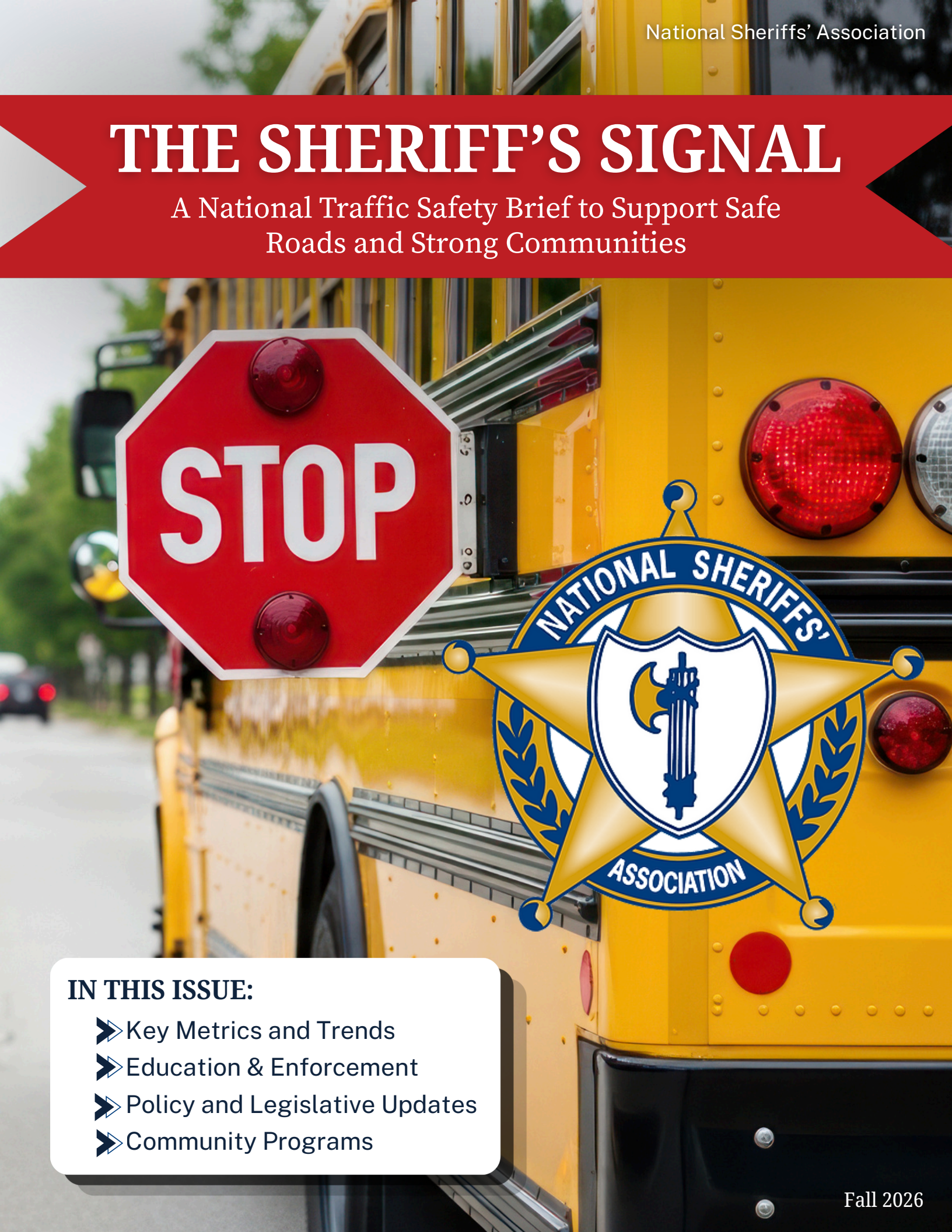
National Sheriffs' Association

THE SHERIFF'S SIGNAL

A National Traffic Safety Brief to Support Safe Roads and Strong Communities



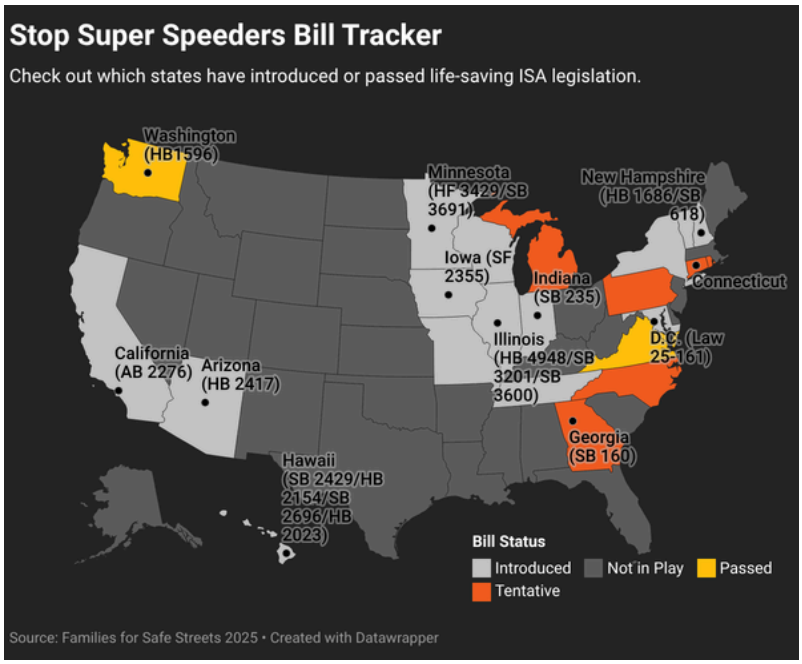
IN THIS ISSUE:

- Key Metrics and Trends
- Education & Enforcement
- Policy and Legislative Updates
- Community Programs

Fall 2026

KEY SAFETY METRICS AND TRENDS

MOMENTUM BUILDS TO STOP SUPER-SPEEDERS



Efforts to improve roadway safety continue to gain momentum as Illinois and Arizona become the latest states to adopt legislation supporting the use of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) technology for repeat speeding offenders.

In the 2026 legislative session, Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin introduced Stop Super Speeders legislation.

*ISA is designed to prevent chronic speeders from exceeding speed limits, helping to intervene before dangerous behaviors lead to crashes. Learn more **here**.*

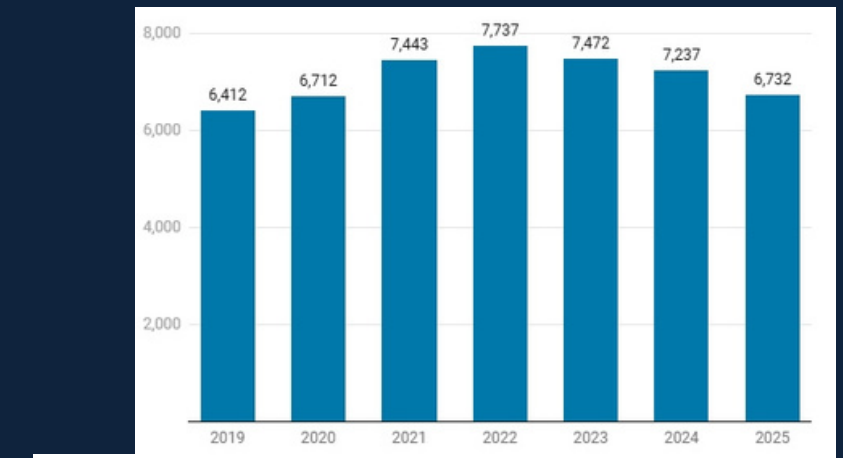
11,288+
people were killed from speeding in 2024

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES DOWN 7%

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) recently released a **report** projecting 6,732 pedestrian fatalities on U.S. roadways in 2025, **a 7% decrease from the previous year** and the third consecutive year of declining pedestrian deaths. Despite this encouraging trend, pedestrian fatalities remain 5% higher than pre-pandemic levels, underscoring the continued need for focused traffic safety efforts.

The report highlights several key findings, including that SUVs and pickups are involved in more than half of all pedestrian fatalities and that distracted driving continues to be an increasing contributing factor. Read the full **report** to explore national trends and state-specific pedestrian fatality data.

Source: Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) analysis of State Highway Safety Office (SHSO)



$94 billion
is the total economic toll of the pedestrian fatalities in 2024.

