Outdoor Advertising Association of America

# What does the Traffic Accident Data Say?

Traffic accident data is a valued, standard tool for policy makers. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sums up this point:

> *"Traffic records are the basis for defining, managing, and evaluating traffic safety and performance."*

## Did you know that crash-data studies show no increase in accidents near digital billboards? Industry in these markets reviewed:

- Cuyahoga County, OH (2007)
  - Accident reports **3 years** before and after installation of digital billboards
  - **7 digital billboards** located along Interstates
  - **33,000 accident records** from the Ohio Department of Transportation.

- Rochester, MN (2009)
  - Accident reports spanning more than **4 years** before and after installation
  - **5 digital billboards** located along local roads
  - **18,000 accident records** from the local police department.

- Cuyahoga County, OH (2009)
  This study updated the 2007 report, evaluating more time and data:
  - Accident reports **4 years** before and after installation
  - **7 digital billboards** along Interstates (same structures as 2007 study
  - **60,000+ accident records** from the Ohio DOT

- Albuquerque, NM (2010)
  - Accident reports spanning **3½ years** before and after the installation
  - **17 digital billboards** located along local roads
  - **7,000+ accident records** from the local police department

- Reading, PA (2010)
  - Accident reports spanning **4 years** before and after installation
  - **26 digital billboard faces** on 20 structures along expressways and local roads
  - **35,000 accident records** from Pennsylvania DOT and local police

## Key Findings

- There is no statistically significant relationship between accidents and digital billboards; digital billboards are "safety neutral"
- More than 120,000 accident records in proximity to 55 digital billboard faces were analyzed
- *Circumstances different . . . conclusion the same*
    - Size of digital billboards were different:
        - Standardized bulletins in Cuyahoga County (14'x48')
        - Standardized bulletins in Rochester (10'6"x36')
        - Standardized posters in Albuquerque (12'x24')
        - Variety of bulletins, posters, and miscellaneous sizes in Reading
    - Digital billboard locations were different:
        - Along **Interstates** in the Cuyahoga County
        - Along **local roads** in Rochester and Albuquerque
        - Along **local roads and expressways** in Reading
    - Combined traffic counts exceed one-half billion cars per year

- *The age of driver is a neutral factor*
    - Younger drivers (under 21) show no increases in accident rates
    - Older drivers (over 65) show no increases in accident rates
      *The researchers said: "For comparisons of younger, older or nighttime drivers, there are no increases in accident rates near these digital billboards"*

- *Time of day is a neutral factor*
    - Daytime and nighttime comparisons show no increases in rates in the area surrounding the digital billboards

## The consistent outcome from these studies:

***Digital Billboards are NOT Linked to Accidents***