

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, the total number of motor vehicle fatalities in Colorado increased for the first time in six years, after steadily declining between 2007 and 2011. There were 472 motor vehicle fatalities in 2012, a 5.6 percent increase in fatalities from 2011. The increase in motor vehicle fatalities was not unique to Colorado, as the United States overall experienced a 3.3 percent increase in motor vehicle fatalities from 2011 to 2012.

In order to reach the goals set forth in the Colorado Department of Transportation's 2014 Integrated Safety Plan, it is imperative to stop the recent increases in fatalities and then once again decrease fatalities. Data from 2012 indicate that Colorado has the following three key problem areas:

- **Speeding-related fatalities;**
- **Unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities; and**
- **Alcohol impaired driver fatalities.**

In 2012, speeding-related fatalities, unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, and fatalities with a driver impaired by alcohol accounted for the three largest proportions of the 472 motor vehicle deaths at 162 (34 percent), 156 (33 percent), and an estimated 133 (28 percent), respectively. Though the five year trend data show these areas to be improving, focusing prevention efforts on these areas still provides the greatest opportunity to impact the total number of fatalities.

Additionally, this report identifies an emerging area of interest for Colorado.

- **Driving while impaired by marijuana:** In 2013, voters approved a state constitutional amendment legalizing the recreational use of marijuana for people at least 21 years old in Colorado. Since recreational marijuana sales began January 1, 2014, Coloradans are concerned about the impacts of driving while impaired by drugs. While there is minimal data on driving while impaired by drugs available to present in this report, and none specific to marijuana, the Colorado Department of Transportation is actively monitoring this issue.

The traffic safety problems identified in this report guide the Colorado Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office in the distribution of resources and development of prevention programs.