

ITARDA INFORMATION

交通事故分析レポート

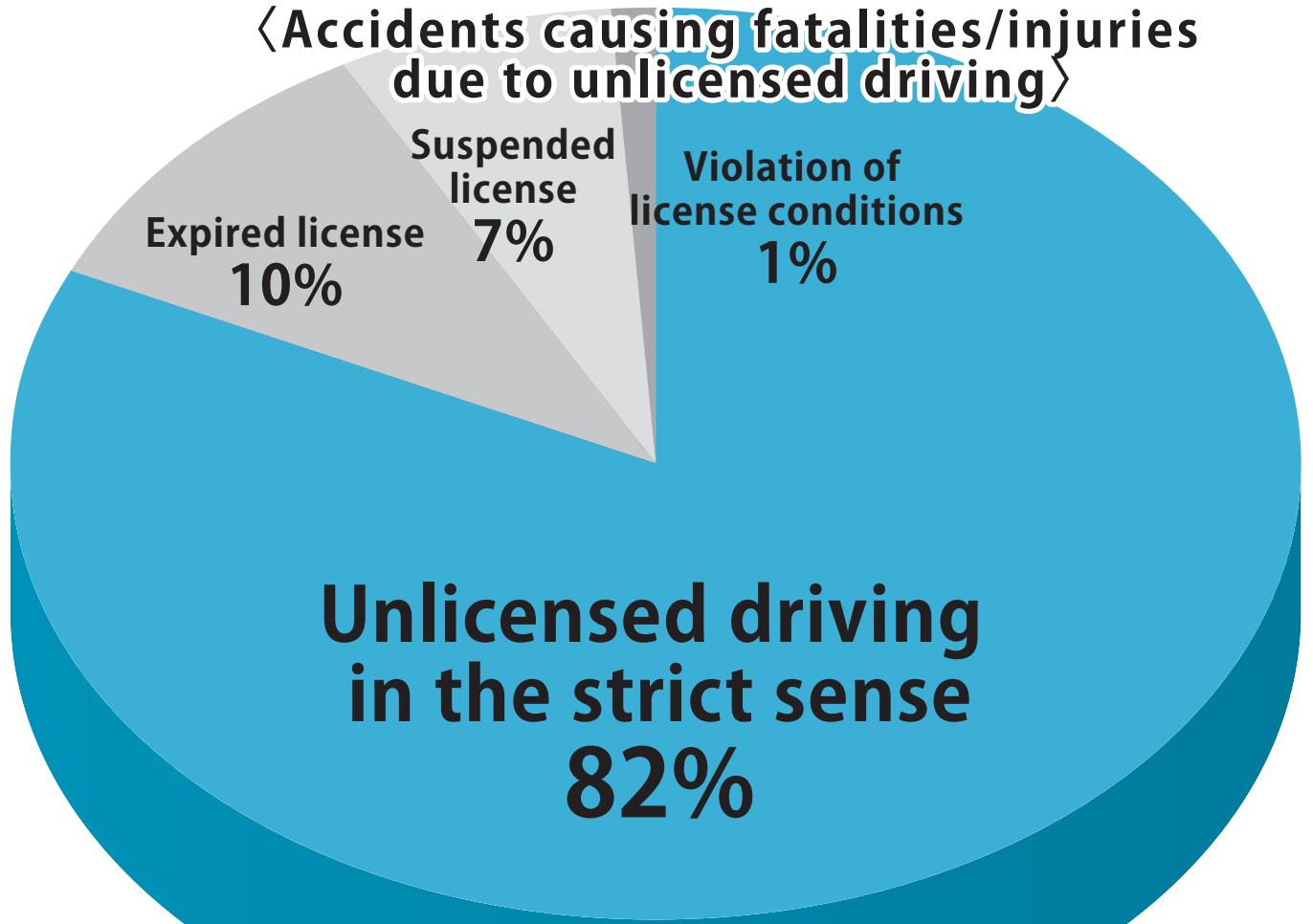
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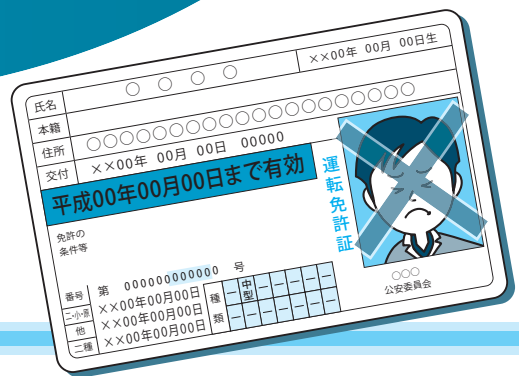
Let's eliminate unlicensed driving accidents

~Creating an environment with zero unlicensed driving and zero tolerance for unlicensed driving~

2007~2011: 14,816 unlicensed driving accidents
 〈Accidents causing fatalities/injuries due to unlicensed driving〉



| | |
|--|----|
| ① Introduction | P2 |
| ② Characteristics of unlicensed driving | P2 |
| ③ Unlicensed driving is more likely to lead to serious accidents. | P4 |
| ④ Unlicensed drivers drive more dangerously..... | P6 |
| ⑤ Unlicensed drivers have a low level of road user ethics. | P7 |
| ⑥ Summary | P8 |



1 Introduction

Although the numbers of unlicensed driving accidents are decreasing year on year, the especially dangerous types of accidents which tend to be caused by unlicensed driving are a problem that is refusing to go away. Unlicensed driving causes the following problems:

- People believe that “Having no license to drive is not in itself dangerous behavior.”
 - Driver’s driving skill may diminish over time due to factors like age or illness. An unlicensed driver has not taken his or her latest aptitude test indicating the possibility of insufficient driving skills.
 - A much higher rate of unlicensed drivers flee from the scene of accidents after they occur without taking the appropriate steps, because they are afraid of being detected.
- Another major problem is that “drivers who have started to drive without a license already have a tendency not to take traffic rules seriously, and have a low level of awareness about the need to adhere to the such rules,” a fact which can easily lead to serious consequences.

