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# **Traffic Safety Overview: Moving Towards Zero Deaths**

Washington County has three major Interstate Highways that go through the County: Interstate 70, Interstate 81, and Interstate 68. Washington County has experienced an increase in serious injury and fatal vehicular crashes over the last decade as the population increased and additional businesses moved into the area. Serious injury is defined as any injury, other than a fatal injury, which results in one or more of the following: severe laceration resulting in exposure of underlying tissues / muscle / organs or resulting in significant loss of blood, broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg), crush injuries, suspected skull, chest, or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations, significant burns (second and third degree burns over 10% or more of the body), unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene or paralysis (as defined by the American National Standard Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes).

Washington County implemented the Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety in 2012, which has now evolved into Directed Enforcement assignments. These assignments are directed toward problem traffic areas within Washington County. This Strategic Highway Safety Plan will address traffic and infrastructure issues so that the goals and objectives of the Safety Plan can be accomplished through partnerships in the community.

Over the past five years (2015 – 2019), Washington County has accounted for approximately 3.4% of all traffic fatalities in Maryland. That portion has fluctuated from 3.2% (2015), 3.4% (2016), 2.5% (2017), 2.7% (2018), and 5.2% (2019) over that time, while the County has maintained approximately 2.5% of the State's population and 3.5% of the State's vehicle miles traveled. This means that Washington County is slightly overrepresented in fatalities. The proportion of serious injuries (defined as KABCO=4 on the police crash report) stayed consistent from 2.0% (2015) to 3.1% (2016) to 3.0% (2017) to 2.9% (2018) to 3.9% (2019). This means that the County is underrepresented with regards to serious injuries as it related to vehicle miles traveled, with the exception for 2019. The state of Maryland has seen an increase of 20.2% in serious injury crashes between 2015 to 2019 (reference Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan (2021 to 2025)).

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has once again dedicated three personnel as a Traffic Unit to conduct traffic enforcement in areas of high traffic crashes and areas with high traffic violations. This does not affect the Directed Enforcement efforts that all law enforcement officers are committed to across the County.

# ZERØ DEATHS MARYLAND

## 2021 – 2025 Strategic Highway Safety Plan:



The Washington County 2021 – 2025 Strategic Highway Safety Plan focuses on the specific emphasis areas of **Distracted Driving, Pedestrians & Bicyclists, Aggressive Driving, Impaired Driving and Highway Infrastructure**, which have been the major factors in causing serious injuries and fatalities involving crashes in Washington County. A Strategic Highway Safety Plan Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Traffic Advisory Council, convened to review, strategize and formulate this Plan. All partner agencies of the Traffic Advisory Council have adopted this Plan and are a part of its implementation.

The Plan Committee reviewed historical crash data for the last five years and devised this plan to address the causation of serious and fatal crashes as well as targeting specific roadways where a high number of these crashes have historically occurred.



#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration Maryland Highway Safety Office

August 11, 2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5 Year AVG.	%
<b>Fatal Crashes</b>	15	17	14	14	22	16	0.7
Injury Crashes	722	822	796	772	785	779	31.0
Property Damage Crashes	1,510	1,705	1,783	1,877	1,718	1719	68.4
<b>Total Crashes</b>	2,247	2,544	2,593	2,663	2,525	2514	100.0
<b>Total of All Fatalities</b>	17	18	14	14	28	18	
Total Number Injured	1,015	1,124	1,121	1,126	1,127	1,103	



#### Washington County Crash Summary









The Strategic Highway Safety Plan is established in support of the State of Maryland's Highway Safety Office goal of zero deaths in crashes in Maryland. From the charts above, Washington County had been trending lower except for 2019 where the numbers more than doubled. Overall for Washington County the percentage of crashes that are fatal crashes is 0.795% between 2012-2019.

This Plan will incorporate a number of initiatives other than just enforcement and should have a more significant impact toward zero deaths.

## **Distracted Driving:**



A distracted driving crash occurs when a driver shifts attention away from the driving task to do other things such as texting, cell phone use, adjusting the radio, attending to a child, and a number of other activities.

