

Study: Pedestrian deaths rose in states where pot is legal

By Neal E. Boudette, New York Times

Pedestrian deaths in traffic accidents have reached levels not seen in years, and a safety group has sought to explain why. It has identified several possible causes, like digital distractions and an increase in driving. Now it has added another: marijuana.

Over the first six months of 2017, pedestrian fatalities rose sharply from a year earlier in states that had legalized recreational marijuana, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. In the rest of the country, such deaths declined.

“We are not making a definitive, cause-and-effect link to marijuana,” said Richard Retting, a traffic safety engineer at Sam Schwartz Consulting who was the author of the study. The data “is a marker for concern,” he added. “It may be a canary in a coal mine, an early indicator to address.”

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