

Drugged driving a growing problem in Calif.

By Tony Bizjak and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The horrific crash in Auburn on Sunday, when an allegedly drugged driver plowed into two teenage pedestrians, came as no shock to law enforcement and traffic safety officials. Slowly, but surely, drugged driving is surpassing drunken driving as a lethal threat on state and local roads.

“This is a big, complicated problem that the driving public needs to recognize is serious,” said Chris Cochran, assistant director with the state Office of Traffic Safety, which has begun a public education campaign on the road dangers of everyday drugs.

About 1 in 7 drivers involved in fatal wrecks in California during 2014 tested positive for at least one potentially impairing drug other than alcohol, according to a *Sacramento Bee* review of data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Most drivers aren’t tested for drugs, particularly if they survive a crash or weren’t at fault. Among California drivers who died and were tested in 2013 and 2014, more than one-third had drugs in their system, state and federal data show.

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