Historically, there has been an average of 10 distracted driving fatalities in Washington County, with 14 occurring in 2019. Over the past five years (2015 to 2019), Washington County has accounted for 5.3% of the State's distracted driving fatalities. Serious injury crashes reported in Washington County

as a result of distracted driving increased over the past 5 years: 1.1% (2015), 1.2% (2016), 1.7% (2017), 1.7% (2018), and 2.2% (2019) as a percentage of all crashes. This rise in serious injury reported crashes could be contributed to the advanced efforts of law enforcement in the detection of the distracted driving. However, the reporting on distracted driving incidents still remains a challenge.

Those figures also mean that in 2019, 52.7% of all fatalities in Washington County resulted from distracted driving crashes. Correspondingly, distracted driving crashes resulted in 30.0% of all fatalities and 39% of all serious injuries in 2017 statewide. This illustrates the

# Take the pledge

The fight to end distracted driving starts with you. Make the commitment to drive phone-free today.

- Protect lives by never texting or talking on the phone while driving.
- Be a good passenger and speak out if the driver in my car is distracted.
- Encourage my friends and family to drive phone-free.

#justdrive

significance of the distracted driving problem in Washington County. Distracted driving violations include the use of handheld cell phone to participate in calls and texting. In 2019, Maryland Law Enforcement officers issued 31,036 citations for cell phone use and 2,370 citations for texting while driving. The number of citations represent a slight increase over the number of citations over 2018.

#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration Maryland Highway Safety Office

## Washington Co. - Distracted Driver Involved Crash Summary

						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
Fatal Crashes	7	9	9	7	10	8	0.6
Injury Crashes	424	489	504	458	445	464	32.5
Property Damage Crashes	799	1,011	1,024	1,033	903	954	66.9
Total Crashes	1,230	1,509	1,537	1,498	1,358	1426	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	9	9	9	7	14	10	
Total Number Injured	616	691	753	691	667	684	
							1











#### **Distracted Driving Strategies**

1. Collection, analysis, and evaluation of **data** to identify safety issues, key audiences, and locations of concern for distracted driving

- 2. Enhance, improve, and support enforcement of distracted driving laws
- 3. Improve roadway infrastructure to reduce distracted driving
- 4. Support legislation and adjudication to reduce distracted driving

5. Conduct **outreach initiatives** including, but not limited to, public awareness, education, training, and media programs to reduce distracted driving.

6. Identify, promote, and support implementation of effective **technologies and engineering applications** to address distracted driving infrastructure.

## **Pedestrians and Bicyclists:**



Pedestrian crashes are defined as crashes involving a person reported as a pedestrian on foot, including a motorist who has exited a vehicle.

Bicyclist crashes are defined as crashes involving a person reported as a bicyclist or pedal cyclist.

With regards to pedestrian and bicycle safety in Washington County, very few fatalities or serious injuries happen among those populations. Pedestrian fatalities have fluctuated over the past five years, from 2 in 2015, 3 in 2016, 3 in 2017, 1 in 2018, and 5 in 2019. Serious injuries have also fluctuated from 5 in 2015, 10 in 2016, 11 in 2017, 7 in 2018, and 10 in 2019. Bicyclist fatalities have occurred very rarely over the past five years, and serious injuries involving a bicyclist was rare as well, with 1 in 2015, 0 in 2016, 2 in 2017, 0 in 2018, and 1 in 2019.



						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
<b>Fatal Crashes</b>	2	3	3	1	5	3	4.9
Injury Crashes	49	48	52	50	43	48	85.5
Property Damage Crashes	3	7	6	9	2	5	9.5
Total Crashes	54	58	61	60	50	57	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	2	3	3	1	5	3	
Total Number Injured	54	53	60	53	51	54	

### Washington Co. - Pedestrian On Foot Involved Crash Summary











#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategies

1. Collection, analysis, and evaluation of **data** to identify safety issues, key audiences, and locations of concern for pedestrian and bicycle safety

2. Enhance, improve, and support enforcement of pedestrian and bicycle safety laws

3. Improve roadway **infrastructure** related to pedestrian and bicycle safety

4. Support legislation and adjudication to advance pedestrian and bicycle safety

5. Conduct **outreach initiatives** including, but not limited to, public awareness, education, training, and media programs focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety.

6. Identify, promote, and support implementation of effective **technologies and engineering applications** to address pedestrian and bicycle safety infrastructure.

