

Baltimore County FFY2023 Problem Identification

Overall

Baltimore County accounted for 13.7% of the population and 14.5% of the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the State of Maryland on average over the past three years (2018-2020). During that time, an annual average of 69 traffic fatalities have occurred in the County, which have been alternating, ranging from 85 (16.6% of all fatalities in the State) to 60 (11.2%) to 63 (11.0%). The number of serious injuries (defined as KABCO=4 on the police crash report) over the past three years in Baltimore County has steeply decreased, ranging from 539 to 484 to 418, which are 16.7%, 15.5% and 15.4% of the State total for serious injuries in 2018, 2019, and 2020¹ respectively.

Usually over four hundred thousand citations for traffic violations are issued across the State and adjudicated in Maryland District Courts each year (449,381 in 2018 and 438,451 in 2019)². However, only 323,400 citations were issued and adjudicated in the year 2020 across the State. Over the previous three years, the number of traffic citations issued in Baltimore County has seen a significant decrease from 47,725 (10.6% of statewide traffic citations) in 2018 to 42,022 (9.6%) in 2019 to 32,856 (10.2%) in 2020. These citations were issued anywhere within the boundaries of Baltimore County to a resident of any jurisdiction, state, or country.

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving fatalities in Baltimore County during the past three years have remained relatively constant, with 5 occurring in 2018, 7 in 2019, and 7 in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County have dipped and increased, ranging from 29 in 2018 to 26 in 2019 and 36 in 2020. Aggressive driving crashes occurring in 2020 accounted for 11.5% of all fatalities and 20.8% of all serious injuries in the State.

Aggressive driving citations are rarely issued because a driver must be observed committing three or more specific infractions to qualify under the aggressive driving statute. In

¹ In 2020, the world experienced the COVID-19 pandemic which contributed to significant changes in roadway travel and driver behavior. Reduced vehicle miles traveled and open roadways resulted in an increase in speed and other risky driving behaviors. Consequently, 573 people died in traffic-related crashes on Maryland's roads, representing an increase of more than seven percent from the previous year's total of 535, with pedestrian and bicycle fatalities comprising over one-quarter of the State's roadway deaths. While overall fatalities increased in 2020, the reduced travel contributed to marked decreases for injury and overall crashes at the statewide and jurisdictional level. Therefore, this anomalous year must be considered when drawing conclusions based on the use of 2020 crash data to evaluate highway safety programs and trends.

² Citations listed under Transportation Article 21, which are defined as "Rules of the Road" in the Citation Manual, also referred as moving violations.

Maryland, 793 such citations were issued on average over the past three years. Of those, an average of 123 were issued in Baltimore County (119 in 2018, 121 in 2019, and 129 in 2020).

Distracted Driving

Since 2018, there have been an annual average of about 22 distracted driving fatalities occurring in Baltimore County. In 2020, distracted driving in the County added 25 deaths to the State's distracted driving fatalities, a point on a trend that has seesawed over the previous three years (25 in 2018 and 17 in 2019). Serious injuries resulting from distracted driving crashes in the County have decreased significantly over the past three years, from 271 in 2018 (16.9% of all distracted driving serious injuries in the State) to 225 in 2019 (15.0% of all) to 169 in 2020 (13.9% of all). In 2020, 39.7% of all fatalities and 40.4% of all serious injuries recorded in Baltimore County resulted from distracted driving crashes.

Distracted driving citations issued in Maryland during the past three years have decreased significantly, ranging from 33,655 in 2018 to 33,978 in 2019 and 19,450 in 2020. During the same period, distracted driving citations issued in Baltimore County have steeply decreased, ranging from 3,071 in 2018 to 2,927 in 2019 and 1,863 in 2020. As a proportion of the distracted driving citations issued statewide, those handed out in the County accounted for 9.1% in 2018, 8.6% in 2019 and 9.6% in 2020.

