Impaired Driving Summer Campaign

The August Impaired Driving Crackdown began on August 18th and runs through September 4th. This campaign is intended to reduce traffic crashes and deaths when, statistically, data shows we need increased enforcement. All agencies that are participating in our highway safety grants must participate during this time. It can be saturation patrols or checkpoints. If you are not involved in the grant program we encourage you to step up your efforts as well.

Please get the information onto your social media pages to get the message out to the public. It is our commitment to provide all the information we can to assist you in your enforcement efforts.

If you would like to host an OUI checkpoint but lack the staffing please contact our LEL. We’ll help you make it happen. Additionally, a BAC test can benefit a driver because it is proof he/she was not impaired at the time of the crash.

Alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is a key indicator of the impaired driving problem in Maine and having a BAC of all surviving drivers is essential in documenting the alcohol problem.

We use the information here at the Bureau of Highway Safety and we also include it in data that we provide to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Equally important is that you have exact information relating to drunk driving in your jurisdiction when applying to us for Highway Safety money.

2017 National Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Enforcement Mobilization

This year’s nationwide drunk driving prevention mobilization runs from August 18 to September 4. Research shows that high-visibility enforcement can reduce drunk driving fatalities by as much as 20 percent. The 2017 Products for Enforcement Action Kit (PEAK) enforcement materials may be used to crack down on drunk drivers and motorcyclists, and increase community awareness of the dangers of drunk driving.
A Note from the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition

Thank you for reading the MTSC newsletter. We strive to keep our readers informed on the latest transportation safety news items that cover a variety of important topics from both local and national perspectives. If you would like to be automatically notified when newsletters are published, drop us an e-mail.

Drive Safely - Stay Distraction-Free and Buckle-Up!

The MTSC Executive Board

Texting Enforcement Strategies

In March, NHTSA released a long-anticipated evaluation of strategies to enforce texting while driving bans. Researchers aggregated best practices, drawing on 7,300 hours of high visibility enforcement (HVE) with participating law enforcement agencies in Connecticut and Massachusetts over four waves of enforcement in 2013 and 2014. Key findings include:

Texting Enforcement Strategies

• The importance of conducting officer training, holding roll calls focused on texting enforcement, and engaging in pre-planning to ensure smooth enforcement operations.

• Creating partnerships with local and state enforcement agencies to multiply forces and maximize resources.

• Establishing leadership priority for conducting texting enforcement.

• The use of unmarked vehicles, motorcycle enforcement, detailed officer notes, and the trade-offs involved in leveraging “spotter” officers.

• The value of strong distracted driving laws to help with enforcement of texting bans specifically.

• The use of other charges, such as violating a handheld cellphone ban or impeded operation law, when officers cannot prove a driver engaged specifically in texting.

This project emerged from challenges observed in the handling of texting drivers during a handheld cell phone HVE evaluation in Connecticut and New York in 2010-2011. Though officers have long found it difficult to identify and cite texting drivers, this report articulates successful strategies that police can adopt. As 47 states and D.C. now prohibit texting while driving, states and law enforcement agencies can look to this study to plan more effective programs. Download the report at http://bit.ly/txtenf17.
Heatstroke Can Kill in Minutes:
Sweltering summer weather is visiting much of the country and with it a growing danger to kids: vehicular heatstroke. To help raise awareness, on July 31st, NHTSA engaged in an all-day social media conversation designed to inform the public about the dangers that heatstroke can pose to kids left in cars. Every 15 minutes, starting at 7 a.m. EST, the agency used the hashtags #heatstrokekills and #checkforbaby on all of its social media posts.

Vehicular heatstroke happens when a child is left or trapped inside a car or truck. The temperature inside a vehicle can quickly rise high enough to kill a child—even when it doesn’t feel that hot outside. Understanding how and why these tragedies happen is the key to protecting America’s children.

It Happens to Good Parents:
In the vast majority of vehicular heatstroke deaths between 1998 and 2016, the child was mistakenly left in or gained access to the vehicle when unsupervised. Don’t leave yourself vulnerable by believing this can only happen to irresponsible parents. These tragedies can and do happen to people like you.

It Happens Fast:
In 10 minutes a car can heat up by 20 degrees. Even on a mild day the temperature inside a vehicle can hit 110 degrees. If a child’s body temperature reaches 107 degrees, that child will die.

Since 1998, we’ve lost 7291 children to heatstroke tragedies—29 this year alone. We all need to be on guard to protect kids. Follow these tips:

Look Before You Lock.
Get into the routine of always checking the back seats of your vehicle before you lock it and walk away.

A Gentle Reminder.
Keep a stuffed animal or other memento in your child’s car seat when it’s empty, and move it to the front seat as a visual reminder when your child is in the back seat. Or place your phone, briefcase, or purse in the back seat when traveling with your child.