In this issue, we will explain the characteristics of unlicensed driving accidents, the dangers of unlicensed driving and other matters; we hope this issue will serve as a useful reference for creating an environment with “zero unlicensed driving and zero tolerance for unlicensed driving.”

■ Definition of “unlicensed driving etc.”

Unlicensed driving etc. as defined in Road Traffic Accident Statistics by National Police Agency is categorized into the following types from A to D. The percentage of traffic accidents causing fatalities/injuries (over a five-year period from 2007-2011) by these types are shown in the front page figure of this issue. In this issue of ITARDA Information, such accidents will be analyzed as “unlicensed driving accidents.”

(Accidents caused by drivers with valid licenses over the same five-year period: n = 3,535,830, all figures from Fig. 2 onward are based on the same criteria)

- A. Unlicensed driving in the strict sense
Where the driver does not hold a valid driver’s license and does not correspond to Categories B, C, or D below.
- B. Suspended license
Where the driver’s license has been suspended.
- C. Expired license
Where the driver’s license has been suspended due to not being renewed, and where less than six months has elapsed since the date of expiry.
- D. Violation of license conditions
Where the driver has violated one or more license conditions such as AT (Automatic transmission) vehicles only.

2 Characteristics of unlicensed driving

■ Trends in unlicensed driving accidents

As Table 1 and Fig. 1 show, the number of unlicensed driving accidents decreased year on year between 2002 and 2011. However when the numbers of unlicensed driving and drink-driving accidents are compared, it is evident that while drink-driving accidents decreased by 75% from 2002 to 2011 partly due to the impact of crackdowns, tougher penalties and the like, unlicensed driving accidents decreased by only 54% over the same period, a smaller margin.

One reason cited for the difference in these rates of decrease is that people do not think of unlicensed driving as being particularly dangerous, and believe that it is not a serious matter. However, unlicensed driving, like drink-driving, is a dangerous behavior which can easily lead to serious accidents.

The results of our analysis of the dangerousness of unlicensed driving will be set out in the following section.

Table 1: Trends in no. of unlicensed driving accidents

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Slight injuries | 4,437 | 4,397 | 4,238 | 3,875 | 3,516 | 2,960 | 2,527 | 2,312 | 2,205 | 2,130 |
| Serious injuries | 1,017 | 875 | 804 | 684 | 645 | 547 | 482 | 479 | 402 | 392 |
| Fatalities | 202 | 181 | 156 | 148 | 108 | 87 | 94 | 71 | 63 | 65 |
| Total | 5,656 | 5,453 | 5,198 | 4,707 | 4,269 | 3,594 | 3,103 | 2,862 | 2,670 | 2,587 |

*Drink-driving accidents: Accidents caused by drivers who were drunk, under the influence of alcohol, or whose results fell below the threshold levels on breath tests (including drivers who have been drinking alcohol but in whom this could not be detected due to the passage of time).