Impaired Driving

Over the past three years, an average of 17 impaired driving fatalities occurred per year in Baltimore County. Fatalities from such crashes have declined, ranging from 28 (19.9% of all impaired driving fatalities in Maryland) in 2018 to 13 (8.6% of all) in 2019 to 11 (9.1% of all) in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County over the same time period have increased, ranging from 70 in 2018 (15.0% of all impaired driving serious injuries in the State) to 84 in 2019 (17.2% of all) to 91 in 2020 (20.4% of all). In 2020, 17.5% of all fatalities and 21.8% of all serious injuries in Baltimore County resulted from impaired driving crashes, compared to 21.1% of all fatalities and 16.4% of all serious injuries from impaired driving crashes occurring throughout the State.

Impaired driving relates to driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs or controlled dangerous substances. Several citations may be issued at the point of an encounter with an impaired driver. Therefore, all judicial figures related to impaired driving will be quantified using arrests, not individual citations. Impaired driving arrests have steeply decreased in Maryland over the past three years, from 18,403 in 2018 to 18,279 in 2019 to 13,651 in 2020. During the same period, impaired driving arrests have decreased significantly in Baltimore County, ranging from 2,383 in 2018 to 1,978 in 2019 to 1,339 in 2020. As a proportion of impaired driving arrests in the State, the number of impaired driving arrests in the County accounted for 12.9% in 2018, 10.8% in 2019, and 9.8% in 2020. Of the impaired arrests in the County in 2020, 2.5% were of older drivers (ages 65+) while 3.4% were of younger drivers (ages 16-20).

Speeding

During the past three years, Baltimore County averaged 15 speeding related fatalities per year, which have declined over that time: 18 in 2018, 14 in 2019 and 12 in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County over the past three years have oscillated, ranging from 73 in 2018 to 45 in 2019 and 61 in 2020. In 2020, 10.9% of statewide speeding related fatalities and 20.4% of statewide speeding related serious injuries resulted from crashes in Baltimore County. Over the same year, 19.0% of all fatalities and 14.6% of all serious injuries recorded in Baltimore County were the result of crashes involving driving speed.

Speeding citations are very common even though those adjudicated through the District Court do not include automated enforcement. Speeding citations issued in Baltimore County have steeply decreased over the past three years, with 20,257 (10.4% of statewide speeding citations), 16,903 (9.3% of statewide), and 15,660 (10.3% of all) issued in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. Statewide speeding citations have steeply decreased over the same three years: 195,649, 182,213, and 151,419. Speeding citations comprised 47.7% of all Baltimore County citations in 2020.

Non-motorists

Non-motorists are defined here as pedestrians (on foot) and bicyclists. Pedestrian fatalities in Baltimore County have decreased over the previous three years, from 27 (2018) to 21 (2019) to 19 (2020), while serious injuries have increased and then decreased, ranging from 62 (2018) to 67 (2019) to 56 (2020). The occurrence of bicyclist fatalities in Baltimore County has remained relatively constant, with 1 in 2018, 1 in 2019, and 2 in 2020, while serious injuries to bicyclists have risen and fallen, ranging from 8 in 2018 to 10 in 2019 to 3 in 2020.

Very few non-motorist citations are issued throughout the State, to either the pedestrian or the motor vehicle driver. Typically, more violations are issued to drivers, and in Baltimore County 512 were issued to drivers against pedestrians or bicyclists in 2020, while 12 were issued to pedestrians or bicyclists that year. As a proportion of statewide totals (933 and 235), those numbers represent 54.9% and 5.1%, respectively, in 2020.

Motorcycles

Motorcycle rider fatalities have increased and leveled off over the past three years in Baltimore County, ranging from 9 (2018) to 12 (2019) to 12 (2020). Serious injuries to motorcyclists have fallen and plateaued, ranging from 65 (2018) to 45 (2019) to 44 (2020). The 2020 figures account for 15.4% of motorcycle rider fatalities and 14.0% of rider serious injuries that occurred in the State.