## **Aggressive Driving:**





AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS ARE PUBLIC THREATS

An aggressive driving crash occurs when at least one driver in the crash was reported to be driving aggressively, defined by having one of the following values in the first two Contributing Circumstance fields from the standard crash report form.

Failed to yield the right-of-way Failed to obey traffic signal Failed to keep right of center Wrong way on a one way street Too fast for conditions Improper lane change Failed to obey stop sign Failed to obey other traffic control Failed to stop for a school bus Exceeded speed limit Followed too closely Improper passing

Historically, there have been very few aggressive driving fatalities in Washington County. Within the last 5 years (2015 to 2019), there were 0 from 2015 to 2018, but 2 in 2019. There were few serious injuries resulted from such crashes in the County as well, with 3 in 2015, 8 in 2016, 7 in 2017, 4 in 2018, and 4 in 2019. Those figures mean that during that time frame, 6.8% of all serious injuries in Washington County resulted from aggressive driving crashes. Aggressive



driving citations are rarely issued in Maryland because a driver must be observed committing three or more specific violations to qualify under the aggressive driving statute. In 2019, Maryland Law Enforcement Officers issued 825 citations statewide for aggressive driver violations, compared to 762 in 2018 and 781 in 2017.

There has been an average of 3 speed related fatalities in Washington County between 2015 to 2019. There has been a increase in serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County as well, 5 in 2015, 19 in 2016, 14 in 2017, 8 in 2018, and 14 in 2019. Between 2015 to 2019, 14.3% of all fatalities and 15.8% of all serious injuries in Washington County

resulted from speed related crashes. This illustrates the significance of the speed related fatalities in Washington County. Speeding violations are very common within Washington County and the state of Maryland. As a result, Washington County has participated in speed camera systems in and around selected schools. In 2019, Maryland Law Enforcement Officers issued 182,322 citations to drivers for speeding violations, compared to 195,659 in 2018 and 206,485 in 2017.

						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
Fatal Crashes	0	0	0	0	2	0	0.3
Injury Crashes	39	56	35	47	63	48	36.0
Property Damage Crashes	52	103	98	93	78	85	63.7
Total Crashes	91	159	133	140	143	133	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	0	0	0	0	2	0	
Total Number Injured	72	89	60	80	92	79	

## Washington Co. - Aggressive Driver Involved Crash Summary







#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration Maryland Highway Safety Office

August 14, 2020

## Washington Co. - Driver Speed Involved Crash Summary

						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
Fatal Crashes	5	3	2	1	2	3	0.7
Injury Crashes	123	151	125	122	116	127	33.2
Property Damage Crashes	182	290	276	279	240	253	66.1
Total Crashes	310	444	403	402	358	383	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	5	3	2	1	2	3	
Total Number Injured	185	216	179	184	165	186	











#### Aggressive Driving Strategies

1. Use the collection, analysis, and evaluation of **data** on roads to identify speed and aggressive driving related issues, key audiences, and locations of concern.

2. Support the improved enforcement of speed and aggressive driving laws and support law **enforcement** initiatives that promote safe behaviors.

3. Improve roadway environments to reduce speed and aggressive driving behaviors by supporting the implementation of **infrastructure**.

4. Promote and support legislation and adjudication to reduce aggressive driving and speeding

5. Promote a systemic safety culture through the support/solicitation of **outreach initiatives** including public awareness, education, training, and media campaigns focused on reducing speed and aggressive driving.

6. Identify, promote, and support the implementation of effective **engineering and technological approaches** to support speed and aggressive driving countermeasures.

## **Occupant Protection:**

The lack of use of personal restraints or protective equipment is typically not a contributing factor to a crash occurring, but when a crash does occur, the severity of personal injury is greatly affected by the lack of use of this occupant protection equipment.

An unrestrained occupant crash is defined as including a passenger vehicle (automobile, station wagon, van, SUV or pickup truck) occupant:

- Less than 8 years of age recorded as not using a Child/Youth Restraint.
- Eight years of age or older recorded as not using a Lap and Shoulder Belt or Air Bag and Belt, or
- Whose restraint use was recorded as using None or Air Bag Only.