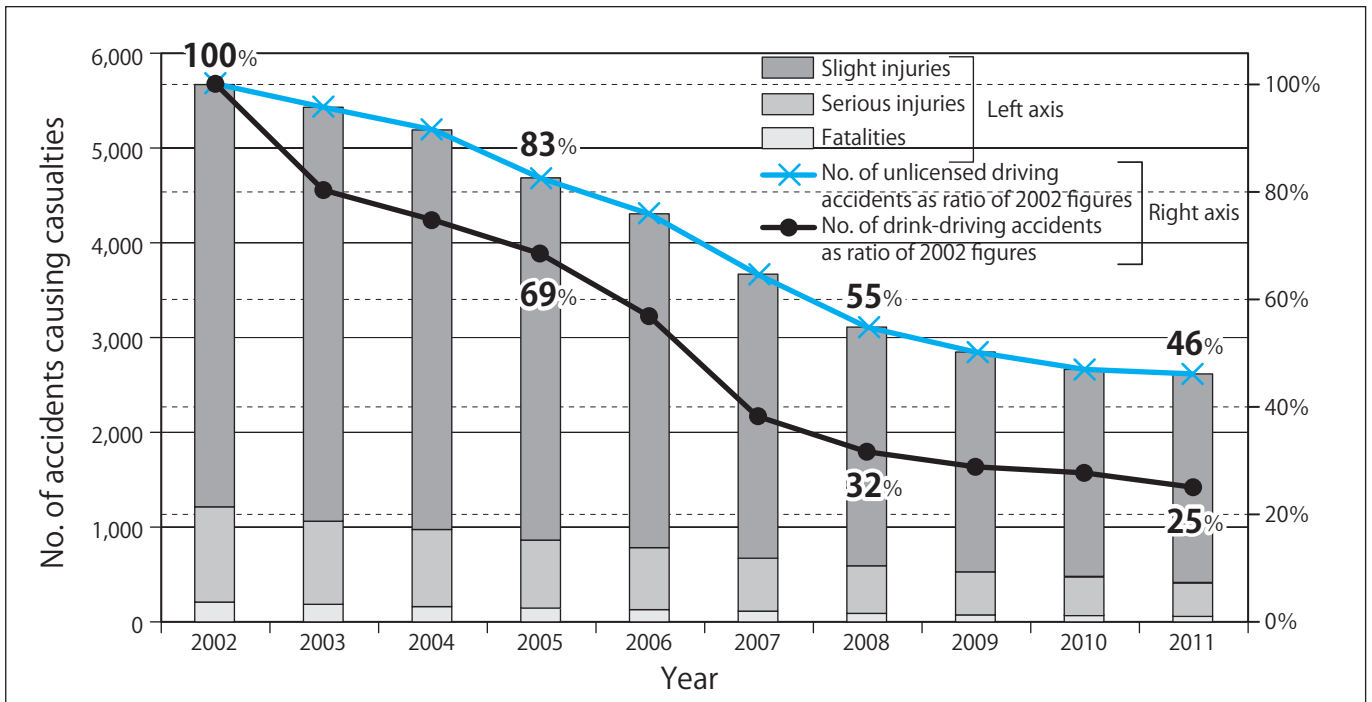


Fig 1: Trends in no. of unlicensed driving accidents

Time of unlicensed driving accidents

Fig.2 shows the percentage of unlicensed driving accidents by their time of occurrence. It is evident that the percentage is higher between morning and evening time, as is the case with accidents caused by licensed drivers. This could be because drivers are only vaguely aware that unlicensed driving is a criminal offense, and find it easy to believe that “As long as I don’t get caught, it’s okay...” with the result that they feel confident about driving in the daytime.

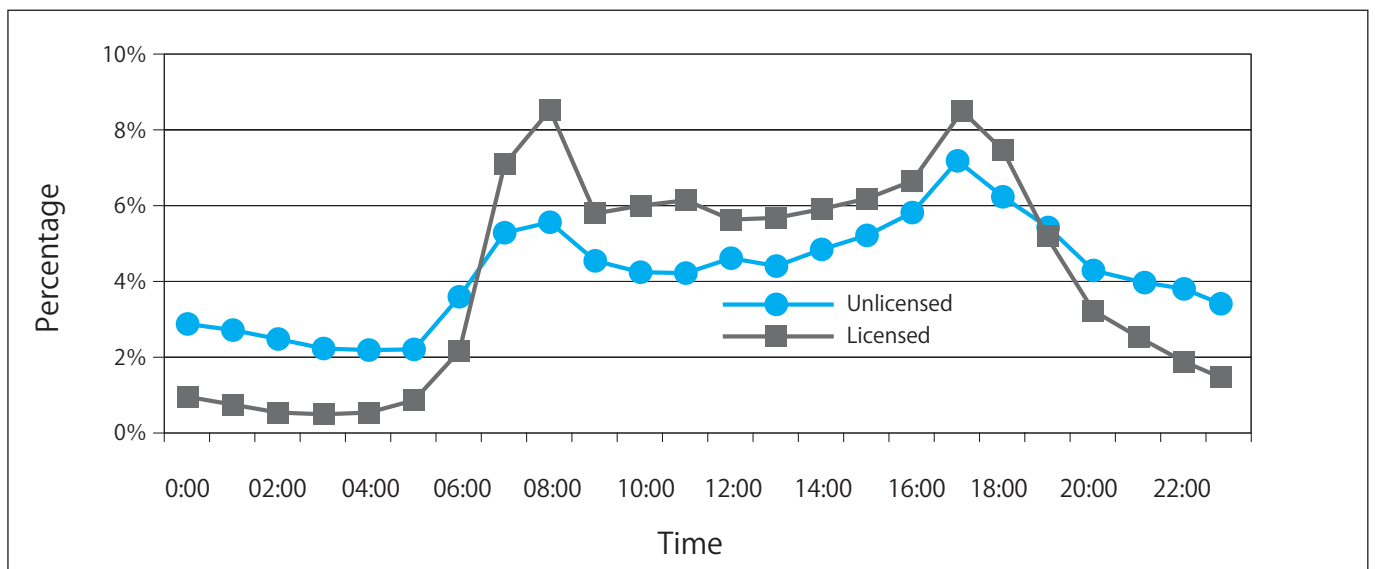


Fig. 2: Percentage of unlicensed driving accidents by their time of occurrence

Passenger occupancy rate when accidents occur

Fig. 3 shows the rate of passenger occupancy in vehicles when accidents occurred. The figure shows that passengers were present at a higher rate in unlicensed driving accidents, indicating that those cases of unlicensed driving could have possibly been stopped. Some of these passengers would not have known that the driver was unlicensed; however, if a passenger occupies a vehicle knowing that the driver is unlicensed, he or she could face charges of aiding and abetting (i.e. assisting) unlicensed driving.

