



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Christmas Holiday Safety

MaineDOT 5-1-1 Facts:

In 2003, the Maine Department of Transportation introduced the Maine 511 Travel Information and alert system to help commuters and travelers' access information regarding weather-related road conditions, construction and congestion, via the web or phone – 24/7. With the 511 telephone line, travelers are able to access accurate, up-to-the-minute information about local highway and public transportation options, current travel/road conditions and more.

511 Usage Statistics: During 2004, MaineDOT's 511 System has received over 325,000 web page requests, www.511maine.gov, and 79,000 calls to the 511 Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system for important traveler information including road conditions, major delays and weather.

About 1,000 crashes occur annually in Maine from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. These crashes result in an average of 4 fatalities and over 350 injuries per year. The MaineDOT offers the following pre-trip vehicle checklist reminders to keep you safe when traveling this holiday season:

- Do your headlights, taillights, directional signals and side markers all work and are they clean?
 - Are your windshield wipers working well and have you topped off your windshield washer fluid – and put an extra supply in the trunk?
 - Are your tires properly inflated and do they have adequate tread?
 - Have you packed your car so that your visibility is not restricted?
 - If you are trailering snowmobiles, check the trailer lights; tire conditions; hitch connection; and the securing and balance of your load.
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The real key to crash prevention is safe driving behavior. The MaineDOT offers some reminders to keep you safe on the road this Christmas season:

- Only drive when you're completely rested.

This information is provided by MaineDOT, for further safety information contact 207-624-3278



- Don't let distractions take your eyes or mind from the road. Driving is a full-time task.
 - Allow extra time for holiday traffic and take regular rest breaks.
 - Make sure everyone buckles up.
 - Be ready to safely react to problems on the road or the actions of other drivers.
 - Drive at a safe speed.
 - Adjust your speed when slippery road conditions are present.
 - Don't drink and drive.
 - Stay informed on the latest weather and road conditions-you can check MaineDOT's 511 system by calling 511 or check the web at www.511maine.gov
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In Maine during the past five Christmas through New Year's holiday periods, more than 1,000 crashes resulted from unsafe speed. Five people died and nearly 600 were injured.

Driver distraction, inattention and unsafe speed are leading factors for crashes during the Christmas holiday. The leading crash type is Lane Departure when a driver leaves their lane and becomes involved in a Head On or Run Off Road crash. Deer crashes are also common. When you are traveling this holiday week, the MaineDOT would like you to remember the following:

- Expect holiday traffic delays and leave yourself extra time.
- Check your local weather and predicted conditions along your route before you leave. Check MaineDOT's 511 system by calling 511 or check the web at www.511maine.gov. Remember that temperatures can shift in a short period of time and conditions vary throughout the state.
- Pay full mental and visual attention to the driving task.
- Obey the speed limit and slow down when roads are wet, snow covered, or icy.
- Watch for kids playing in the snow and sliding, joggers, snowmobiles and cross country skiers – they may enter the road unexpectedly..
- Watch out for moose and deer, especially when it is dark.

Be a Road Model: drive safely this holiday season and always wear your seat belt.