

## AGGRESSIVE DRIVING AND SPEED-RELATED PROGRAM AREA BRIEF

### BACKGROUND

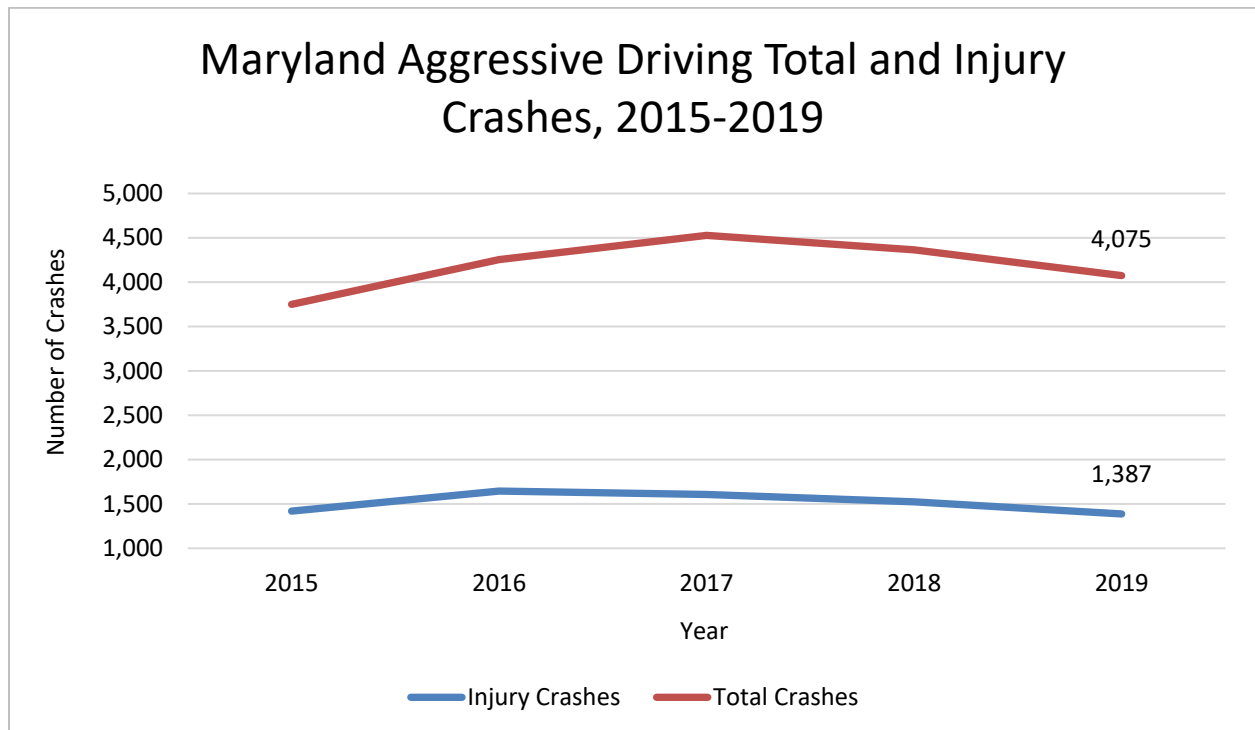
Aggressive driving is a traffic offense defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as occurring when “an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property.” It is not road rage, which is a criminal offense defined as “an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger(s) of another motor vehicle or an assault precipitated by an incident that occurred on a roadway.”