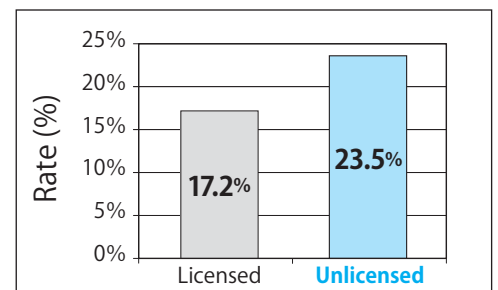


Fig. 3: Passenger occupancy rates

3 Unlicensed driving is more likely to lead to serious accidents.

This section will describe how unlicensed driving (regardless of the type, age or place) can easily lead to serious consequences, just as drink-driving can.

■ Unlicensed driving is dangerous regardless of its type.

There are many types of people who engage in unlicensed driving: these include people who have never acquired a license, people whose licenses have been revoked, people who have not undertaken renewal procedures and allowed their licenses to expire, and drivers whose licenses have been suspended. Fig.4 shows the difference in the degree of danger depending on the type of unlicensed driving, indicating that when accidents are caused by drivers who are “unlicensed in the strict sense,” the rate of serious accidents (accidents causing fatalities/serious injuries) is approximately 2.7 times the rate of such accidents among “licensed drivers.” Similarly, the serious accident rates among accidents caused by “expired” and “suspended” drivers are higher than among “licensed” drivers. It is evident from this that while there are many different types of unlicensed driving involving drivers with and without driving skills, the risk of causing serious accidents is higher among all unlicensed drivers regardless of its type, compared to licensed driving.

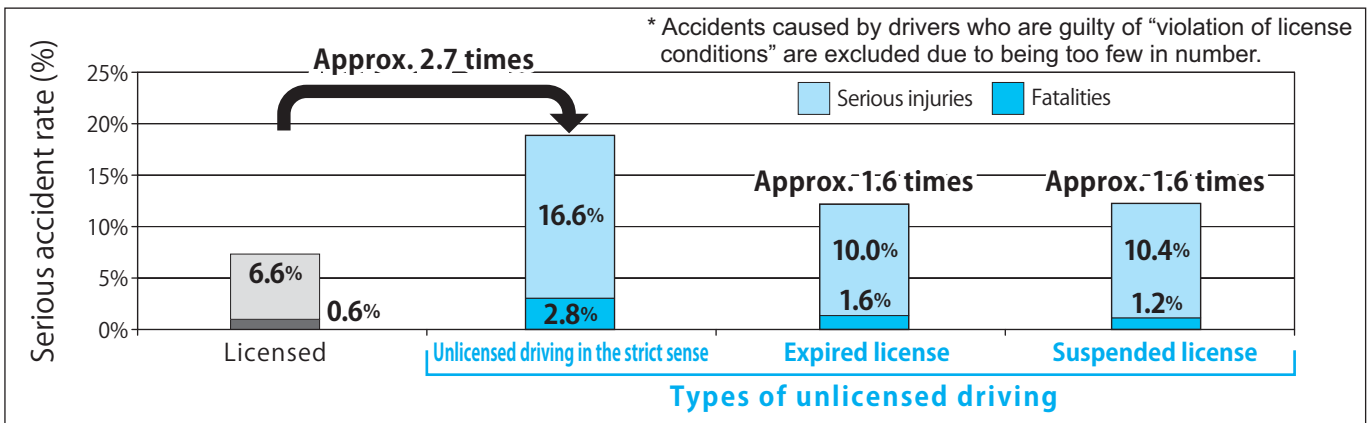


Fig. 4: Serious accident rate (%) by type of unlicensed driving

■ Unlicensed driving is dangerous regardless of age.

It is by no means the case that unlicensed driving is only dangerous when engaged in by young people. Fig.5 shows the rate (%) of serious accidents based on the license status for each age group; the serious accident rate (%) is 1.7~3.4 times higher among unlicensed drivers than among licensed drivers. It is evident that the dangers of unlicensed driving are not confined to the younger generation; they are a problem that all generations need to reflect on.

