Japan Traffic Accident Statistics for 2004

In 2004, the number of fatalities resulting from traffic accidents was tracked at 7,358 persons, a decline of 4.5% from 2003 (when deaths fell below 8,000 persons for the first time in 46 years). However, both the number of accidents and persons injured in those mishaps rose slightly over the previous year levels, setting new all-time highs. The number of accidents exceeded 900,000 for the fifth consecutive year, and the total for injured persons was over one million persons for the sixth straight year. These figures combine to underscore the continuation of a worrisome trend in Japan’s traffic environment.

It is thought that the basic background for this increase in number of accidents and injuries is attributable to the increase in vehicle unit ownership, the number of licensed drivers and the total distances being driven.

With the exception of 1995 and 2000, the number of traffic accident fatalities has steadily declined on a year-to-year basis over the past decade. The leading reasons cited for this progress include, “improvements in the seatbelt wearing rate,” “reduced vehicle speed just prior to impact,” “declines in highly malicious and dangerous accidents,” and the “reduced share of fatalities or injuries to illegal pedestrians.”

Source: National Police Agency
Viewed by age and mobility format, the number of fatalities among riders and passengers of two-wheeled vehicles was 1,313 persons, a decline of 3.0% from 2003. Of that number, motorcycle rider and passenger fatalities totaled 673 persons (of which the younger age bracket, age 16–24, made up 214 persons, or a 31.8% share), and moped rider and passenger deaths 640 persons (of which the elderly, age 65 and above, accounted for 262 persons, or 40.9%).

Among brackets charting conspicuous increases over 2003 were fatalities of motorcycle riders and passengers in their 30s (up 37 persons, +23.6%); elderly riders and passengers of mopeds (up 25 persons, +10.5%); and riders and passengers of mopeds in their 50s (up 23 persons, +37.1%). A sharp decline, meanwhile was recorded in fatalities of younger riders and passengers of motorcycles (down 58 persons, -21.3%).

**Number of Fatalities by Age and Mobility Format**

Viewing the number of fatal accidents for operators of vehicles of moped status and above (first party concerned) by legal violation and age, the most frequent cases were violations for reckless driving (930 accidents, 14.3%); glancing away from the road (845, 13.0%); and exceeding the speed limit (711, 10.9%). There was a particularly sharp rise in reckless driving violations (up 20 accidents from the previous year, +2.2%), while speed limit
violations fell conspicuously for both operators in their 30s (down 66 accidents, -31.9%) and younger persons (down 66 accidents, -21.0%)

Fatal Accidents Involving Operators of Moped Vehicles and Above (First Party Concerned) by Legal Violation and Age

Source: National Police Agency

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