

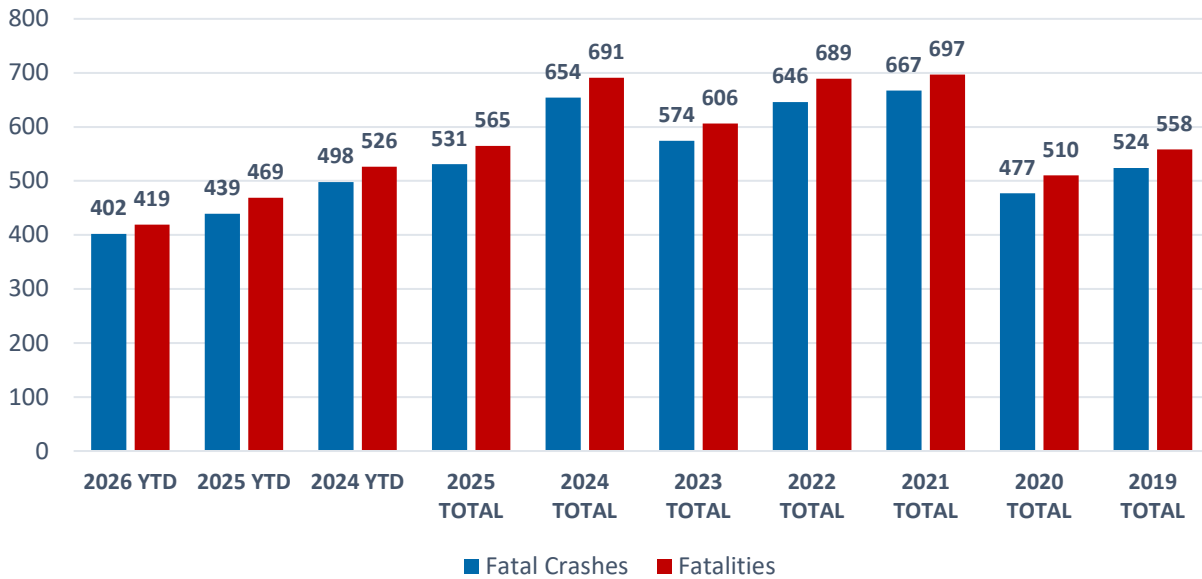


NEW JERSEY

Traffic Safety Bulletin

October 20, 2026

Year to Date — Statewide Fatal Crash Statistics



FATAL CRASHES	
2026	402
2025	439
2024	498
2025 TOTALS	531
2024	654
2023	574
2022	646
2021	667
2020	477

FATALITIES	
2026	419
2025	469
2024	526
2025 TOTALS	565
2024	691
2023	606
2022	689
2021	697
2020	510

- YTD Percentage Change 2025 – 2026: -10.7% (-50)
- TOTAL Percentage Change 2024 – 2025: -10.8% (-57)

Fatal crash data can be viewed as a barometer of the state's overall roadway health. Sustained traffic safety engagement and enforcement decrease the physical, emotional, and monetary victimization of the motoring public due to violent traffic collisions. Please join us in SAVING LIVES and REDUCING INJURIES from traffic crashes.



www.NJSafeRoads.com

— Moving Toward Zero Fatalities —





Teen Driver Safety Week | October 18-24

A teen's inexperience behind the wheel makes them more susceptible to crashes, so including teen safety messaging in a traffic safety communication plan is important. Specific risk factors for teens behind the wheel include alcohol and drug use, not wearing a seat belt, distracted driving, additional passengers, speeding, and drowsy driving.

Many communication resources on [this page](#) are available in two versions, one for the teen driver and the other for their parents. Many assets are also available in English and Spanish. Share this information with partner organizations to help spread the message across communities.

Nationally

- Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death for teens (15-18 years old) in the United States.
- In 2024, a total of 2,320 people were killed in traffic crashes that involved a teen (15-18 years old) driver, and 752 of those killed were the teen driver.
- Of the 2,320 people killed in crashes involving a teen (15-18 years old) driver, 478 were the passengers of a teen driver.
- 280 (59%) of those fatalities were other teens riding with a teen driver.
- Of those teen passengers killed while riding with another teen driver, 61% were male, and 39% were female.
- In 2024, there were 85,947 teen (15-18 years old) drivers injured in traffic crashes.