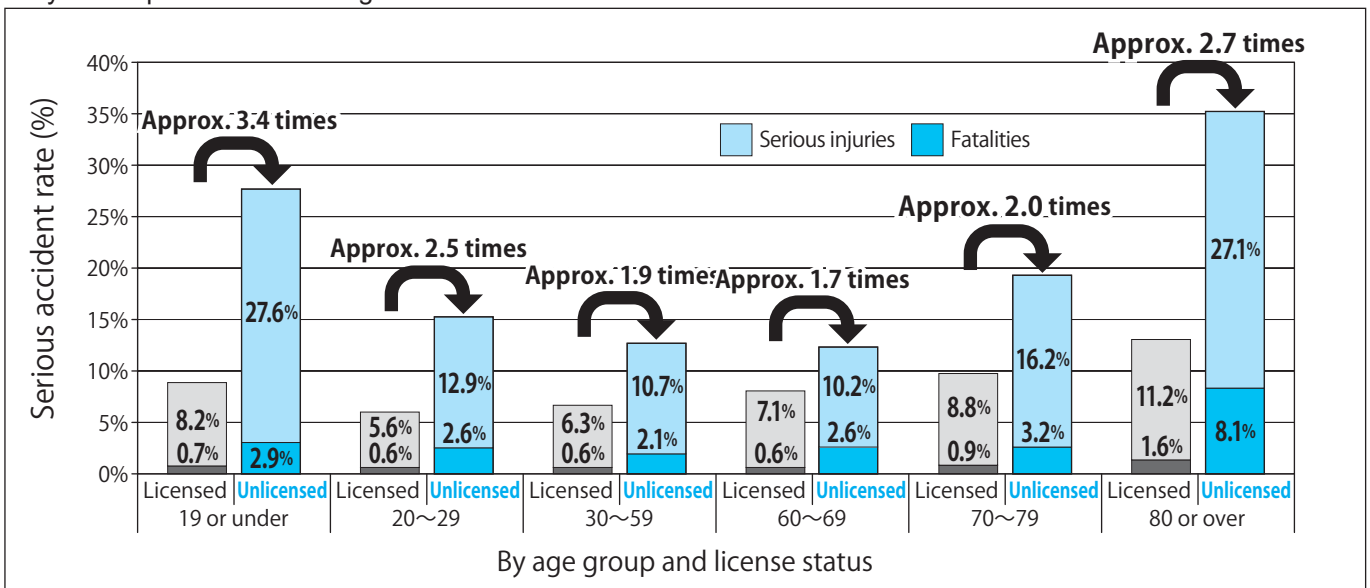


Fig.5: Rate (%) of serious accidents by age group and license status

■ **Unlicensed driving is dangerous regardless of the sites where accidents occur.**

Fig. 6 shows the serious accident rate for various collision sites (sites where accidents occur), indicating that the serious accident rate is higher regardless of where the accident occurred. In particular, 40.5% of all accidents where the collision took place in side strips were serious accidents. Even for other collision sites, the serious accident rate was higher when drivers were unlicensed, indicating that unlicensed driving is more likely to lead to serious accidents regardless of where accidents occur.

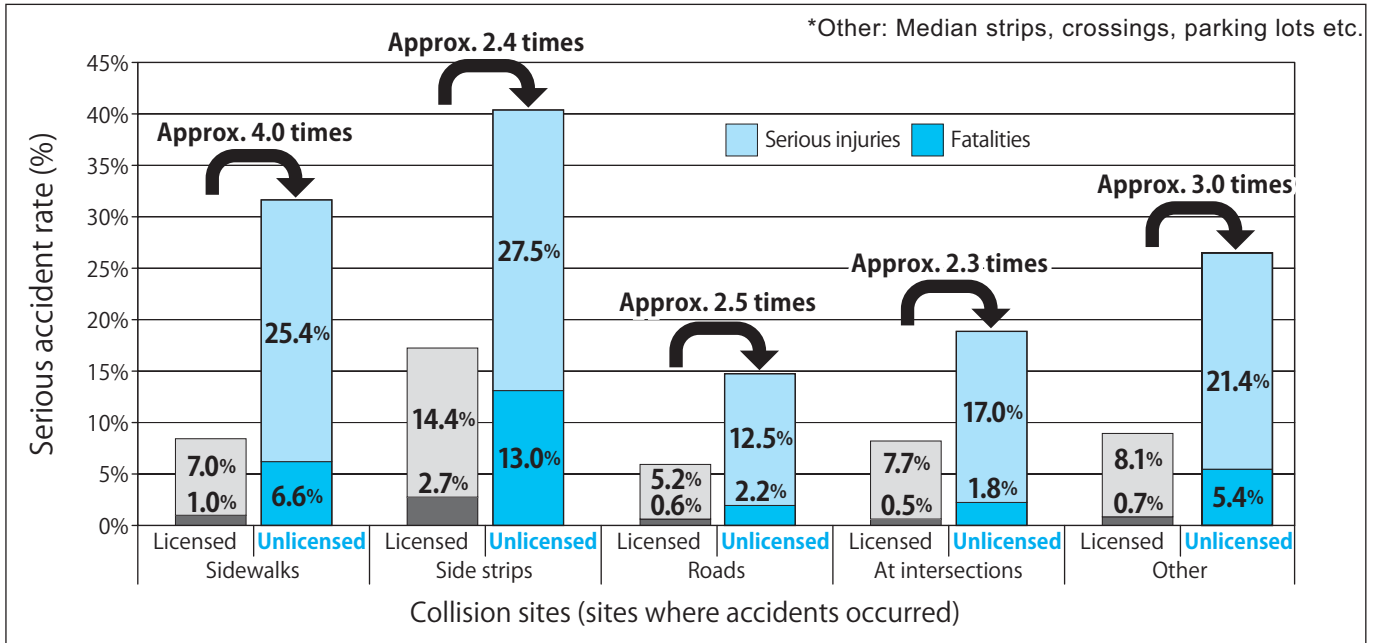


Fig. 6: Serious accident rate (%) by collision site

■ **Unlicensed driving is as dangerous as drink-driving.**

The image of “drink-driving” is that it is very dangerous, but what about accidents caused by unlicensed driving? Let us compare the two, based on the Road Traffic Accident Statistics by National Police Agency. Fig. 7 shows the serious accident rate among unlicensed driving accidents and drink-driving accidents, while Table 2 shows the absolute numbers of such accidents, indicating that although the fatal accident rate is higher among drink-driving accidents, the serious accident rate (accidents resulting in fatalities or serious injuries) is similar for accidents caused by licensed drivers who have been drinking and accidents caused by unlicensed drivers who have not been drinking, meaning that both unlicensed driving and drink-driving pose a similar degree of danger.