Maryland has had a universal helmet law in place for several decades, consequently the incidence of unhelmeted motorcyclists involved in a crash is low. The State has averaged 7 unhelmeted motorcycle rider fatalities per year over the past three years, therefore, unhelmeted motorcycle fatalities in Baltimore County have stayed about the same (an average of 2 per year). However, 12 seriously injured riders in Baltimore County were unhelmeted in 2020, which is 13.8% of the State total (compared to 9 in 2018 and 6 in 2019).

Older Drivers

In Maryland, older driver safety programs focus on drivers of age 65 years or older. The data presented here on fatalities and serious injuries include any person involved in a crash with an older driver. Older drivers were involved in crashes that resulted in an average of 94 fatalities in Maryland each year (85 in 2018, 105 in 2019 and 91 in 2020). During that time, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in Maryland have seen a significant decrease, ranging from 518 in 2018 to 512 in 2019 to 381 in 2020. Fatal crashes involving older drivers in Baltimore County averaged 17 over the same period (ranging from 18 in 2018, 18 in 2019 to 14 in 2020). Further, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in the County have decreased significantly, ranging from 119 in 2018, 72 in 2019 to 61 in 2020.

A total of 10,971 citations for moving violations or restraint usage were issued to drivers of age 65+ in Maryland in 2020. Over the past three years, the number of traffic citations issued to older drivers in Baltimore County has decreased significantly from 1,477 (8.6% of those issued statewide) in 2018 to 1,413 (8.0%) in 2019 to 839 (7.6%) in 2020.

Young Drivers

In Maryland, young driver safety programs focus on individuals between ages 16 and 20. The data presented here on fatalities and serious injuries include any person involved in a crash with a young driver. Young drivers were involved in crashes that resulted in an average of 52 fatalities in Maryland each year (54 in 2018, 46 in 2019, and 56 in 2020). During that time, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in Maryland have fluctuated, ranging from 384 in 2018 to 407 in 2019 to 345 in 2020. In 2020 there were 4 fatalities involving young drivers in Baltimore County, a number that leveled after a decrease over time, with 9 in 2018 and 3 in 2019. Further, serious injuries due to crashes involving younger drivers have declined over the same time period, from 70 in 2018 to 58 in 2019 to 53 in 2020.

A total of 35,236 citations for moving violations or restraint usage were issued to drivers of age 16-20 in Maryland in 2020. Over the past three years, the number of traffic citations issued to younger drivers in Baltimore County has seen a significant decrease: 4,299 (10.3% of those issued statewide), 4,049 (9.8%), and 3,679 (10.4%) in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively.

Occupant Protection

An unrestrained occupant is defined as a child under the age of eight not reported to be restrained in a child safety seat (which includes harness and booster seats) or a person over the age of eight not reported as restrained by a seat belt while riding in a passenger vehicle or light truck. Unrestrained occupant fatalities have fallen and plateaued over the past three years in Baltimore County, ranging from 26 (2018) to 9 (2019) to 10 (2020). Serious injuries have fluctuated over the same period: 108 (2018) to 88 (2019) to 92 (2020). The 2020 values accounted for 7.8% of the unrestrained fatalities and 23.8% of the unrestrained serious injuries occurring in the State.

In 2020, 16,858 citations were issued statewide for safety equipment violations (including seat belt violations and child safety seat violations), which was a much lower total when compared to the numbers issued in the previous years (27,342 in 2018 and 29,660 in 2019). In Baltimore

County, 1,694 such citations were issued in 2020, representing 10.0% of the statewide total, compared to 3,839 from 2018 and 3,573 from 2019. The MHSO conducts an annual roadside survey of seat belt usage in Maryland. The statewide observed seat belt usage rate for Maryland in 2020 among drivers and front seat passengers of all vehicles was 91.4%, while the overall observed seat belt usage rate for Baltimore County was 88.7%.

Note: Citation frequencies and percentages reported here may be underestimates of actual issued citations due to an ongoing system conversion.