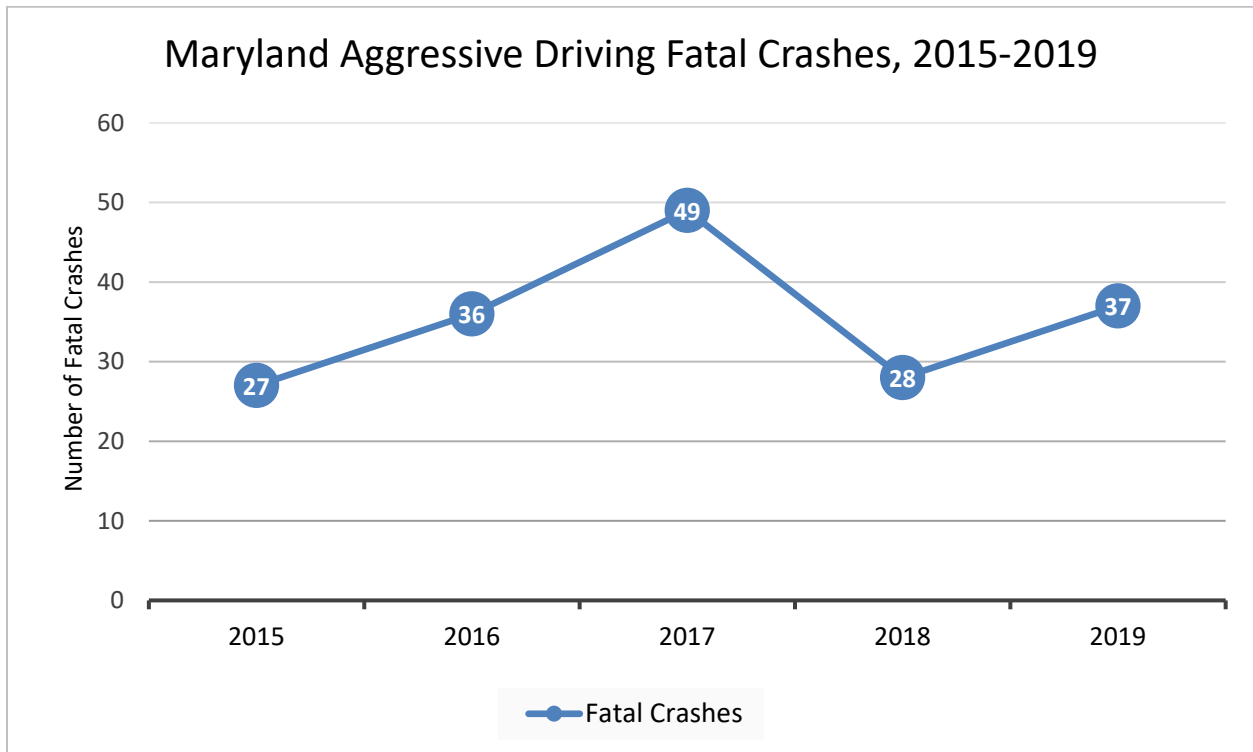
Aggressive driving behaviors include:

- Speeding
- Following too closely, or “tailgating”
- Running red lights, stop signs and other traffic control devices
- Improper passing, failing to signal intent, using emergency lanes, or passing on a shoulder
- Weaving in and out of lanes and unsafe lane changes.

Speed is a significant aggressive driving behavior and is estimated to be a contributing factor in over one-third of all fatal crashes nationwide. The probability of death and debilitating injury grows with impacts at higher speeds—doubling for every 10 MPH over 50 MPH that a vehicle travel. The Federal Highway Administration found that, on average, 70 percent of motorists exceed the posted speed limits. In 2010 the economic cost of speed-related crashes was estimated to be \$52 billion annually (The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA 2015).