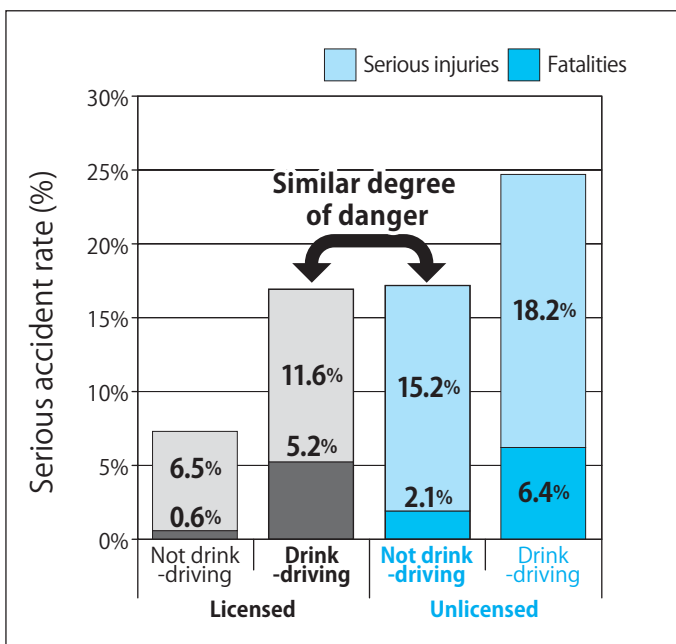


Fig. 7: Comparison of serious accident rates (%) for unlicensed driving and drink-driving

Table 2: Serious accident rate (%) by unlicensed driving status and drink-driving status

| | | Fatalities | Serious injuries | Slight injuries |
|------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Licensed | Not drink-driving | 20,612 | 228,703 | 3,255,146 |
| | Drink-driving | 1,491 | 3,326 | 23,847 |
| Unlicensed | Not drink-driving | 278 | 2,008 | 10,959 |
| | Drink-driving | 91 | 258 | 1,065 |

*1 Presence or absence of drink-driving unknown: 2,705 accidents
 *2 Presence or absence of drink-driving unknown: 157 accidents

4 Unlicensed drivers drive more dangerously.

In this section, we will analyze the reasons why unlicensed driving is more likely to lead to serious accidents.

■ Unlicensed drivers engage in dangerous driving that exceeds the speed limits.

Fig. 8 shows accidents in which the speed of the vehicle immediately before the accident occurred (danger perception speed*) exceeded the speed limits. From this figure, it is evident that regardless of the speed limit zone, accidents involving excessive speed comprised a higher rate of all accidents among unlicensed drivers. Fig 9 shows the extent of damage to vehicles caused by accidents. It is evident that the extent of damage is greater among unlicensed drivers, partly due to the effects of excessive speed, indicating that these drivers are engaging in dangerous driving which leads to serious accidents.

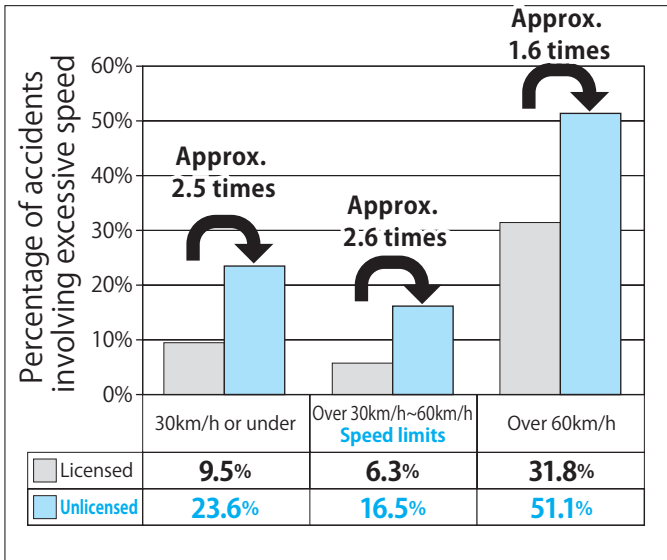


Fig. 8: Percentage of danger perception speed by speed limit and license status

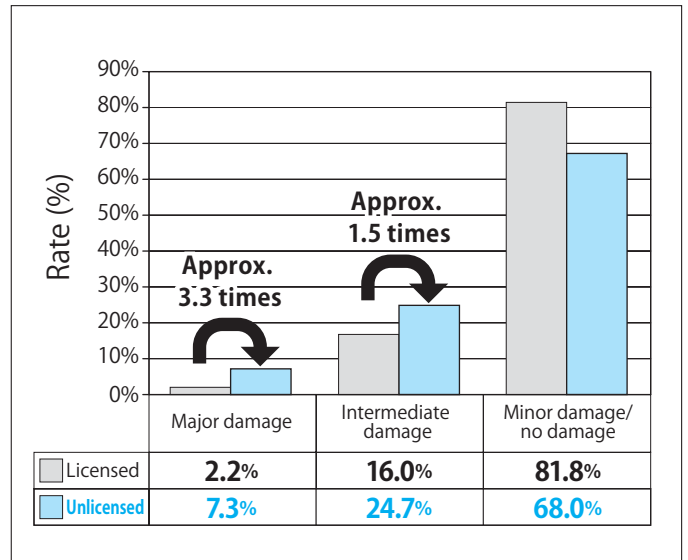


Fig. 9: Damage rate (%) of vehicles by license status in vehicle-to-vehicle accidents involving same types of vehicle (Example: accidents between passenger vehicles or accidents between two mopeds)

* Danger perception speed: Speed of vehicle immediately before the driver took actions to avoid the accident such as operating the brake or steering wheel (speed immediately before the accident)

Level of damage:

Excessive : The vehicle has lost all function as a vehicle and can no longer be restored.

