

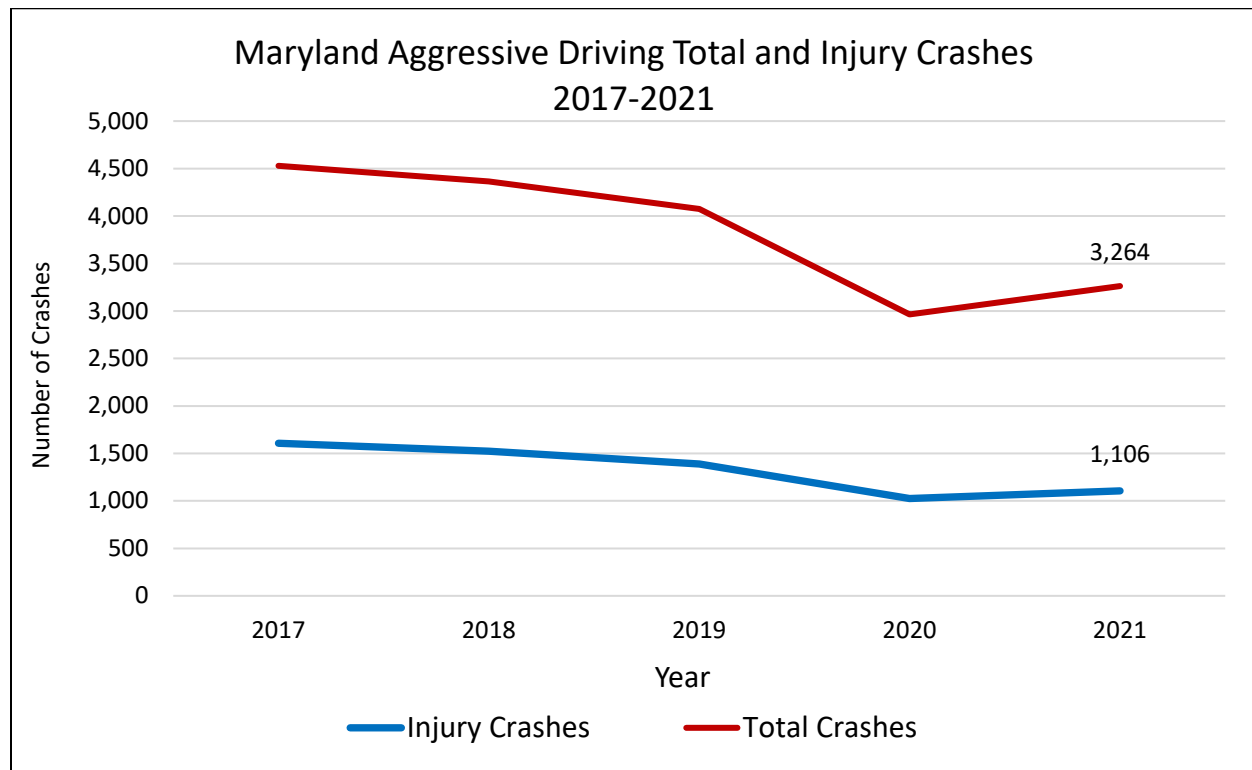
## BACKGROUND

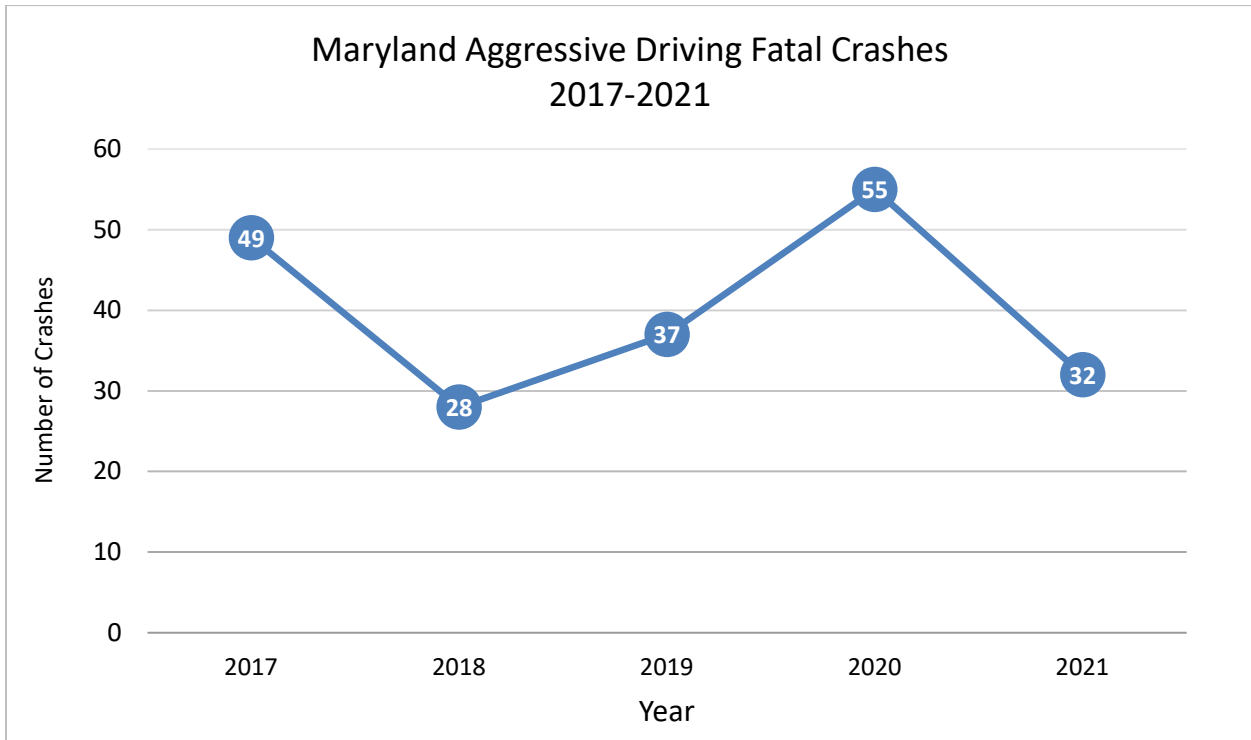
Aggressive driving is a traffic offense defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as occurring when “an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property.” It is not road rage, which is a criminal offense defined as “an 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.

