

# PROGRESS REPORT

## UNLICENSED DRIVERS POSE DEADLY THREAT, STUDY SHOWS

When drivers lose their licenses, they don't necessarily stop driving — and the results can be deadly. A recent study by the AAA Foundation looked at the license status of drivers who were involved in fatal crashes and found that, overall, 20 percent of fatal crashes involved at least one driver who did not have a valid license.

Dr. Lindsay Griffin of the Texas Transportation Institute used the government's Fatality Analysis Reporting System to examine 278,078 drivers who were involved in 183,749 fatal crashes. Dr. Griffin found that 7.4 percent of the drivers had a suspended, revoked, expired, or canceled license. Another 3.7 percent had no license at all, while the license status of 2.7 percent could not be determined. (This last category included hit-and-run fatalities.) Over the four years of the study, 42,049 people were killed in crashes involving unlicensed drivers.

"Drivers operating on invalid licenses at the time of their fatal crashes are different from the rest of us," Dr. Griffin says. "Not only were their licenses invalid, but 28 percent of them had received three or more license suspensions or revocations in the three years before their crashes. These are not just ordinary people who forgot to renew."

## DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS

October 31 is the deadline for submitting unsolicited research proposals to the AAA Foundation for consideration at the Foundation's funding meeting next February. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety sponsors research into problem traffic behaviors and develops materials to educate drivers and other road users about safe practices.

Guidelines for research proposals are available at [www.aaafoundation.org/Text/Proposal.cfm](http://www.aaafoundation.org/Text/Proposal.cfm).



David Willis, President of the AAA Foundation, called for states to take legal and administrative action that would keep unlicensed drivers off the road. "These drivers are out there killing people," he said. "It's the same as 40 to 50 large commercial airliners falling out of the sky each year."

The incidence of unlicensed driving varied greatly from state to state. New Mexico leads the country with 24 percent of fatal-crash drivers having aberrant licenses, followed by the District of Columbia, Arizona, California, and Hawaii. At the other end of the scale is Maine, with the national low of 6.4 percent, followed by New Hampshire, Minnesota, Kentucky, and Massachusetts.

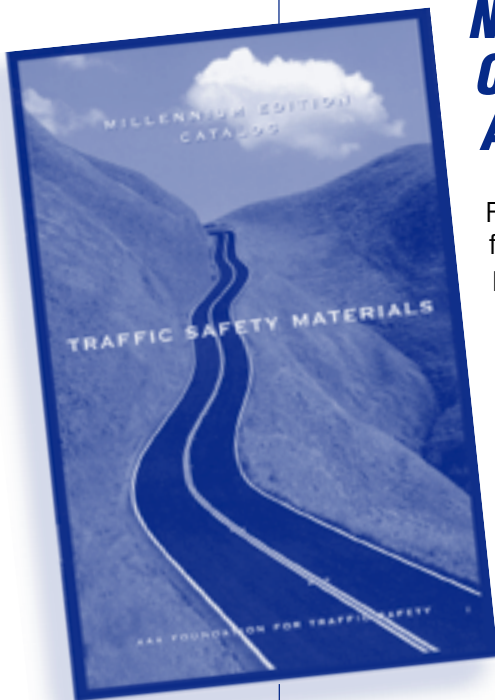
Dr. Griffin called for new strategies to prevent proven offenders from continuing to drive. Research indicates that California drivers whose vehicles are impounded under that state's law have fewer crashes. New technologies such as "smart card" driver licenses may also make it possible to identify unlicensed drivers and prevent them from driving.

To read the complete report in PDF format, go to the Foundation's web site at [www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/unlicensed2kill.PDF](http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/unlicensed2kill.PDF) or request a printed copy from the Foundation.