### THE FACTS





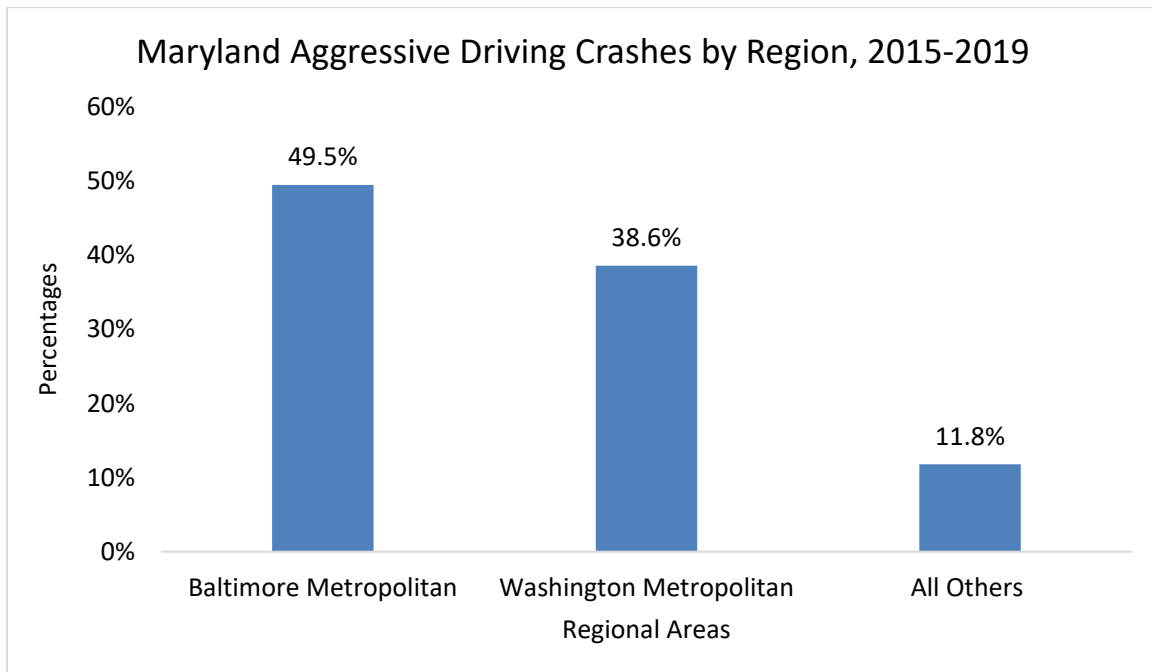
**Aggressive driving is defined as:** having one of the following values in both the primary and secondary contributing circumstance fields: Failed to yield right of way; Failed to obey stop sign; Failed to obey traffic signal; Failed to obey other traffic control; Failed to keep right of center; Failed to stop for school bus; Wrong way on one way; Exceed speed limit; Too fast for conditions; Followed too closely; Improper lane change; Improper passing.

- Motor vehicle crashes are a huge threat to public health.** Motor vehicle crashes continue to be a leading cause of death in the United States<sup>1</sup>. In 2018, approximately 6.7 million crashes were reported; approximately 29 percent resulted in an injury or fatality<sup>2</sup>.
- Injuries and fatalities are high among aggressive driving crashes.** On average, all crashes resulting in injury or death accounted for approximately 29 percent of the total crashes in the State. However, among aggressive-related crashes, 37 percent resulted in an injury or fatality, amounting to, on average, more than 1,500 injury and fatal crashes per year.

<sup>1</sup> CDC National Vital Statistics Reports – 10 Leading Causes of Death

<sup>2</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts Annual Report Tables, National Statistics 2010-2018

- Metropolitan areas have the highest concentration of aggressive driving crashes<sup>3</sup>.** Between 2015 and 2019, around 88 percent of all aggressive driving crashes occurred in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. On average, Baltimore County accounted for approximately 18 percent of Maryland’s aggressive driving crashes and approximately 15 percent of aggressive driving fatal crashes.



- Aggressive driving crashes are lowest during the beginning of the year.** Although spread relatively evenly throughout the year, aggressive driving crashes rose slowly from February through May. Total crashes related to aggressive driving peaked during the late fall months (October, November, and December). Some of the most severe crashes resulting in death occurred most often in March, May, and August.
- Weekdays and afternoons to early evening hours experience the highest number of aggressive crashes.** More than 75 percent of all aggressive driving crashes occurred between Monday and Friday. On average, crashes increased toward the end of the work week and declined during the weekends. However, nearly half of all fatal crashes related to aggressive driving occurred on the weekend (Friday–Sunday). Aggressive driving crashes were highest between 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.