15.1% of all rural pedestrian crashes were fatal, versus **9.2%** in urban areas.

For the past five years, pedestrians crossing expressways yielded relatively fewer total crashes (4,170) but the highest fatality rate (56.7%).



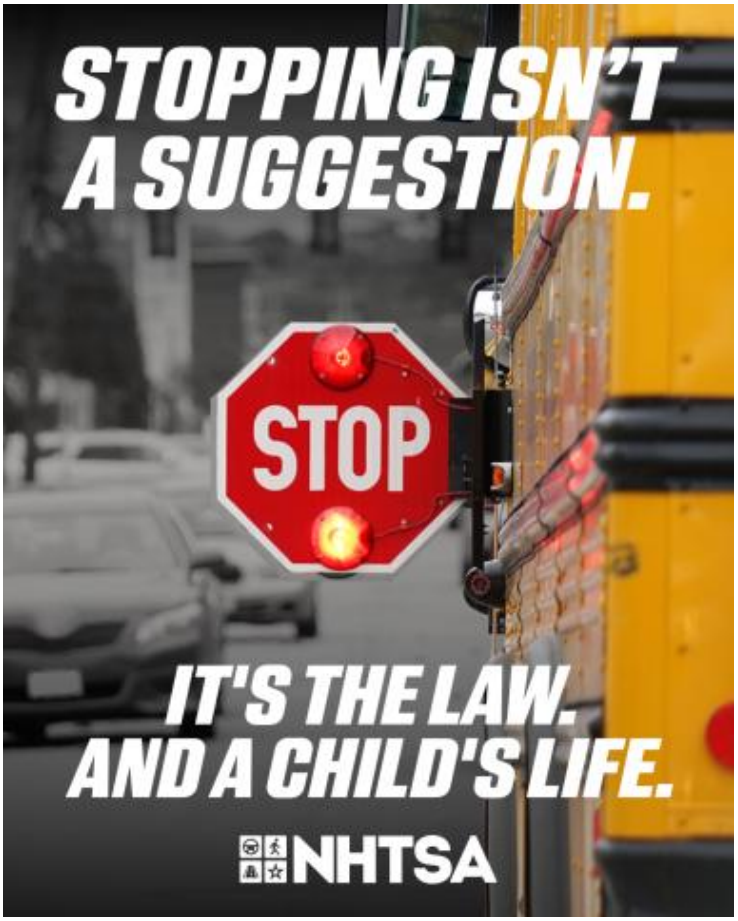


EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

STOP: SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

As students prepare to return to the classroom, school buses once again become a familiar sight on roadways.

According to the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)**, 53 people were killed in crashes involving a driver illegally passing a stopped school bus between 2000 and 2021, and **more than half of those fatalities were children**. Young students are especially vulnerable around school buses. They may rush to board or exit the bus, make impulsive decisions, or assume drivers can see them and will stop.



Sheriff's offices can play a vital role in protecting students through a combination of high-visibility enforcement, public education, and community partnerships. Increased patrols along school bus routes and in school zones during the back-to-school season can deter dangerous driving behaviors and reinforce the importance of obeying school bus stop laws. Agencies can also work with school districts to educate parents, students, and motorists about safe driving practices and the serious consequences of illegally passing a stopped bus.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services released their **2026 Survey** on Illegal Passing of School Buses. As revealed in the **press release**,

"26.2% of the nation's school bus drivers participated in a one-day survey to report motorists who passed their stopped school buses... 101,334 school bus drivers reported that 56,024 vehicles passed their buses illegally on a single day during the 2025-2026 school year. Adjusting for 100% of the school bus drivers in the U.S., we would have seen just over 213,800 illegal passings each day."

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

NHTSA CALLS ON AUTOMATED VEHICLE DEVELOPERS TO PRIORITIZE FIRST RESPONDER SAFETY

On July 8, 2026, Jonathan Morrison, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), issued a public call to action directing automated vehicle developers to address a recurring pattern of interference with first responders.