Intermediate : The vehicle requires dismantling/replacement repair of its parts or widespread body panel repairs.

Slight : The vehicle body has sustained slight scratch marks in one portion or requires part replacement/minor repair.

■ Among unlicensed drivers, there is a higher rate of traffic violations at intersections causing accidents.

Ignoring traffic signals, obstructing crossing pedestrians and disregarding stop sign are violations related to intersections which can lead to traffic accidents. Fig. 10 shows the rate of dangerous violations related to intersections among all accidents; accidents caused by ignoring traffic signals and disregarding stop sign occurred at a higher rate among unlicensed drivers. Therefore, we can suggest that people who engage in unlicensed driving tend to engage in dangerous driving which can lead to traffic accidents.

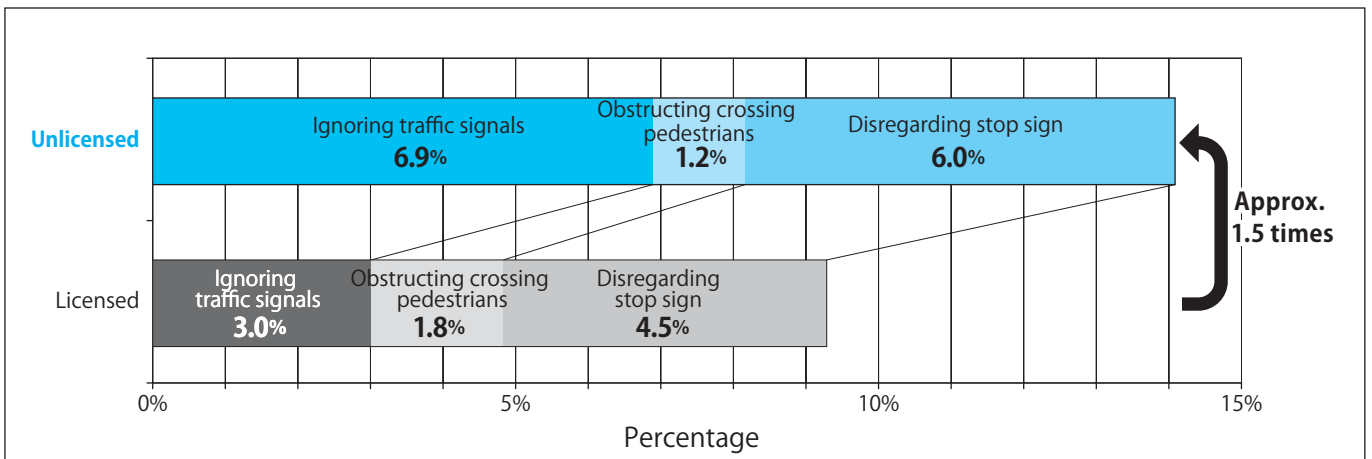


Fig. 10: Percentage of traffic violations causing accidents by license status

5 Unlicensed drivers have a low level of road user ethics in general.

In this section, we will analyze the level of road user ethics among the people who engage in unlicensed driving from a different perspective.

■ Unlicensed drivers often flee the scenes of accidents.

Fig. 11 shows the percentages of drivers who, after causing accidents, flee the scene of the accident without rescuing injured parties (violation of duty to rescue) or reporting the accident to the police (violation of duty to report). A higher percentage of drivers causing unlicensed accidents flee the scene of an accident after it occurs without taking appropriate steps due to reasons such as fear of their unlicensed state being detected, thus compounding their crimes.

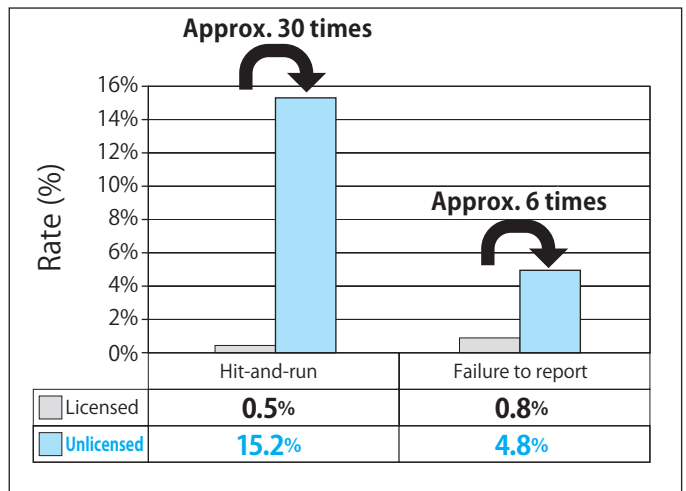


Fig. 11: Percentage of hit-and-run accidents and failures to report by license status

■ Unlicensed drivers also drink-drive.

Fig. 12 shows the percentage of drink-driving among drivers who cause accidents. Whereas only 0.8% of licensed drivers who caused accidents were drink-driving, the percentage was 9.6% among unlicensed drivers— approximately 12 times more. It is evident from this that a great many unlicensed drivers lack the most basic awareness of traffic rules.