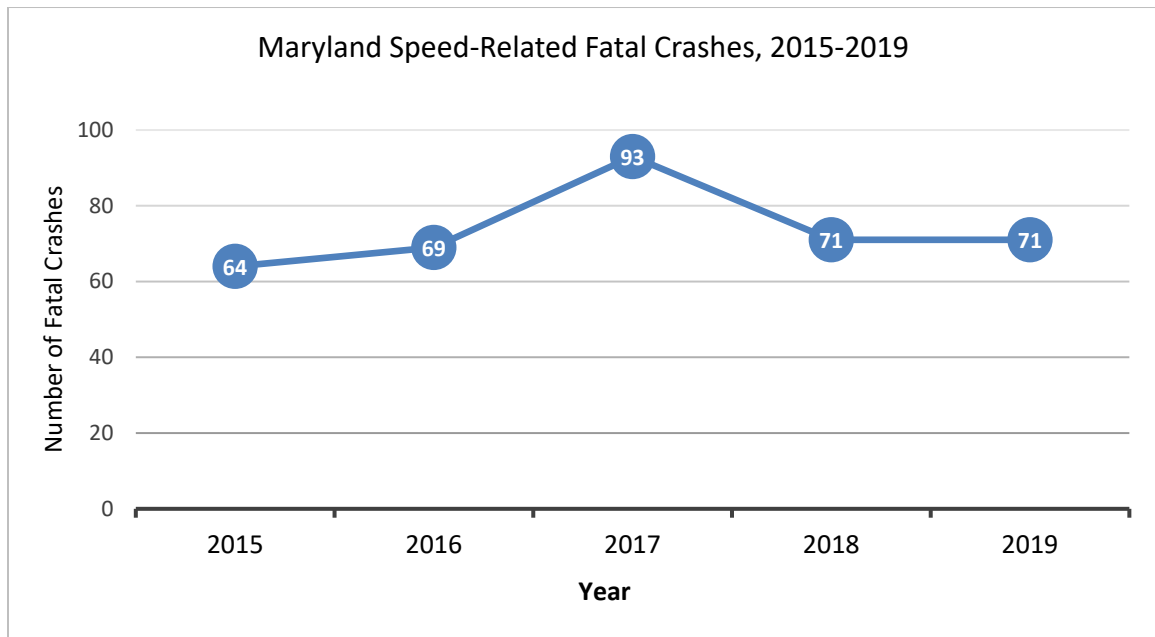
<sup>3</sup> Baltimore Metropolitan area is comprised of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard and Queen Anne’s Counties, and Baltimore City, as designated by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The Washington Metropolitan Area is defined as Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s Counties, as designated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

- **Aggressive drivers tend to be younger, in their twenties.** Twenty nine percent of all aggressive drivers were between the ages of 20–29, despite accounting for approximately 21 percent of the drivers in all crashes statewide. Over 30 percent of all aggressive driver fatalities were in their twenties. On average, drivers in their twenties were injured or killed more than twice as often as drivers in their forties.

- **More aggressive drivers are males than females.** Males accounted for 58 percent of the aggressive drivers involved in crashes. On average, approximately four times as many male aggressive drivers die in crashes than do their female counterparts.