Teen Driver Safety Week: Building Safer Driving Habits

New Jersey's FY2024–2026 Highway Safety Plan highlights the importance of education, parental involvement, and enforcement in protecting young drivers:

- **Young-driver crashes affect everyone.** During 2018–2022, 313 people died in New Jersey crashes involving drivers ages 16–20. These fatalities include all people killed in those crashes, not only young drivers.
- **Afternoon hours deserve attention.** Nearly half, 49 percent, of crashes involving young drivers occurred between noon and 5:59 p.m. during 2017–2021, underscoring the importance of safe driving during school dismissal and afternoon activities.
- **Address the key risks.** The plan identifies passenger distractions, cell phone use, seat belt use, alcohol and marijuana use, and nighttime driving as concerns for inexperienced drivers.
- **Graduated Driver Licensing builds experience.** GDL lets new drivers build skills under lower-risk conditions. Reinforcing its restrictions is an important part of preventing crashes.
- **Parents play a critical role.** The plan emphasizes parents' ability to reinforce GDL restrictions and establish additional household driving rules.
- **Enforcement and education work together.** Agencies can use this week to reinforce GDL and zero-tolerance laws, engage parents, and support school-based, peer-to-peer traffic safety education.



National School Bus Safety Week



- Every day, millions of children climb aboard a yellow school bus — a ride that should be safe from front step to back stop. National School Bus Safety Week, observed October 19-23, 2026, unites drivers, school districts, parents, and communities under the theme “Safe Stops. Stronger Communities.” It’s a reminder that when the stop-arm is extended and lights are flashing, it’s time to stop — no exceptions. [Read more at nhtsa.org](https://www.nhtsa.org)

Pedestrian Safety Month



At some point in the day, everyone is a pedestrian, which is why pedestrian safety is an essential part of every highway safety communications plan. Below you’ll find messaging on how drivers can keep pedestrians safe and how pedestrians can stay safe. During October, USDOT and NHTSA celebrate National Pedestrian Safety Month. You can use any of the materials on this [page](#) to strengthen your pedestrian safety messaging.

You can also download and use sample news releases and a social media kit throughout National Pedestrian Safety Month. [Pedestrian Safety Month](#)



Millions of American drivers are speeding. The environment could be paying the price

More than 242 million licensed drivers in the U.S. hit the open road, and almost half of them speed, at least occasionally, [according to recent data from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#). Many, in fact, view speeding as [a normal part of driving](#). [Read More Here](#)

NJDOT Announces New Division of Transportation Permitting

The new division aligns with Executive Order 5 (EO-5) to simplify and modernize the State's regulatory processes to save time and money, and improve affordability, accountability, and transparency. Earlier this year, NJDOT completed a comprehensive review of Departmental permits and approvals to identify outdated or duplicative requirements, which helped inform the reforms required under EO-5. [Read More Here](#)

4th NJ officer struck on duty in a month as Cape May crash sparks immigration fight

A Middle Township police officer struck by a driver charged with DWI is the fourth New Jersey officer to be seriously injured on duty in a month, as the crash sparks a political dispute over immigration enforcement. [Read More Here](#)

New AAA Foundation Survey Shows Where Drivers Fall Short on Roadside Safety

Ahead of National Slow Down, Move Over Day on Saturday, October 17, AAA is sharing a new survey from the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety \(FTS\)](#) that reveals a dangerous gap between driver awareness and roadside behavior. [Read More Here](#)

New Jersey girl hurt in crash involving e-bike in Mays Landing, police say

A 14-year-old New Jersey girl was seriously hurt in a crash while riding an e-bike on Friday, police said. [Read More Here](#)

U.S. Traffic Fatalities Fall for Fourth Straight Year, but Safety Concerns Remain



Traffic fatalities have fallen for the fourth straight year in 2025, according to a new report from nonprofit research firm TRIP. Traffic fatalities increased significantly during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, as people transitioned to motor vehicles rather than public transportation options. [Read More Here](#)

The Five Types of Speeding Drivers

It's easy to jump to conclusions about why so many drivers repeatedly break speed limits, whether you assume they can't help it or don't care about anyone but themselves. A recent study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, though, finds that there are actually five distinct types of speeders on our roads — and until we understand each group's unique psychology, we won't be able to slow any of them down.. [Read More Here](#)