## THE FACTS





**Aggressive driving is defined as:** A crash in which a driver has one of the following values in both the primary and secondary contributing circumstance fields of the Maryland crash report: 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; exceeded speed limit; too fast for conditions; followed too closely; improper lane change; improper passing; failure to obey traffic signs, signals, or officer; disregarded other road markings; other improper action; or operated motor vehicle in erratic/reckless manner.

- 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 2020, approximately 5.3 million crashes were reported, representing a 22 percent decrease from year 2019<sup>2</sup>. However, according to NHTSA early estimates, fatalities in 2021 increased by more than 10 percent over fatalities in 2020. Due to an increase in vehicle miles traveled, the fatality rate for 2021 was 1.33 fatalities per 100 million VMT, representing a slight decrease from the 1.34 fatality rate in 2020<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)— Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths — United States and 28 Other High-Income Countries, 2015 and 2019, July 1, 2022

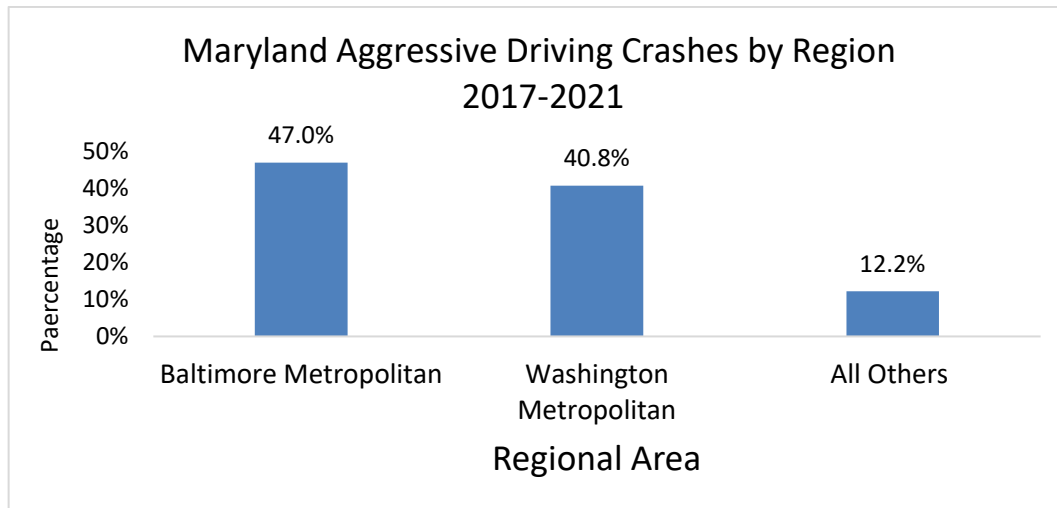
<sup>2</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts 2020 Data: Summary of Motor vehicle Crashes, Report Generated: September 2022

<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813369>

<sup>3</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts: Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories in 2021, Report Generated: May 2022

<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813298>

- **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<sup>4</sup>. However, among aggressive-related crashes, 36 percent resulted in an injury or fatality, amounting to, on average, around 1,400 injury and fatal crashes per year.
- **Aggressive driving related fatalities are down though crashes and injuries are up.** In 2021, approximately 3,300 aggressive driving-related crashes occurred on Maryland roadways, which was 10 percent higher than had occurred in 2020. Injuries had declined steadily through 2020, though there was a 5 percent increase in 2021. However, the 33 fatalities occurring in 2021 represented a 46 percent decrease since 2020, which saw the highest number of fatalities (n=61) in the last 10 years.
- **Metropolitan areas have the highest concentration of aggressive driving crashes<sup>5</sup>.** Between 2017 and 2021, 88 percent of all aggressive driving crashes occurred in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. On average, Prince George’s County accounted for approximately 20 percent of Maryland’s aggressive driving crashes and approximately 17 percent of aggressive driving fatal crashes.



<sup>4</sup> 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. 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. With COVID still very much a part of life in 2021, though with a gradual return to openness and increased travel, 2021 must also be considered in the context of a national health emergency.

<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.

- **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 May, August, and September.
- **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 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- **Aggressive drivers tend to be younger, in their twenties.** Nearly 30 percent of all aggressive drivers were between the ages of 20–29, though this age group accounted for approximately 21 percent of the drivers in all crashes statewide. Around 36 percent of all aggressive driver fatalities were in their twenties. On average, aggressive drivers in their twenties were injured nearly three times or killed twice as often as aggressive drivers in their forties, respectively.
- **Aggressive drivers are more likely to be male than female.** Males accounted for 57 percent of all aggressive drivers. On average, approximately over four times as many male aggressive drivers die in aggressive driving crashes than do their female counterparts.

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

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