Very few fatalities or serious injuries have occurred as a result of occupant protection over the last 10 years in Washington County. Fatalities in Washington County resulting from lack of occupant protection stayed consistent between 2015 to 2019 with an average of 4 per year.

Moreover, in regards to severe injury crashes where occupants do not use safety equipment an average of 10 severe injuries occur between the time frame of 2010 to 2019.

Safety Equipment	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	ТО	AV	%
	0	L	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TAL	G.	
In Use	5	4	14	5	6	2	6	4	4	10	60	6	48.
													0
Not In Use	4	3	6	8	7	4	4		4	4	44	4	35.
													2
NS,Oth,Unk		2	2		3	5		2	1	6	21	2	16.
													8
Dri/Passenger	9	9	22	13	16	11	10	6	9	20	125	13	100
Fatalities													.0

## Washington Co. - Driver or Passenger - Safety Equipment Use

Safety Equipment Not in Use - Air Bag Only or None. Excludes motorcycles, mopeds and ATV's.



Safety	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	ТО	AV	%
Equipment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TAL	G.	
In Use	929	957	1,04	861	808	779	844	822	824	835	8,70	871	85.8
			6								5		
Not In Use	72	75	71	56	77	54	56	45	48	53	607	61	6.0
NS,Oth,Unk	97	75	53	49	66	50	80	106	143	113	832	83	8.2
Dri/Passenger	1,09	1,10	1,17	966	951	883	980	973	1,01	1,00	10,1	1,01	100.
Injuries	8	7	0						5	1	44	4	0

Safety Equipment Not in Use - Air Bag Only or None. Excludes motorcycles, mopeds and ATV's.







#### **Occupant Protection Strategies**

1. Use the collection, analysis, and evaluation of **data** to identify occupant protection safety issues, key audiences, and locations of concern.

2. Support the improved **enforcement** of occupant protection laws and support enforcement initiatives.

3. Improve roadway environments related to occupant protection through the support of **infrastructure**.

4. Support legislation to advance occupant protection for all ages.

5. Support **outreach initiatives** including public awareness, education, training, and media campaigns focused on adult and child occupant protection.

6. Identify, promote, and support the implementation of effective **engineering and technological approaches** to advance occupant protection.

## **Impaired Driving:**

Alcohol is a substance that reduces the function of the brain, impairing thinking, reasoning and muscle coordination. All these abilities are essential to operating a vehicle safely. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines alcohol impairment as any fatal vehicle crashes involving a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 grams per deciliter (g/dl) or higher. Recently, incidents of driving under the influence of drugs/medications has increased as well.



Between 2015 to 2019, an average of 5 fatalities occurred in

Washington County, with 9 occurring in 2015. During that time, Washington County has accounted for an average of 2.4% of the State's impaired (alcohol/drugs) driving fatalities. There has been an increase in serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the county, from 10 in 2015, 13 in 2016, 10 in 2017, 25 in 2018, and 24 in 2019. This could be the result of de-criminalization of marijuana (less than 10 grams) along with the opioid crisis. However, those figures also mean that, between 2015 and 2019, 26.4% of all fatalities and 21.6% of all serious injuries in Washington County resulted from impaired driving crashes. The occurrence and correlation between fatal crashes, serious injuries, and impaired driving make impaired driving enforcement an important issue within Washington County. Impaired driving arrests relate to driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs and several citations are issued at the point of a single arrest. Therefore, all judicial figures related to impaired driving will quantify arrests, not individual citations. In 2019, Maryland Law Enforcement officers issued 52,588 citations for impaired driving (total of all citations issued), this translates to a total of 18,620 arrests.



This is compared to 18,447 in 2018 and 18,903 arrests in 2017. As indicated earlier, there appears to be an increase in impaired by drugs/medications arrests. In 2019, there were 7,827 citations issued to drivers for operating a vehicle while impaired by drugs. In 2018, 6,907 citations were issued, and in 2017, 6,005 citations were issued.

#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration Maryland Highway Safety Office

Washington Co Driver Alcohol or Drugs Involved	l
Crash Summary	

						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
Fatal Crashes	8	1	3	5	4	4	2.2
Injury Crashes	61	63	64	67	65	64	33.6
Property Damage Crashes	135	122	122	125	108	122	64.2
Total Crashes	204	186	189	197	177	191	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	9	1	3	5	6	5	
Total Number Injured	80	81	82	96	99	88	











#### **Impaired Driving Strategies**

1. Use the collection, analysis, and evaluation of **data** to identify impaired driving issues, key audiences, and locations of concern.