**4 out of 5  
aggressive driver  
fatalities are male.**

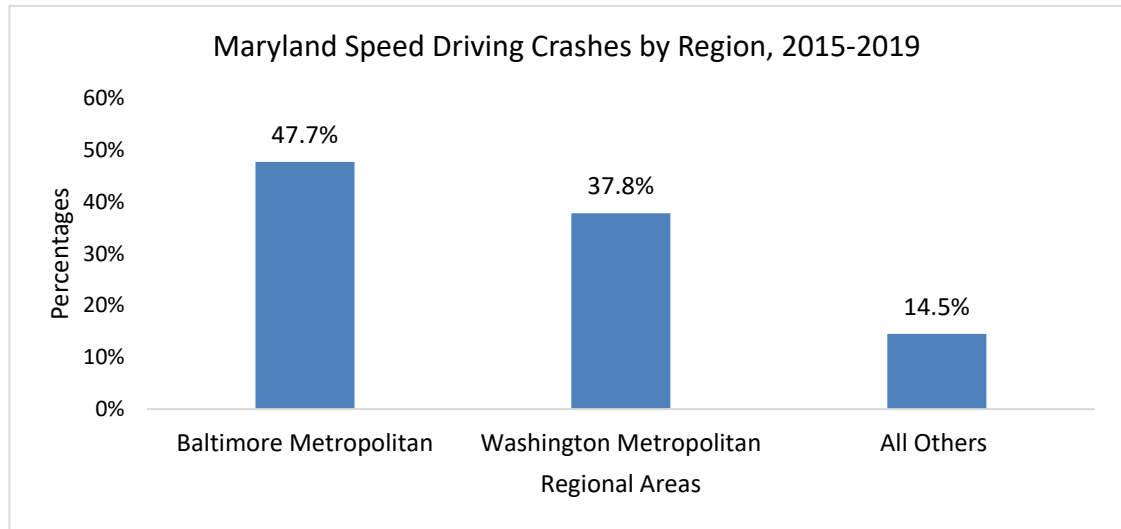
- **Improvements to aggressive driving are significant.** In 2019, over 4,000 aggressive driving-related crashes occurred on Maryland roadways. The number of aggressive driving-related crashes was lower in 2019 than in 2018. Injuries and fatalities have risen and fallen over the past five years with overall injuries and fatalities lower in 2019 than the figures in 2017.



- **Injuries and fatalities are high among speed<sup>4</sup> involved crashes.** On average, all crashes resulting in injury or death accounted for approximately 29 percent of the total crashes in the State. However, among speed-related crashes, 32 percent resulted in an injury or fatality, amounting to, on average, more than 3,100 injury and fatal crashes per year.

<sup>4</sup>**Speed-involved Crashes** – At least one driver in the crash was reported to be speeding, defined by having values of either Exceeded Speed Limit or Too Fast for Conditions in the first or second contributing circumstance fields.

- Metropolitan areas have the highest concentration of speed-related crashes<sup>5</sup>.** Between 2015 and 2019, around 85 percent of all speed-related crashes occurred in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. On average, Baltimore County accounted for approximately 19 percent of Maryland’s speed-related crashes and 17 percent of speed-related fatal crashes.



