The use of cannabis and prescription and other drugs are increasingly prominent on our roadways, where 16.2 percent of the nation’s 37,461 fatalities in 2016 were related to drug-involved driving. In the United States, several states have legalized the use of medical and/or recreational cannabis, increasing concerns about traffic safety. Aside from alcohol, cannabis is the most frequently detected drug in drivers who are involved in collisions. The impact of drugs on the brain and behavior varies considerably depending on the type of drug and how it is metabolized. There are also large variations across jurisdictions in the frequency of testing suspected impaired drivers for drugs, the consistency of laboratory drug testing practices, and the capacity of law enforcement. In the United States, 6,058 people were killed in drug-involved collisions in 2016, a 9.5 percent decrease from 6,696 in 2015, and a 7.6 percent increase from 5,630 in 2012. In 2016, among fatally injured drivers with known drug tests, 42.7 percent were positive for legal or illegal drugs.

—Katherine L. Chen, Bor-Wen Tsai, Garrett Fortin, and Jill F. Cooper—

The highest number of fatal and severe injuries from drug-involved driving collisions occurred in the southern part of the state—Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties. Conversely, the highest rate of fatal and severe injury from drug-involved driving collisions by population were concentrated in the more rural parts of the state in Alpine and Modoc counties.
The majority (83.4%) of the primary collision factors for drug-involved collisions comprise driving or bicycling under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Hit object was the most prevalent type of drug-involved crash (38.2%). The next two most common collision types were head-on (18.4%), and broadside (14.8%).

Drug-involved fatal and severe injuries varied greatly by day of week and time of day. Nearly 40% of drug-involved fatal and severe injuries occurred on Saturday or Sunday. Though comprising only 12 hours (7.1%) of the week, Saturday afternoon into the night (3pm to 3am) accounted for 14.9% of all drug-involved fatal and severe injuries.

Drug-involved fatal and severe injury victims were predominantly young male adults (age 15-44), comprising 50.8% of all victims.

Over half (55.1%) of all drug-involved fatalities occurred on non-interstate principal arterials (high-capacity urban roads). The next most common roadway type was non-interstate minor arterial (16.8%).

In 2016, just under three-quarters (72.7%) of drug-involved collision fatalities occurred in passenger vehicles, while 25.3% were on motorcycles, and 2% involved other vehicle types.

**REFERENCES**