

[https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/study-daylight-savings-switch-increases-fatal-car-crashes/article\\_fad05002-438a-11ea-b010-d729a54f2f40.html](https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/study-daylight-savings-switch-increases-fatal-car-crashes/article_fad05002-438a-11ea-b010-d729a54f2f40.html)

## Study: Daylight savings switch increases fatal car crashes

Michael Karlik, Colorado Politics

Jan 30, 2020

A new study from University of Colorado researchers has found a 6% rise in fatal car crashes in the United States during the week after the start of daylight savings time.

"Prior to 2007, we saw the risk increase in April. And when daylight saving time moved to March, so did the risk increase," said co-author Céline Vetter. "That gave us even more confidence that the risk increase we observe is indeed attributable to the daylight saving time switch, and not something else."

The researchers examined 732,835 motor vehicle accidents from 1996 to 2017. While the overall numbers followed a seasonal pattern, they discovered an elevated rate in the workweek following the spring transition to daylight savings time.

They associated the time change with **28 roadway fatalities annually, as people drive to work in darkness** again. In the time period studied, 627 deaths were associated with daylight savings time, with **larger fatality rates in the western part of time zones that experience longer periods of morning darkness**.

The study appeared in the journal *Current Biology* on Thursday. The authors add that **"circadian misalignment" and sleep deprivation correlated with the time change may play a bigger role** in the prevalence of crashes than simply a difference in ambient light.

**Transitioning off of daylight savings time in the fall did not result in elevated crash rates.**

"Our results support the theory that abolishing time changes completely would improve public health," said Vetter. "But where do we head from here? Do we go to permanent standard time or permanent daylight saving time?"

She added that the presence of **morning light is beneficial for overall health and sleep patterns, suggesting a preference toward year-round standard time**.

In the General Assembly, Senate Bill 20-105 would place Colorado permanently on daylight savings time, if federal law changes to allow it.

There is also a current ballot initiative filed with the Secretary of State's office that would also put Colorado on year-round daylight savings time. One of its designated proponents, former Sen. Greg Brophy, R-Wray, pointed out that the CU study was in line with previous research on the hazards of the time change.

"It's ridiculous that we still suffer through this completely unnecessary and dangerous ritual," he said.

Brophy, a longtime opponent of the clock-change, added that the ski resorts previously opposed his efforts, ostensibly for fear of how it would affect the time people spent on the slopes. During the 2011 attempt, one resort spokesperson cited operational challenges "and other unknowns."

Michael Karlik, Colorado Politics