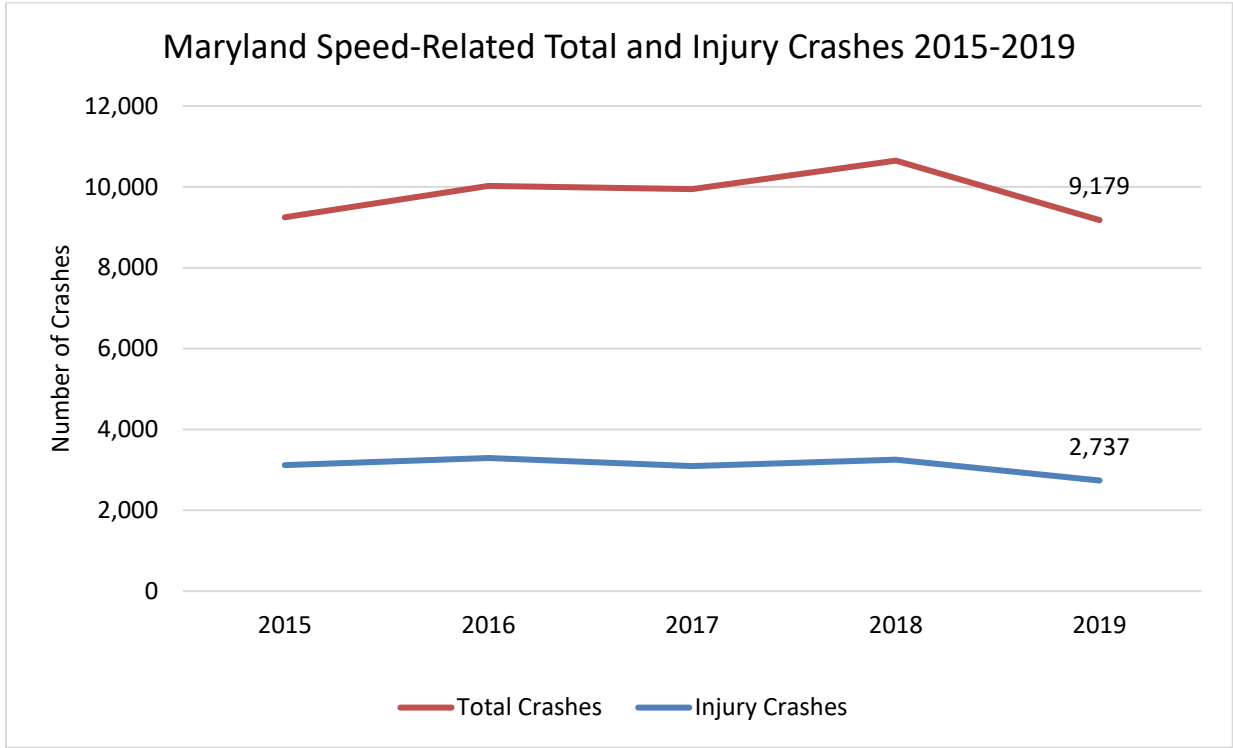
- Speed involved crashes are lowest during the middle of the year.** Total crashes related to speed peaked during the late fall and early winter months (October, November, December, and January). The more severe crashes resulting in death occurred most often in April, May, June, August, and December.
- Weekdays and afternoons to early evening hours experience the highest number of speed-related crashes.** More than 70 percent of all speed-related crashes occurred between Monday and Friday. On average, crashes increased toward the end of the work week and declined during the weekends. However, nearly half of all fatal crashes related to speed occurred on the weekend (Friday–Sunday). Speed related crashes were highest between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

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<sup>5</sup>Baltimore Metropolitan area is comprised of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard and Queen Anne’s Counties, and Baltimore City, as designated by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The Washington Metropolitan Area is defined as Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s Counties, as designated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

- Speeding drivers tend to be younger, in their twenties.** Twenty eight percent of all speeding drivers were between the ages of 20–29, despite accounting for approximately 21 percent of the drivers in statewide crashes. Over 32 percent of all speeding driver fatalities were in their twenties. On average, drivers in their twenties were injured or killed more than twice as often as drivers in their forties.
- More speeding drivers are males than females.** Males accounted for 58 percent of the speeding drivers involved in crashes. On average, almost four times as many male speeding drivers die in crashes than do their female counterparts.
- Improvements to speed-related crashes are significant.** In 2019, approximately 9,200 speed-related crashes occurred on Maryland roadways, yet the number of speed driving-related crashes was lower in 2019 than in each of the previous four years. Injuries and fatalities have risen and fallen over the past five years, with overall injuries and fatalities lower in 2019 than the figures in every year since 2016.
- The number of annual speed-related crashes is fluctuating.** Since 2015, there was a 0.7 percent decrease in the total number of crashes related to excessive speed. There was no change in the speed related crashes that resulted in death from year 2018 to 2019. On average, there are approximately 9,800 crashes related to speed each year.

