

# Report: Digital Billboards Not a Threat to Drivers

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A second study conducted by Philadelphia-based Tantala Associates for the Foundation for Outdoor Advertising Research and Education, concluded that digital billboards do not pose a safety threat to drivers.

The study, released Monday (April 13), centered on Rochester, MN, and echoed findings from a 2007 study of digital boards in Cleveland, Ohio.

After analyzing Rochester Police Department data from about 18,000 traffic accidents over a five-year period, the report found that digital billboards in Rochester have no statistically significant relationship with the occurrence of accidents. In fact, the rate of accidents actually decreased by 4 percent within 0.6 miles of the digital boards.

The studies were conducted in part, to assure local governments that accepting digital boards in their cities and towns will not lead to a safety hazard. Over the past three years, outdoor media companies, such as Clear Channel Outdoor, CBS Outdoor, and Lamar Advertising, have rolled out hundreds of digital billboards. Rotating advertising messages are displayed as static images for about 8 seconds each.

The boards have also been used to provide public service messages, such as AMBER alerts as well as weather alerts.

"This study is more evidence that these valuable advertising and public service tools belong in forward thinking communities," said Nancy Fletcher, president and CEO for the Outdoor Advertising Association of America. "The evidence is clear: digital billboards are not related to traffic accidents."

While both studies came to the same conclusions, the Cleveland study, looked at digital billboards along interstate highways. The Rochester study analyzed digital boards along local streets.