"NHTSA has identified a clear pattern of driverless AVs interfering with law enforcement and other first responders. The agency has documented multiple instances in which AVs drove directly into active emergency scenes, blocked the paths of ambulances and firefighters, or failed to recognize and respond to basic safety conditions like flashing lights, flares, smoke, fire, and traffic cones."

NHTSA urges automakers to prioritize first responder interactions, and warns developers that do not address these safety concerns. Read the full press release **here**.

STATES TAKE A STAND AGAINST AGGRESSIVE DRIVING





This past year, 10 states: Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Virginia, and Wisconsin, enacted at least 12 bills addressing aggressive driving and street exhibitions.

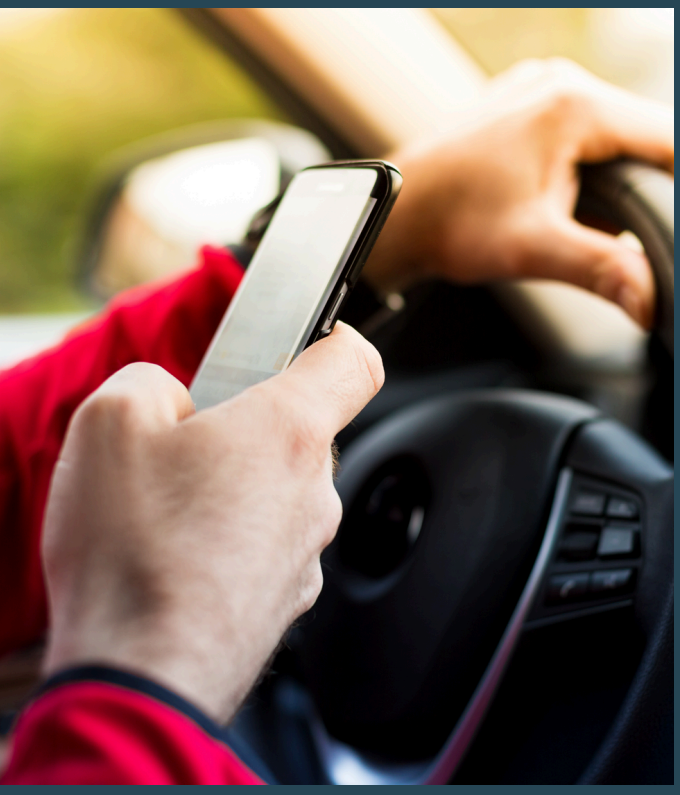
These bills target dangerous activities such as speed contests, burnouts, doughnuts, and other forms of reckless driving, with the goal of reducing hazardous driving behavior. In April 2026, a study was conducted on street racing by AAA and found that 73% of drivers surveyed noticed at least one type of street racing in the last year. Learn more about this pressing issue **here**.

Tools, Technology, and Training

TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVING THE BUS

Communities are embracing new technology to improve school bus safety. **AI-powered technology and telematics** now provide detection cameras, exterior cameras, and documentation tools that can identify and record vehicles that violate school bus laws. Every day, thousands of drivers illegally pass stopped school buses, and this technology aims to help reduce these dangerous violations. However, this technology is not without its challenges, with some citing instances of wrongful ticketing.





DISTRACTED DRIVING IS EVERYONE'S PROBLEM

According to **recent findings** from LexisNexis Risk Solutions, distracted driving violations have increased among all age groups since 2022, highlighting a concerning shift in driver behavior. Drivers ages 16–25 experienced a 48% increase in violations, while those ages 26–35 saw a 55% increase. The trend continued among older motorists, with violations rising 70% for drivers ages 36–45, 55% for those ages 46–55, 52% for drivers ages 56–65, and 73% increase among drivers age 66 and older.

These findings reinforce an important message: **distracted driving is no longer just a "young driver issue."** Whether caused by mobile devices, in-vehicle technology, or other distractions, distracted driving places everyone on the road at risk. Sheriffs' offices play a critical role in addressing this growing challenge through public education, visible enforcement, and community outreach that encourages drivers of every age to stay focused behind the wheel.