**4 out of 5 speeding driver fatalities are male.**



## CAUSE OF AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Aggressive driving is caused by driver frustration, impatience, and anger, which lead to selfish, irritated, bold, or pushy behavior in a vehicle. Sources of driver feelings are many:

- Drivers have very busy lives and too little time;
- Traffic tie-ups and roadwork is increasing and never-ending;
- Drivers may be stressed from work or pressures at home; and
- Over the past 20 years, traffic on area roads has nearly doubled. Crowded roads encourage aggressive driving. Fender-benders, potholes, rain, and sun glare compound the problem and can cause chain reactions.

Aggression is contagious. Drivers act aggressively because others are doing so and passing on poor driving behavior. The more crowded the roads, the worse the problem.

A Temple University study in 2011 found:

- People who perceive their car as a reflection of their self-identity are more likely to behave aggressively on the road and break the law.
- People with compulsive tendencies are more likely to drive aggressively with disregard for potential consequences.
- The importance of one's possessions is linked to increased aggressive driving tendencies.
- Young people who are in the early stages of forming their self-identity might feel the need to show off their car and driving skills more than others. They may also be overconfident and underestimate the risks involved in reckless driving.
- Those who admit to aggressive driving also admit to engaging in more incidents of law-breaking.
- A sense of being pressed for time and under pressure leads to more aggressive driving.

## MARYLAND'S AGGRESSIVE DRIVING LAWS

Maryland's Aggressive Driving law (TR§21-901.2) states that at least three of the following violations must be observed to charge a driver with aggressive driving:

- Traffic lights with steady indication;
- Overtaking and passing;
- Passing on right;
- Driving on laned roadways;
- Following too closely;
- Failure to yield right-of-way; or
- Exceeding a maximum speed limit or posted maximum speed limit.

Fines for aggressive driving are \$370 and five points on your license.

## MARYLAND'S "Be The Driver" CAMPAIGN

"Be the Driver" is an all-encompassing traffic safety campaign that contains an emphasis on preventing speeding. The sped prevention aspect carries the headline "Be the Slow Down Driver" and focuses on messages to the public that encourage slower speeds. The campaign also outlines the dangers of speeding.

is an aggressive driving enforcement campaign that combines a focused media campaign with active traffic law enforcement. On average, 3 out of every 10 crashes, are caused by an aggressive driver. This behavior causes the driver to be a danger to themselves and others. ADAPT encourages drivers to recognize aggressive behavior and take control of their driving.

Participating law enforcement agencies target aggressive drivers by conducting focused traffic safety enforcement "waves." The education portion takes place through the media that includes billboards, radio, and television public service announcements directed at the target audience—drivers between the ages of 18 and 34. For more information and resources, please visit <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/aggressive-driving-resources>.

## AGGRESSIVE DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

### How to Avoid Being An Aggressive Driver

- Allow more travel time to get to your destination. If possible, alter your schedule to avoid driving during peak highway congestion periods.
- Come to a full stop at red lights and stop signs. Avoid running yellow lights.
- Let other drivers merge with you. Obey posted speed limits.
- Don't follow other drivers too closely.
- Don't drive when you're angry, upset, or tired.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt; be polite, courteous, and forgiving.
- Remember – you can't control traffic, but you can control your driving and your emotions.

### How to Avoid Aggressive Drivers

- Avoid eye contact. Stay calm and relaxed.
- Get out of their way and steer clear of them on the road.
- Don't block the passing lane, especially if you are driving slower than most of the traffic.
- Make every attempt to get out of the way safely. Don't escalate the situation.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Don't challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to hold your position in your travel lane.
- Ignore harassing gestures and name calling, and do not return them.



- Report aggressive drivers to the appropriate law enforcement authorities by providing a vehicle description, location, license plate number, and direction of travel. Pull over and dial #77 on your cell phone to report.

## **WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT AGGRESSIVE DRIVING IN MARYLAND**

### **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION**

- Contact: MDOT MVA's Press Information at 410-762-5188