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DO YOUR PART AND DRIVE SMART

It’s finally looking like springtime has arrived in Maine and that means increased road traffic for graduation ceremonies, outside gatherings, Memorial Day celebrations, trips to the beach or mountains and all the good things that come with spring in Maine.

The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety wants to remind motorists, and all road users, that May is National Youth Traffic Safety Month, National Bicycle Safety Month, Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and that Memorial Day kicks off the *100 Deadliest Days of Summer* which is the span of days between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

As of today, 42 people have lost their lives on Maine roads since January 1.

May 7, 2024	
	TOTAL NUMBER OF FATALS
On this day in 2024	42
On this same day in 2023	29
On this same day in 2022	50
On this same day in 2021	28
On this same day in 2020	40

The 42 fatalities, as of today, continues an up-and-down trend of having 40 or more fatalities as of May 7th one year, followed by having less than 30 fatalities as of May 7th the next year, only for them to rise above 40 fatalities the year after.

“All these tragic deaths could have been prevented, sparing grief and heartache for their loved ones left behind”, said Lauren Stewart, Director of the Bureau of Highway Safety. “These are not merely numbers; these are real people with friends and families that will miss them forever.”

With warmer temperatures, graduation ceremonies, and Memorial Day right around the corner, the Bureau reminds you that bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists are harder to see, despite the increased daylight. These are our most vulnerable road users. Pedestrians and motorcyclists

Buckle Up. Drive Safely.



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are significantly overrepresented nationally in traffic fatalities and that remains true for Maine. Preliminary data for 2023 shows that 16 motorcycle riders were killed, and 20 pedestrians were killed. These numbers remain constant, and we all need to be alert and share the responsibility for preventing crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries of all road users. The Bureau encourages motorists to *Share the Road* and *Watch for Motorcyclists*. “*Take a second to take a second look*. It might just save a life”, Stewart says.

Teen drivers accounted for 9% of Maine’s motor vehicle crashes and 9% of motor vehicle fatalities in 2023. More young drivers are likely to be sharing the road this summer with summer vacation, summer jobs, and new learners on permits. Parents hold the key for young, inexperienced driver safety. Spend time behind the wheel with your young driver, set limits, and impress upon them the importance of safe driving habits. Model safe driving habits yourselves because they are watching you.

Tips for all road users:

- If you plan ahead and leave extra time to get where you are going, you’ll have no need to speed.
- *Buckle up. No Excuses!* It doesn’t matter how short or far you are driving. Seat belts are designed to work together with your airbags and keep you inside the vehicle, surrounded by those airbags, in the event you are involved in a crash.
- Be sure children are secured in a car seat or a seatbelt suitable for their size.
- Watch for animals, children, bikers, and walkers and when walking or biking, wear bright reflective clothing. Be sure you can see and hear traffic and be sure that they can see you.
- Pedestrians walk against traffic and bicyclists ride with traffic.
- *Watch for Motorcycles* - motorcycles can be hard to see and because of their size, harder to judge their distance away. Nationally, motorists making left turns result in motorcycle crashes that account for 36% of all motorcycle fatalities.
- Drive sober and alert. Prescription medications, cannabis, alcohol, or any combination of those can result in impaired driving. If you see someone that you suspect of driving impaired, call 9-1-1.
- Put the phone down and resist the urge to make that call, check that text or e-mail message. It’s not legal even at red lights or stop signs. That message can wait for you to stop in a safe place.
- Never leave children or other passengers unattended in or around vehicles. A vehicle becomes hot very quickly and it’s dangerous to play in or around vehicles.
- For more information on safe driving: www.maine.gov/dps/bhs.

The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety wants you to Drive Safe, Maine.



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