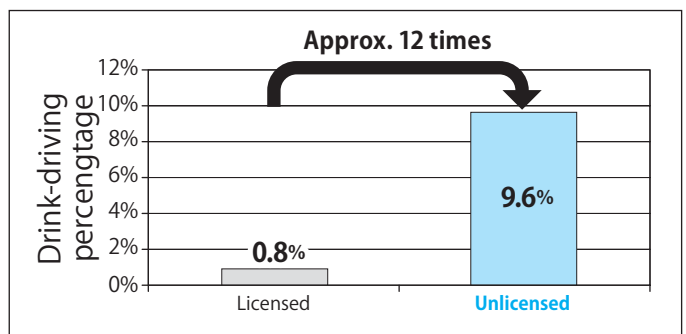


Fig. 12: Percentage of drink-driving by license status

■ Unlicensed drivers often fail to use seat belts and helmets.

Fig. 13 and 14 show the seat belt and helmet non-use rates among road users; it is evident that these rates are higher among unlicensed road users who cause accidents. Looking at the helmet non-use rates by age group shown in Fig. 14, across all age groups the non-use rate is higher among unlicensed road users who cause accidents, indicating that many members of this group have a low level of road user ethics.

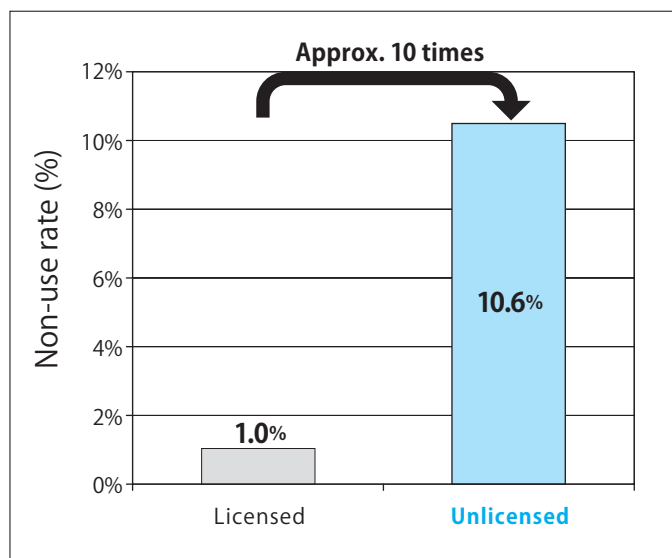


Fig. 13: Seat belt non-use rate (%) by license status

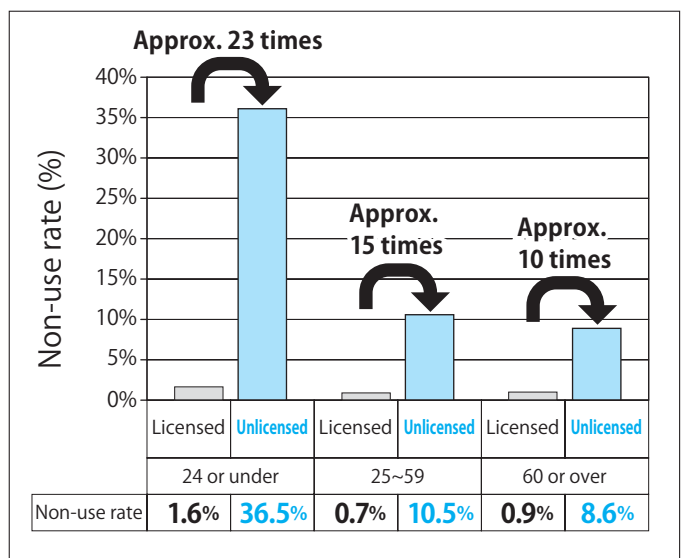


Fig. 14: Helmet non-use rate (%) by license status

6 Summary

Were you under the impression that unlicensed driving was not a serious matter?

From the analysis in this issue, it is evident that when unlicensed drivers are involved in accidents, such accidents tend to be “more serious in nature (accidents causing fatalities and serious injuries),” and that unlicensed driving is characterized by “consistently high levels of danger regardless of the type of unlicensed driving or driver age,” “a higher rate of dangerous violations related to intersections such as excessive speed and ignoring traffic signals,” and “a low level of road user ethics in general among people who engage in unlicensed driving.” We hope that the above analysis has proven that unlicensed driving is genuinely dangerous.

To prevent unlicensed driving accidents, it is essential to signal clearly that this behavior is extremely dangerous, and at the same time to ensure that people attempting to engage in unlicensed driving are prevented from doing so, since such drivers tend to have a low level of road user ethics.

In the future, systems to prevent unlicensed driving will probably be introduced in the vehicles we drive; in the meantime, however, let us make sure that we do what we can do now.

- Do not assume that unlicensed driving is not a serious matter; be aware that this is a dangerous behavior that can lead to serious accidents.
- Make a point of adhering to traffic rules through steps such as checking your driver's license regularly to make sure that you do not accidentally forget to renew it.
- When you are a passenger in a vehicle, check with the driver that his or her driver's license is valid.
- Regularly check driver's licenses among your family and workplace, and be sure to check original licenses themselves rather than checking photocopies or relying on people's verbal assurances.
- Take good care of your car keys to ensure that other people cannot engage in unlicensed driving using your vehicle.

Some people may feel a little resistant towards some of the recommendations given above; however, given the fact that unlicensed driving can so easily lead to serious accidents which result in the deaths of numerous people every year, society as a whole must work together to create an environment in which unlicensed driving is not tolerated.

(Yusuke Hayashi)

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