- 2. Support the improved **enforcement** of impaired driving laws and support enforcement initiatives.
- 3. Improve roadway environments related to impaired driving through the support of infrastructure.
- 4. Support legislation to advance the goals of the impaired driving emphasis area.

5. Support **outreach initiatives** including public awareness, education, training, and media campaigns focused on impaired driving emphasis area.

6. Identify, promote, and support the implementation of effective **engineering and technological approaches** to support the impaired by alcohol or drugged emphasis area's countermeasures.

# **Highway Infrastructure:**

Between 2015 and 2019, an average of 7 fatalities and an average of 233 injuries occurred in crashes involving infrastructure related issues. While work zone crashes are minimal, run-off the roadway and intersection crashes leave an opportunity to improve.



A **Run-Off-the-Road Crash** is defined as a crash where the first event was recorded as striking a fixed object or running off the road, or the location of the crash was reported as off-road or in the median. Again, based on the data, between 2015 and 2019, an average of 7 fatalities occurred related to run off the road crashes.

Interstate related traffic crashes are also an issue within Washington County due to having three major interstates: Interstate 68, Interstate 70, and Interstate 81 within the jurisdictional boundary of the county. Between 2015 and 2019, the total Interstate related run off of the road crashes accounted for 27.6% of all run off of the road crashes. Moreover, between the same time frame, 48.5% of fatal run off the road crashes occurred on Interstates. Finally, between 2015 and 2019, 32.1% of injury run off the road crashes occurred on Interstates. A need for focused attention related to the infrastructure of Interstates deems necessary.



#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration Maryland Highway Safety Office

						5 Year	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	AVG.	%
Fatal Crashes	7	8	5	5	8	7	0.9
Injury Crashes	171	208	199	171	173	184	25.1
Property Damage Crashes	498	536	573	597	518	544	74.0
Total Crashes	676	752	777	773	699	735	100.0
Total of All Fatalities	7	9	5	5	9	7	
Total Number Injured	217	256	251	213	227	233	

### Washington Co. - Run Off the Road Crash Summary











#### **Highway Infrastructure Strategies**

- 1. Identify, develop, and implement of improvements to reduce fatalities and injuries at high-risk locations, corridors, and with roadway elements.
- 2. Identify, develop, and implement of improvements to reduce fatalities and injuries of infrastructure related crashes (intersection related, run off the road, work zone related, etc.).
- 3. Identify, develop and implement system-wide improvements that address the safety of vulnerable user groups (e.g., bicyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists, older and younger drivers, etc).

## Implementation and Evaluation:

Each law enforcement agency in Washington County has adopted this Washington County Strategic Highway Safety Plan and will conduct increased traffic enforcement and implement public awareness strategies according to the specific focus areas identified in this Plan.

The Washington County Strategic Highway Safety Plan Committee will work with other State and local partners to conduct public awareness campaigns and identify infrastructure deficiencies that will reduce crashes in the specific focus areas identified in this Plan.

The Washington County Traffic Advisory Council has also adopted this Washington County Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The Washington County Commissioners and other municipal governments have adopted the Washington County Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This Plan will be taken into consideration as there is discussion and actions taken to improve highway safety in Washington County.

# Washington County Strategic Highway Safety Plan

## **Committee Members:**

- Sheriff Douglas Mullendore, Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Chief Paul Kifer, Hagerstown Police Department
- Lt. William J George, Maryland State Police, Barrick "O"
- Major Peter Lazich, Patrol Commander, Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Sgt. Christopher Peiffer, Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Andrew Eshleman, Washington County Engineering and Construction (Traffic Advisory Council Chairman)
- Karie Braniff, Analyst, Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Tom Libinski, Law Enforcement Liaison at the Maryland Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office
- Chris Perkins, State Highway Administration
- Chief Kevin Morgan, Boonsboro Police Department
- Chief Jim Robison, Hancock Police Department
- Chief Bruce DeGrange, Smithsburg Police Department
- David Chisholm, Deputy Director Emergency Management for Washington County.