Study shows freeway median cable barriers stop vehicles from crashing into oncoming traffic

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Credit: University of Dayton

As America slowly reopens and people resume hitting the open road, travelers through the Buckeye State can rest assured median cable

barriers are doing their job. A University of Dayton Transportation Engineering Lab study of 2,209 highway crashes where a vehicle hit or crossed median cable barriers shows only 1.7% of vehicles involved breached the barriers and crashed into oncoming traffic.

Approximately 95% of vehicles in crashes surveyed did not breach the barriers at all while 2.9% breached the barriers but did not cross into oncoming traffic.

The study also showed barriers stopped motorcycles 100% of the time, passenger cars 96.5% of the time, light trucks 95.5% of the time, medium trucks 88% of the time and heavy trucks 85.9% of the time.

The Ohio Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration funded this, the first analysis of the barriers Ohio started installing along highway medians narrower than 59 feet in 2003, according to Deogratias Eustace, director of the UD Transportation Engineering Lab.

The lab, housed in the department of civil and environmental engineering and engineering mechanics, researches transportation system planning, design, testing and operations; traffic control and analysis; intelligent transportation system evaluation; highway safety assessment; and crash data analysis. Previous research projects have examined crashes in construction zones, factors involved in crashes between motorcycles and motor vehicles, roadway departure crashes, and seat belt use.

Provided by University of Dayton

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