



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Put the Brakes on Fatalities

Some Flash Facts:

National: (The following is information from “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day”(October 10, 2006) website at <http://brakesonfatalities.org>). The focus of this campaign is to reduce fatalities and become involved by changing your driving habits and encouraging others to do the same. We must change our driving habits as evidenced by statistics that say about 42,000 traffic fatalities occur every year. That’s about 115 fatalities every single day—one fatality every 13 minutes.

Some national facts from the website:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people ages 6-33. They annually account for more than 1 million years of potential life lost before the age of 65.
- Each year more than 40,000 people are killed and more than 5 million are injured on U.S. highways.
- Vehicle crashes are a greater threat to life and health in the U.S. than crime is. In 1999, there was one murder every 34 minutes, but that year there was one fatality in a vehicle crash every 13 minutes. There was one violent crime every 22 seconds, but one vehicle-accident injury every 15 seconds.
- Every 33 minutes, someone in this country dies in an alcohol-related crash.
- About two out of every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives, and many will be innocent victims.
- Alcohol involvement is the single greatest factor in motor vehicle deaths and injuries.



- Almost half of all youth (ages 15-20) traffic fatalities on weekends are alcohol-related, compared with 22 percent on weekdays.
- Forty to fifty percent of kid's ages 4 to 8 in fatal crashes are totally unrestrained.
- Properly used booster seats - which let older kids shorter than 4 foot 7 gain the fullest protection from standard back-seat seat belts designed for adults - substantially reduce the risk of injury in a crash.
- Each year, falling asleep while driving causes at least 100,000 auto crashes, 40,000 injuries and 1,550 fatalities.
- The largest group affected by drowsy driving is young men (ages 16-29), often "the brightest, most energetic, hard-working teens" whose crashes occur after midnight. The second-largest group is drivers over age 65, whose crashes tend to occur in early afternoon.
- Because young people are disproportionately represented in this category of fatalities, parents of teens and young adults should be urged to let visibly sleepy friends of their own children sleep over, much as one would urge a visibly drunk person to avoid the road until their condition improved.

The goal of **"Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day"** is to unite the country in achieving one full day of zero traffic deaths by encouraging the public to reduce the tragic toll of motor vehicle crashes by taking pro-active steps such as:

- Driving as if your life depends on it - that means courteously and defensively;
- Not driving while impaired, distracted or in an aggressive manner;
- Buckling up on every trip - every time;
- Using properly-installed child safety seats for children age 8 and under;
- Obeying speed limits, and slowing down to posted speed limits in construction zones;
- Keeping vehicles and tires properly maintained;
- Wearing appropriate protective gear when bicycling, skating or riding a motorcycle or scooter;
- Always stopping, and looking left, right, left before crossing streets; and



Working with local officials to remove hazards and improve roadway safety.

Maine Fatalities

- 169 people died on Maine roads in 2005. This is an improvement over prior years, but early numbers for 2006 show that Maine highway deaths are again on the rise.
- One person dies on Maine roads every two days.

In 2005

- 135 fatalities occurred when vehicles left their lane and were involved in a head on collision or run off the road crash.
- 86 fatalities were due to illegal or unsafe speed.
- 64 fatalities involved occupants who were not using their seat belts/passenger restraints.
- 65 fatalities resulted from crashes involving a young driver (aged 16 to 24).
- 55 fatalities are related to drivers under the influence of alcohol.

There are over 6 million crashes in the U.S. each year, resulting in 42,000 fatalities and 3 million injuries. In Maine, about 200 people die in crashes each year-and these crashes, fatalities and injuries are almost always preventable.

Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day is being observed nationally on October 10 this year.

The MaineDOT reminds you to keep safe in the following ways:

Crashes are **preventable**. Top ways to prevent crashes include:

- Maintain a safe speed and following distance – make adjustments when driving at night or in inclement weather.
- Concentrate on driving - constantly scan the road ahead, to the sides and behind.
- Be prepared to take evasive action-always have an escape route.
- Obey traffic controls-do not try to “beat the traffic light”.
- Be mentally ready to drive - well rested, substance free, and emotionally calm.



Check your Vehicle Equipment:

- Safety Equipment only works when you use it --- so make sure everyone buckles up!
- Be sure your tires, battery, brakes, wipers, washer fluid and radiator fluid are properly maintained.
- Keep windows and all lights clean---so you can see and be seen (especially as daylight hours decrease)

Be a Road Model: keep the roads safe for yourself and others

In the US, a motor vehicle crash related fatality occurs every thirteen minutes and an injury happens every 10 seconds.

Speed is the leading cause of fatal crashes. In Maine, speed was a factor in 40% or nearly 250 fatalities in the past three years.

The MaineDOT reminds you that excessive speed causes:

- Loss of vehicle control
- Reduced reaction time and stopping ability
- Increased severity of injuries and vehicle damage.

Remember to:

- Always drive at a safe speed
 - Reduce speed when:
 - ❖ roads are wet
 - ❖ visibility is reduced
 - ❖ roadway construction or maintenance is underway
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In Maine, 169 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2005. That's more than three people every week and one young driver or passenger every twelve days! Speeding is the cause of about 40% of crash fatalities. Other primary factors include:

(2003-2005 Maine Crash Data):

Driver Inattention and Distraction: A factor in 40,000 crashes and 165 deaths Improperly driving left of the center line: 1,400 crashes and 71 fatalities. (Head on crashes are the deadliest type.)

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



Failure to yield the right of way: 15,000 crashes and 45 deaths

Avoid fatal mistakes on the road by following these safe practices:

- Travel at a safe speed---to maintain vehicle control and stay within your travel lane.
- Give full attention to the driving task
- Always buckle up!

Be a Road Model: reduce speed to avoid crashes and save lives