*Dr. Lindsey Griffin (center) and David Willis (right) speak with reporters after a press conference on unlicensed drivers.*

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## NEW CATALOGUE OFFERS VIDEOS AND MORE

Check out the AAA Foundation's new catalogue – it's full of safety items, including the popular "Preventing Road Rage" and "Children in Traffic" videos, as well as the ever-popular "Otto the Auto" videos. You can also order enhanced visibility products — caps, arm bands, and vests that use retro-reflective material for maximum safety. In keeping with the information age, the catalogue is available in electronic and paper forms. Visit the catalogue on line at [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org).

You can also request a paper copy by e-mailing [dperkins@aaafoundation.org](mailto:dperkins@aaafoundation.org) or writing to "Catalogue" at Suite 201, 1440 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

## WEB SITE ADDS FEATURES

Want to find information on the AAA Foundation web site? Use our new boolean search engine. ("Boolean" means that it will search for combinations of words or even for some words and not others.) "Our old search engine wasn't as efficient," says Jack Hoch, the AAA Foundation's webmaster. "I've also added a couple of features that are fun." That includes a weekly poll on traffic safety issues. Web users can express their views in the poll, order free brochures from the improved shopping cart, or find copies of AAA Foundation research and publications in PDF format.

Over time the web site is increasingly becoming an expert source for traffic safety information. "Views are increasing at a rate of 10 to 15 percent per month," Hoch says. "Our 'Unlicensed to Kill' study received 5,700 views in just 48 hours."

Hoch has added one more feature that should appeal to the 24/7 crowd: if you're up late and have been on line for hours, the site's clock will remind you of the date and time.

## NETHERLANDS, GERMANY SHOW HOW TO MAKE WALKING SAFER

Medical professionals advise people to walk more for exercise. Yet Americans are walking less than they used to, while citizens of The Netherlands and Germany are walking more than they used to, and they walk far more than Americans do. In The Netherlands and Germany 17 and 22 percent of trips are made by foot, respectively, compared with 6 percent in the United States. Among older pedestrians the difference is even greater: In Germany, 48 percent of people over 75 walk for transportation and in The Netherlands it's 24 percent, compared with this country's 6 percent.

An article by John Pucher and Lewis Dijkstra, published in *Transportation Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3, suggests that one reason Americans walk less than Europeans is because of safety concerns. Their article, "Making Walking and Cycling Safer" examines the difference in pedestrian and cycling fatality rates among the three countries and looks at their strategies for addressing pedestrian and cycling safety.

Although fatality rates are going down, the U.S. is vastly more dangerous for pedestrians than either of the comparison countries. The Netherlands has just 1.1 fatalities per 100 million pedestrian trips. Germany's 2.4 is still remarkably low compared to the United States, where

**Progress Report** is issued every other month by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, a not-for-profit, publicly-supported charitable educational and research organization. Visit our web site at [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)

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walkers have a whopping 29.1 fatalities per 100 million trips.

The study identifies several factors that make European countries safer. First, they have more pedestrian-friendly facilities: The Netherlands and Germany both have auto-free pedestrian shopping zones, clearly marked crosswalks, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian-activated crossing signals, as well as “refuge islands” in the center of the wider streets. Neighborhoods use traffic calming strategies to reduce vehicle speeds, while overall urban design is directed to favor pedestrians. In traffic, drivers are taught to give the right of way to pedestrians and traffic regulations and enforcement strongly favor pedestrians. If a pedestrian is hit, the driver is almost always charged as being at fault.

The authors suggest that the United States can improve its dismal pedestrian statistics by building more and better facilities, creating urban designs that favor pedestrians, using traffic calming in residential neighborhoods, restricting motor vehicle use in certain areas, better educating the public, and enforcing regulations that protect pedestrians and bicyclists.

As the authors state, “In short, the dangers of walking and cycling in America are not just perceived: They are real.”

## **TENNESSEE CLUB USES MOVIE TO TEACH SAFETY**

When a theater approached Don Lindsey, director of public affairs for AAA East Tennessee about attending the opening of the movie “Road Trip” at the Regal Cinemas East Towne Crossing 8, he was immediately interested – the film seemed a natural opportunity to teach safety to teens.