Hyundai recalls more than 94,000 vehicles over fire risk

Hyundai is recalling 94,622 vehicles due to a fire risk linked to overheating of motors in powered front seats, according to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recall report. [Read More Here](#)

Hit-and-run driver who killed volunteer fire chief was drinking before crash, police say

A hit-and-run driver who struck and killed a volunteer fire chief working at a construction site on the New Jersey Turnpike early Tuesday admitted to investigators he had been drinking prior to the crash. [Read More Here](#)

IACP Statement on the Responsible Use of Automated License Plate Recognition Technology

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) strongly supports the lawful, ethical, transparent, and accountable use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology when it advances legitimate public safety objectives, including preventing and solving crime, protecting community members and officers, locating missing, endangered, and vulnerable persons, and recovering stolen property. [Read more at theiacp.org](https://theiacp.org).



Sad News from the Catch You Later Foundation

"We, the volunteers for the Catch You Later Foundation and "Help Pam O'Donnell," are sharing the news that Pam was newly diagnosed with cancer and would like to make things easier for her while she fights this battle, along with still doing her presentations. At the moment, she is fine and physically fit, but her daughter is scared and mentally fighting a battle of her own since the car crash has already taken her other parent.

Ali, her daughter, took it upon herself to start a fundraising campaign to ease some of the burden. If you can help in any way, it would be greatly appreciated.. [Here is the link](#)



DDEF- Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund Update

Last year, 70% of DDEF award dollars went unspent. Departments were awarded \$5.1 million, but they claimed only \$1.5 million. The funds don't expire; there is no application, and the paperwork is straightforward. The average payment per department is \$13,615.

The fund at a glance (FY26)

- **Receipts:** \$2.45 million (\$1.1 million bottle tax / \$1.3 million surcharges)
- **Disbursements:** \$1.8 million
- **Balance:** The fund grew by \$600,000 to just over \$12 million.

Participation is up; spending is catching up

- 310 departments engaged over the last 12 months, up from 229 the year before.
- 204 DDEF awards were distributed, totaling \$5.1 million, up from 133 awards the prior year.
- Only 113 of those 204 awards have been paid, totaling \$1.5 million, or about 30% of the dollars awarded.
- Unspent funds rolled into FY27, and spending is gaining on current receipts: 68% of 2025 receipts were spent in FY25, and 75% of 2026 receipts in FY26.
- The main challenge is the residual local balances that built up before COVID.

Program reminders

- **How funds are secured:** upon conviction under N.J.S.A. 39:4-50.
- **Refusals:** improper use of the refusal statute remains an issue. Use 39:4-50.4A.
- **50% requirement:** at least 50% of each award must go to overtime DWI enforcement to qualify for reimbursement.
- **Overtime rates:** DDEF overtime is not capped at the \$70 grant rate. If officers aren't signing up, the Chief can set a flat hourly rate of up to \$100/hr.

Scheduling DWI details

Alcohol consumption peaks in the evenings, overnight, and on weekends, so schedule DDEF details for those hours. Morning and afternoon details run counter to the fund's purpose. Avoid them unless a special event or other circumstance justifies them.

Questions: Contact Steve Slimowicz at hts.ddef@njoag.gov (609-917-8530)

A Pedestrian Safety Solution



Street Smart NJ is a public awareness and behavioral change pedestrian safety campaign. Since its creation in 2013, more than 300 communities have participated in Street Smart NJ.

Street Smart NJ emphasizes educating drivers and pedestrians through mass media and grassroots outreach, as well as targeted enforcement. Police officers focus on engaging and educating, rather than simply issuing citations. Street Smart NJ complements, but doesn't replace, other state and local efforts to build safer streets and sidewalks, enforce laws and train better roadway users.

Join the Growing list of partner Agencies!