CONSUMER ALERT FROM NHTSA: RECALL ISSUED FOR 462K KIA TELLURIDES



Kia has issued a recall for certain 2020–2024 Kia Telluride vehicles due to a fire risk caused by the front power seat motor overheating. The risk is present while the vehicle is being driven or parked. Drivers are advised to park their vehicles outside and away from buildings and other vehicles until the recall repair has been completed. Learn more **here**.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CADDO PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROMOTES BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY

The Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office in Louisiana recently hosted a Back-to-School Safety Kick-Off & Health Fair to help students and families prepare for a safe and successful school year. The free community event featured information on a variety of safety topics, including car seat and seat belt safety, school bus safety, emergency preparedness, and health and wellness. The Sheriff's Office also shared important safety reminders to help families start the school year on the right foot.

Read more **here**.





Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office. (n.d.). *Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office* [Facebook page].

MARYLAND TRAFFIC FATALITIES REACH DECADE LOW

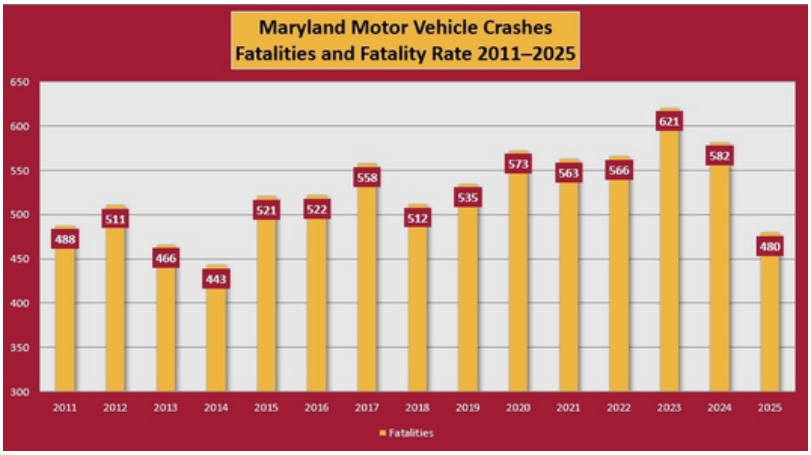
Maryland saw an approximately 18% decline in traffic fatalities in 2025, with motor vehicle crash deaths falling from 582 in 2024 to 480 in 2025, the first time since 2014 that the state recorded fewer than 500 traffic fatalities. Governor Wes Moore said,

"The decline we're seeing in motor vehicle fatalities shows that when we act with urgency and data-driven strategies, we can save lives."

The state also saw notable declines among vulnerable road users. Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities decreased by 33%, from 173 in 2024 to 116 in 2025, while motorcyclist fatalities dropped 46%, from 90 to 48.

Education, enforcement, engineering, and increased federal and state highway safety funding serve as contributing factors.

Efforts have included enhanced enforcement targeting impaired and aggressive driving, expanded automated speed enforcement, increased seat belt campaigns, and community-based safety programs. Read more **here**.



EVENTS

DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER

NHTSA is running a national high-visibility enforcement campaign, **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over**, from August 19–September 7. This campaign focuses on the consequences of drunk driving, especially around the holiday weekend. During the 2024 Labor Day holiday, there were 170 crash fatalities involving an alcohol-impaired driver, compared to the national daily average of 32 deaths.



NATIONAL TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT RESPONDER TRAINING

The National TIM Responder Training Program provides responders with practical training focused on safely and efficiently managing traffic incidents. Developed with responders in mind, the program promotes a consistent approach to Traffic Incident Management (TIM) and helps responders work together to clear incidents and restore traffic as quickly and safely as possible.

For those who have already completed TIM training, the Train-the-Trainer (T-t-T) program offers an opportunity to take that knowledge back to your agency or State. Learn more **here**.

SHARE YOUR STORY!

If you have conducted, or are currently engaging in successful enforcement efforts, please let us know. Contact Sofie Roskin at **sroskin@sheriffs.org** to highlight your sheriff's office.



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION LIVESTREAM

Join the National Distracted Driving Coalition on October 15, 2026, for a first-of-its-kind livestream exploring how technology is transforming the way we address preventable crashes caused by distracted driving.

The event will highlight how artificial intelligence, vehicle technology, and emerging innovations are helping identify, address, and prevent distracted driving. Attendees will learn about new tools and technologies that have the potential to make our roads safer and reduce preventable crashes.

Learn more **here**