MARTIN & JONES PLLC
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The media has recently been reporting on the rising number of fatal car accidents in the Raleigh area. As lawyers who have been representing car accident victims in Raleigh and across North Carolina, we find this trend to be very troubling. Most people would expect that the number of fatal accidents would be trending downward due to advanced safety features in new cars, distracted driving publicity campaigns, and increased attention toward general highway safety.

Fatal Car Accident Statistics for the Raleigh Area

The North Carolina Department of Transportation compiles traffic accident statistics for each year. While most of the most detailed data is available only at the state level, it does provide the total number of fatal accidents for each city. Here are the fatal accident statistics for the Raleigh area (including the Raleigh-Durham airport) for the years 2015 through 2022:

- 2015 - 32 fatal accidents out of 17,004 total accidents
- 2016 - 31 fatal accidents out of 18,021 total accidents
- 2017 - 22 fatal accidents out of 17,877 total accidents
- 2018 - 28 fatal accidents out of 17,869 total accidents
- 2019 - 35 fatal accidents out of 19,098 total accidents
- 2020 - 40 fatal accidents out of 13,533 total accidents
- 2021 - 40 fatal accidents out of 15,576 total accidents
- 2022 - 62 fatal accidents out of 15,977 total accidents

Statistics are not yet available for 2023. However, the statistics we do have access to confirm that there has been a sudden surge in the number of fatal accidents in the Raleigh area. After dipping to the low 20s in 2017, they have been rising ever since. Surprisingly, there was a significant increase in 2020 despite the lockdown.

Setting aside the overall trend, 2022 saw the most dramatic increase in almost a decade with an increase of 22 fatal accidents over the prior year. This jump is shocking and raises numerous questions regarding what may be causing it. Perhaps even more troubling is that the total number of accidents remains lower than the pre-pandemic peak in 2019, yet we are seeing almost twice as many fatal accidents.

Causes Are Difficult to Identify

Various experts who study these trends are having a difficult time explaining why fatal accidents are increasing while the total number of accidents has declined. Road infrastructure has improved, eliminating some of the hazards that older roads and highways present. Modern cars are equipped with more safety features than ever. Public awareness campaigns and legislative efforts targeting behaviors such as aggressive driving, distracted driving, and driving while intoxicated are ongoing and becoming more aggressive.

Many experts believe that one explanation is that these statistics are a byproduct of our country's mental health crisis. Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses are causing people to engage in risky behaviors such as driving while intoxicated, speeding, and not wearing a seatbelt.

Other experts believe that these statistics reflect a cultural and emotional shift among drivers. Many people are working harder and are more stressed than ever. They are financially struggling to make ends meet. People feel isolated and alone as cultural norms rapidly shift. The end result is an overall decline in a sense of social responsibility and civility, leading to more aggressive and reckless driving behaviors.

Whatever the causes may be, these statistics are cause for concern. If you have lost a loved one in a serious accident, you may want to contact a car accident lawyer to discuss your options.

Most Dangerous Intersections and Roadways in Raleigh

One of the ways to keep yourself safe is to avoid dangerous roads and intersections. Some of the factors that can make a road or intersection dangerous include the following:

- Limited visibility and poor lines of sight
- The speed of traffic
- The volume of traffic and congestion
- Lighting

- The number of merging lanes or roads feeding into the intersection

According to DriveSafe Online, these are the most dangerous intersections in the Raleigh area:

- Glenwood Avenue and Creedmoor Road
- Capital Boulevard and New Hope Road
- Six Forks Road and Wake Forest Road
- South Saunder Street and Interstate 40
- Blue Ridge Road and Hillsborough Street

In a recent interview, Raleigh police chief Estella Patterson named the following three roads as the most dangerous in the Raleigh area:

1. New Bern Avenue
2. Capital Boulevard
3. South Saunders Street

Giving some thought to the route you plan to take to and from work, school, and weekend activities can reduce your likelihood of being involved in a serious car accident. You should also be mindful of traffic and weather conditions, as they can significantly increase the risk of accidents.

If you are involved in a car accident, you should consider working with an experienced car accident attorney who knows the area. Where your accident occurred can be an important factor in your case.

Wrongful Death Claims in Car Accident Cases

If you have lost a loved one in a fatal car accident, you may be entitled to compensation for your losses. Families should understand, however, that wrongful death claims are complex and can be quite difficult to pursue, especially for non-lawyers.

Under North Carolina law, only the personal representative of the decedent's estate may pursue a wrongful death claim. The personal representative is the person named in the decedent's will to administer the estate. If your loved one died without a will, you can petition the court to have yourself or another family member named as a personal representative. That person can then pursue the claim on behalf of the estate. Any compensation they recover through the wrongful death suit will be distributed to the heirs of the estate.

To ensure that your claim is successful, we recommend that you work with a car accident attorney who has experience in handling wrongful death claims. You only have one opportunity to get the compensation you need to rebuild your life.

Contact Martin & Jones if You or Someone You Love Has Been in a Car Accident

The consequences of a serious car accident can change your life forever. Fortunately, you do not have to face the future alone. A car accident attorney from Martin & Jones can help you get the compensation you need to rebuild your life. Call us today at 800-662-1234 or contact us online to schedule a free consultation.

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