Contact: William "Will" Yarzab, Street Smart NJ Coordinator

Tel: 973.877.8120 Cell: 908.229.4018 Wyarzab@njtpa.org



NJDHTS Traffic Officers Meeting

NJSafeRoads.com



October 2026

2026 Federal/State Grant Reporting Cycle	Uniform Coordinated Effort	Sound Off: Proactive Education and Enforcement
FY2026 Federal Grants: Q4/Final Reporting Cycle 10/15/26. State Pedestrian Fund Grants: Q1 Reporting Cycle 10/15/26. Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Statewide Labor Day Crackdown: Progress Report 09/21/26 Past Due; Reimbursement Request 10/07/26.	FY2027 Federal Grant Programs begin launching on 10/01/26. Sustained Enforcement Calendar Distacted Driving National Enforcement Campaign Pedestrian Safety Month Palm Card, Crosswalk Warning	- Event: BIANJ E-Bike Safety Webinar Registration - 10/7/26 at 1:30 PM - For PP&E Efforts: TMA's, Safe Kids, BIANJ, Bicycle and Ped Resource Center, NJTPA Street Smart, Nikhil Badlani Foundation - Education: CAIT, Mature Drivers, Crossing Guard Training. - Video - NJSACOP Safety Message - Traffic Safety Bulletin (LELs): Contact Mike Morris, mmorris@njsacop.org; Bill Parenti, wparenti@njsacop.org
Additional Monthly Initiatives — Traffic Safety Marketing / NHTSA		
Happening Now: Pedestrian Safety Month (10/1/26 – 10/31/26) “Watch for People. Safer People Keep ~~Pedestrians~~ Friends Safe.” Teen Driver Safety Week (10/18/26 – 10/24/26) “Drive like Your Future Depends on It”. GDL Program Palm Card School Bus Safety Week (10/19/26 – 10/23/26) “Stopping Isn’t a Suggestion. It’s the Law. And a Child’s Life.” Upcoming: Halloween (10/19/26 – 10/23/26) “Monster Mash Not Car Crash, Drive Sober.” Vehicle Safety Recalls (10/26/26 – 11/1/26) “Don’t Fumble Your Vehicle’s Safety.” Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time (11/23/26 – 11/29/26) “To Enjoy a Day of Gratitude Buckle Up First.”		
Grant Opportunities and Information		
Year-End Holiday Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Crackdown Portal opens from 9/28/26 to 11/6/26. Please begin submitting necessary Q4 Reporting Documents: On Progress Reports – Evaluate your programs performance and objectives. Include “Public Presentations Forms” and the Public Participation and Community Engagement Plan and Report (Also email copy to HighwaytrafficSafety@njoag.gov).		
Reminders/Updates		
ALL PARTICIPATING GRANTEES - Join us for NJDHTS FY2027 Grant Launch Meeting on 10/1/26, 10 AM – 12 PM. - Promote Pedestrian Safety and Distacted Driving (October) and Seat Belt Compliance (November) messaging & enforcement. Utilize ‘<i>Staying Safe In the Car</i>’ Brochures English / Spanish. Distribute ‘<i>Take a Break from Your Phone</i>’ palm cards. Educate about the ‘Move Over Law’ Palm Card and Poster. - Post appropriate messages on variable message boards throughout town to amplify awareness. NJDHTS Safe Passage pamphlets available for all Traffic Safety Partners. - Boost DHTS social media during month.		
Northern Team	NJDHTS Program Staff Contacts Central Team	Southern Team
Drew Nagel (609) 931-5124	Tameka Fogg (609) 262-4908	Loresa Daniel (609) 262- 4714
Deborah Flynn (609) 728-6499	Emelin Corado (609) 931-7119	Marissa Rodriguez (609) 826-6524
Jason Friedman (609) 468-2638	Anna Burns (609) 262-4734	Tamira Chambliss (609) 262-4735



Save the Date

NJ Police Traffic Officers Association Meeting

Date: November 4, 2026 @ 1000

Location: AAA
700 Horizon Dr,
Hamilton Twp, NJ 08691

NJSACOP Monthly Briefing

Date: November 5, 2026 @ 1000

Location: Sheraton Hotel
6 Industrial Way East,
Eatontown, NJ

If you have any questions or suggestions for future posts, please don't hesitate to contact the NJSACOP Traffic Safety Team at mmorris@njsacop.org and wparenti@njsacop.org. Our Statewide Traffic Safety Coalition is always seeking new ideas, images, and success stories to share. Thank you in advance for your efforts to keep our roadways safe. #SafeRoadsNJ

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Chief William G. Parenti, Ret.

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