

Motorcycle Crashes Spike in Delaware May 2019



Delaware – The Delaware State Police, Delaware Office of Highway Safety, Delaware Department of Transportation and AAA Mid-Atlantic are working together to notify the public about the recent spike in motorcycle crash fatalities in Delaware. Since January 1st, 2019 there have been six motorcycle fatalities across the state all within the month of May and all under 42 years of age. In all fatal cases listed speed is the number one contributing factor.

“Throughout the year especially during this time when it gets warmer we see more preventable speed-related crashes. It is imperative to know that split second critical decisions are made by motorcyclists that impact every driver on our roads. Through better decisions, education and enforcement we can work together to make a difference to reduce Delaware fatalities.” **Sergeant Richard Bratz, Director of the Delaware State Police Public Information Office**

Motorcycle Fatal and Non-Fatal Crashes from January 1st to May 27, 2019:

32 motorcycle crashes + 5 fatal crashes = 37 crashes

40 motorcycle injuries (not including fatals)

6 motorcycle fatalities

- **Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:18 p.m. – (1 Fatality) DE-5 south of DE-24 (Oak Orchard area) – A helmeted**

motorcyclist was reportedly speeding and lost control when trying to pass another vehicle. Alcohol use is pending on the motorcyclist.

- **Monday, May 27, 2019, 12:19 a.m. – (2 Fatalities)** on I-95 southbound south of Jackson Street (Wilmington city area) – A motorcyclist was reportedly speeding and driving recklessly on I-95 southbound in the area and struck a Toyota Sienna, ejecting both the driver and passenger (both helmeted, landing on the shoulder). Alcohol use is pending on the motorcycle driver. Also, the motorcycle driver did not have a valid license.
- **Friday, May 24, 2019, 11:07 p.m. – (1 Fatality)** US-202 at Fairfax Boulevard (Fairfax Area) – A helmeted motorcyclist was reportedly speeding and driving recklessly on US-202 northbound in the area and a 69-year-old driver attempted to turn left, where the motorcycle entered his path. Alcohol use is pending on the motorcyclist.
- **Saturday, May 18, 2019, 8:47 p.m. – (1 Fatality)** US-13 northbound north of Federal School Lane (New Castle area) – A car was attempting to make a U-turn from US-13 southbound to US-13 northbound at a crossover and struck a helmeted motorcyclist. Speed is suspected on part of the motorcyclist and impairment analysis is pending.
- **Sunday, May 5, 2019, 2:06 a.m. – (1 Fatality)** DE-9 at the C&D Canal, (Delaware City area) – This crash involved a 20-year-old motorcyclist who was traveling on the Reedy Point Bridge who crossed the center line, striking a vehicle in the opposite direction and was ejected. Speed and impairment appear to be factors for the motorcyclist.

“Motorcyclists are vulnerable drivers on our roadways. It’s up to both riders and motorists to share the road according to Delaware laws that are put into place to ensure that everyone arrives at their destination safely,” **Sarah Cattie, Motorcycle Traffic Safety Program Manager, Delaware Office of Highway**

Safety

AAA, OHS, DeLDOT and DSP Provide Safety Tips:

One of the most common reasons drivers give for cutting off or pulling out in front of a motorcycle is that they “didn’t see it.”

Bikers can prevent crashes and injuries by:

- Reducing speeds and/or maintaining safer speeds
- Keeping headlights and marker and taillights on at dusk and in dark or rainy weather
- Staying three to four seconds behind a vehicle they intend to pass, checking oncoming traffic from the left side of the lane, signaling the intention to turn, and then checking for oncoming traffic before passing.
- Checking their rearview mirror and quickly turn their head to ensure the vehicle is a safe distance behind them when completing a pass.
- Wearing helmets that meet a high protection standard.
- Wearing proper clothing, eyewear and sturdy, closed-toe footwear.

Motorists can help to make the roads safer for motorcyclists by taking some simple precautions:

- Be extra cautious on weekends, when more motorcyclists take to the road.
- Provide motorcyclists adequate room to maneuver. Follow at least three to four seconds behind them.
- Allow extra maneuvering room in areas with potholes, pavement transitions and railroad crossings. Motorcyclists may need to slow down, stop or adjust their lane position.
- Never try to share a lane with a motorcycle. Motorcycles have the same right to lanes as any other vehicle.
- If a motorcycle is nearby, check your mirrors carefully before changing lanes. Motorcycles may be in your blind

spots or difficult to see because of their smaller size.

*“Road safety is everyone’s responsibility, whether driving a car, truck, or motorcycle and whether we are drivers, passengers, or pedestrians, it’s important for all of us to be aware of others using our roads and to follow basic safety policies while using our public roads,” said **Ken Grant, Public and Government Affairs Manager for AAA Mid-Atlantic.***

*“There are nearly 22,000 motorcycles registered in Delaware and by following the rules of the road – obeying the speed limit, not driving distracted, and not driving under the influence, the risk of being involved in a crash is greatly reduced for anyone operating a motor vehicle and the surrounding motorists,” said **Secretary of Transportation Jennifer Cohan***

Safer motorcycle rides start with respect. Check out the Office of Highway Safety’s Motorcycle Safety website at ArriveAliveDE.com/Motorcycle-Safety and find out where you can take the Motorcycle Rider Safety Course, popular routes for riders throughout the state of Delaware, and check the street smarts section that teaches you how to conduct a pre-ride check called T-CLOCS. While you’re visiting, check out the video section featuring some of Delaware’s riders as they talk about the freedom of owning a bike and why motorcycle safety is so important.

Whether you’re an experienced rider or a novice, you could learn something here that could save your ride—and maybe even your life. The motorcycle safety rider quiz takes less than a few minutes. Go to: ArriveAliveDE.com/Motorcycle-Safety/Rider-Quiz.

- To keep motorcyclists safe, OHS urges everyone to share the road and be alert. We’re reminding motorcyclists to make themselves visible, use DOT-compliant motorcycle helmets, and to always ride sober.

- Make sure you are properly licensed. Check out the DMV Motorcycle Endorsement at: [DE.Gov/services/driver_services/drivers_license/dr_lic_motorcycle.shtml](https://www.de.gov/services/driver_services/drivers_license/dr_lic_motorcycle.shtml).
- Look twice, before you proceed. Then look again. Cars are easier to spot than motorcycles.
- When turning left, ensure there is enough time and space for the motorcyclist to clear the roadway before you initiate the left turn.
- Protect yourself with the proper motorcycle safety gear.

The next OHS motorcycle safety awareness community engagement event will be the Hammer Down for Habitat Motorcycle Ride and Community Day on June 8th, 2019. OHS will be on-site at the American Legion in Smyrna beginning at 9 a.m. with games, a selfie station, and information pertaining to respecting your ride. Click on this link to find out more: <https://business.facebook.com/events/2317175238567234/>

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1800 842-8461). You may also email the unit Director at debra.reed@state.de.us.

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***Presented by the Director of Public Information, Sergeant
Richard Bratz***

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