“Road Trip” catalogues the bizarre misadventures of four college students who drive madly from Ithaca, New York to Austin, Texas, trying to get there ahead of an embarrassing videotape they sent by mail. The film’s themes of long- distance driving and risk-taking, coupled with its appeal to a young audience, make it a perfect vehicle for teaching traffic safety.

“We gave away 400 to 500 pieces of safety information, on drowsy driving, road rage, truck safety, all sorts of things, including reflective vests,” Lindsey says. “We also had a drawing in which we gave away three driver-ZED CDs, three road rage videos, and three “Wake Up!” tapes.”

When the ticket line backed up, Lindsey walked up and down offering prizes to people who could answer questions about safety. “I came up with a question, such as ‘how far behind the car should you follow for a safe following distance?’ And no matter what the answer was I gave them a prize, and then we talked about the answer so the other people in line heard it too.”

Lindsey had a traffic safety display for three days and feels it was a positive experience: “Considering that the people were there to be entertained, not to learn, I felt like we had a pretty good response. There were questions and admiration for us being there,” he says.

“Depending on the situation, I think we could probably do it again.”

## **LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLE SAFETY STUDY**

Extra long tractor-trailer trucks, known as “longer combination vehicles” or LCVs, are a common sight in some Western states. These multi-trailer freight carriers intimidate motorists by their size, yet trucking companies claim LCVs are as safe or safer than regular trucks. The AAA Foundation has just released a study, “Longer Combination Vehicle Safety Data Collection,” that analyzes how five states — Florida, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah — report crashes involving these vehicles.

The authors examined crash and “exposure” (vehicle miles traveled) data in the five states to see how accurately they reflected the circumstances and vehicles involved in crashes. The authors concluded, “None of the five states has a crash reporting system that adequately supports the analysis of LCV safety.” They add that the current data collection practices do not provide enough information to make any kind of safety judgment — crash reports do not accurately show vehicle configurations (e.g., numbers and lengths of trailers involved) and there is no data on how many miles are traveled each year by various kinds of LCVs.

This peer-reviewed study, conducted for the AAA Foundation by Data Nexus, Inc., College

—continued next page



*Don Lindsey  
Director of Public  
Affairs, AAA East  
Tennessee, hands  
out AAA Foundation  
materials at the  
opening of the movie  
“Road Trip.”*

***“None of the five states has a crash reporting system that adequately supports the analysis of LCV safety.”***

**LCV SAFETY STUDY** (continued)

Station, Texas, is posted on our Web site ([www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)), under "research," and printed copies are available by contacting the Foundation.

## **DRIVER-ZED GROWS UP: NEW VERSION DESIGNED FOR EXPERIENCED DRIVERS**



The Foundation's popular driver risk-management software isn't just for teens any more. A new version of driver-ZED is aimed at experienced drivers – adults who may have had years behind the wheel but could use some updated practice. The new version of driver-ZED uses the same live-action digitized video as the original, but offers a more

structured learning style and an improved scoring system.

Instead of teen hosts, soothing adult voices provide instructions and guidance. And the teen-narrated safety tips have been replaced with short clips from AAA Foundation videos such as "Preventing Road Rage" and "Dangerous Crossings."

Employers, driving schools, and individuals who want to improve their driving skills can order driver-ZED for Adult Drivers by calling 1-800-305-SAFE (1-800-305-7233) or by logging on to the Foundation's web site at [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org).

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR DRIVER-ZED:**

Technical support for both versions of driver-ZED is being handled by the software's developer, Electronic Learning Facilitators. You can contact ZED Tech support at [ZEDsupport@elfinc.com](mailto:ZEDsupport@elfinc.com) or call and leave a message on 1-800-296-3531, ext. 200. Someone will get back to you and help solve the problem.

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