The only category that saw a decrease in the number of fatalities was bicyclists - 22 cyclists were killed, a decrease of 21.4%.

2021 Saw Increases Over the 5-Year Average

It may not be too surprising to see increases in almost every category because of the 2020 lockdowns brought about by the pandemic. However, the 2021 statistics when compared to the 2016-2020 average are just as troubling:

- 276,026 total accidents in 2021 vs. the 5-year average of 271,307
- 1,783 fatal accidents in 2021 vs. the 5-year average of 1,481
- 114,722 injury crashes in 2021 vs. the 5-year average of 122,834

It is interesting to note that the total number of accidents and the number of fatalities increased over the 5-year average, but the number of injuries decreased. Fatalities were at the highest rate they have been over the last 5 years while injuries were at their lowest.

Alcohol Continues to Be a Significant Factor

Another disturbing trend is that alcohol-related accidents appear to be on the rise:

- There were 12,264 alcohol-related crashes in 2021, an increase over the 11,475 accidents in 2020 and the 5-year average of 11,384
- These accidents resulted in 407 fatalities and 8,100 injuries, which are both higher than the 5-year averages of 388 and 7,761, respectively

In fact, alcohol-related accidents were higher than they had ever been in the preceding five years. 2016 had just slightly more injuries (8,189), but injuries were otherwise at their highest in 2021.

Drivers Appear To Be Slowing Down

One positive note is that there were significantly fewer speed-related accidents in 2021. There were 16,282 accidents where speed was a factor. This is less than both 2020 (18,340) and the 5-year average of 18,325. The number of injuries also decreased in both comparisons, but unfortunately, there were 427 speed-related fatalities in 2021 - more than the number of fatalities in both 2020 (416) and the 5-year average of 363.

Accidents by Vehicle Type

The Department of Transportation's report also breaks down the number of accidents by vehicle type. Some of the significant categories include the following:

- There were a total of 249,927 passenger vehicle accidents, which includes 71,759 injury accidents and 1,040 fatal accidents
- There were 742 school bus accidents, which resulted in 175 injuries and 5 fatalities

- There were 3,712 motorcycle accidents, including 210 fatal accidents and 2,847 accidents that resulted in injury
- There were 2,140 pedestrian accidents, including 1,811 injuries and 276 fatalities
- There were 551 bicycle accidents, 25 of which were fatal and 506 resulted in injury

The DOT broke down truck accidents into various subcategories. Here are the leading categories:

- Panel trucks/vans: 5,619 accidents, including 1,644 injuries and 24 fatalities
- Single unit truck with 2 axles and 6 tires: 5,058 accidents, including 1,257 injuries and 35 fatalities
- Single unit truck with 3 or more axles: 2,193 accidents, including 582 injuries and 23 fatalities
- Truck and trailer: 3,567 accidents, including 772 injuries and 21 fatalities
- Semi-trailer: 4,920 accidents, including 1,142 injuries and 68 fatalities

It is not surprising to see that passenger vehicles are involved in the highest number of accidents - there are far more of them on the road than any other type of vehicle. However, there are a surprising number of motorcycle and pedestrian accidents. Among truck accidents, it is interesting to note that light trucks such as panel vans have the highest number of accidents.

North Carolina Cities Ranked

The DOT's report also ranks cities with populations of more than 10,000 based on the number of reported crashes, crash severity, crash rates per number of drivers, and various other factors. The top five cities in North Carolina for car accidents are as follows:

1. Greensboro
2. Lumberton
3. Charlotte
4. Burlington
5. Monroe

Raleigh was ranked 10th, with 68,877 accidents, 110 fatalities, and 12,947 injuries in 2021. Wilmington was ranked 14th, with 13,912 accidents, 45 fatalities, and 3,055 injuries in 2021. Durham was ranked 18th, even though that city saw more than 38,000 accidents, with 73 fatalities and 6,961 injuries.

Injured in a Car Accident? Contact Martin & Jones Today

At Martin & Jones, you are never just a statistic. We work with our clients every step of the way to make sure they get the compensation they need, from dealing with the insurance company to going to court. Let us help you reclaim your future - call us today at 800-662-1234 or send us an email to schedule a free consultation.

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