A Routine Check.
If someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine has been altered, always check to make sure your child has arrived safely. Set a reminder on your phone to call and check in.

A Key to Safety.
Keep your vehicle locked and keep your keys out of reach; nearly 3 in 10 heatstroke deaths happen when an unattended child gains access to a vehicle.

Act to Save a Life:
You should act if you see a child alone in a vehicle. Call law enforcement immediately and free the child from the vehicle to protect that child’s life.

Research is still underway into technologies that may one day alert a driver that a child is being left alone in a vehicle. For now, it’s still up to us to prevent heatstroke deaths and injuries. If you’re a parent who has ever felt tired and overwhelmed (and what parent hasn’t?) then heatstroke can happen in your family.

Now that you know the facts, take action to protect children and to prevent heatstroke tragedies.
Large trucks and buses (commercial motor vehicles or CMVs) have operating limitations such as large blind spots, long stopping distances, and limited maneuverability that make it essential for other vehicles to put extra focus on safety.

Fortunately, you can take simple actions to avoid experiencing or causing problems involving trucks and buses by following these Ten Rules of the Road.

1. Stay out of the “No Zones”

Large trucks and buses have huge blind spots – or No Zones – around the front, back, and sides of the vehicle.

If you can’t see the driver in the truck’s side mirror, assume that the driver can’t see you.

Don’t drive in a blind spot – slow down or move ahead to stay visible.

Be particularly careful when merging near a truck or bus. You may likely be in a blind spot.

2. Pass Safely

Make sure you can see the driver in the mirror before passing. Signal clearly then move into the left lane and accelerate so that you can get past the truck or bus safely and promptly.

Don’t linger in the blind spot.

Make sure the truck or bus is visible in your rearview mirror before you pull in front; give it extra space.

Avoid passing trucks and buses on a down-grade where they tend to pick up speed. Never pass from the right lane.

When a bus or truck is passing you, stay to the right and slow down slightly. Giving the driver room to pass safely helps get you out of the blind spot quicker. Remember to give trucks and buses plenty of space to merge in front of you when coming off ramps or changing lanes.

3. Don’t Cut It Close

Cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous, but it’s especially dangerous to “cut off” a commercial bus or truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you’re likely to be in a blind spot so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you’re visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the amount of time it takes to stop.

4. Stay Back

Tailgating a truck or bus presents added dangers. First, it puts you in a blind spot – or No Zone. Because trucks are so high off the ground, if you fail to stop in time (or get hit from behind) your vehicle could slide under the truck.

Getting too close when stopped is also dangerous – particularly on an upgrade, where a bus or truck might roll back.
5. Anticipate Wide Turns

Buses and trucks require extra turning room – they swing wide, or may even initiate a turn from a middle (rather than far right) lane.

If a truck or bus has its turn signal on, never try to squeeze by it or get between the vehicle and the curb.

When you stop at an intersection, never “block the box” or stop in front of the line, as buses and trucks require that space to complete turns safely.

6. Be Patient

Trucks and buses have operating restrictions, and sometimes use technology like speed limiters.

Honking, driving aggressively, or weaving through traffic won’t make the trip faster, but can cause dangerous distractions and crashes.

7. Buckle Up

Wearing your seat belt is one of the most important things that you and your passengers can do to save your lives. A seatbelt may keep you in your seat and help you maintain control of your vehicle. The safest place for kids is in the backseat, buckled up or in a car seat. Be safe and always buckle up!

8. Stay Focused

If you need to attend to a text, a call, GPS, or an app, get off the road and stop driving. Driving distracted can be as dangerous as driving impaired. Even eating while driving or adjusting your radio can take your eyes off the road long enough for a crash to occur.

Don’t underestimate the speed (or overestimate the distance) of a truck or bus particularly when making turns, merging, or changing lanes.

9. Don’t Drive Fatigued

Take regular breaks, get another driver to relieve you, or get off the road and find a safe place to rest.

10. Never Drive Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs impair both judgement and reaction time. There is no safe limit for drinking before driving.

Many prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs cause dizziness or sleepiness, and can slow reaction time. If your medication carries a warning, take it seriously – have someone else drive or find another way to your destination.

https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/tips-driving-safely-around-large-trucks-or-buses
MaineDOT strives to make bicyclists and pedestrians an integrated element of our intermodal transportation system. Bicyclists and pedestrians are significant partners in MaineDOT’s efforts, providing cost-effective solutions to our state’s mobility, safety and environmental goals. Pedestrians and bicyclists should be afforded the ability to safely travel between traffic generators such as homes, places of work, stores, schools, parks, etc.

The goal of a transportation system is to provide safe and efficient mobility and access for all modes of travel, including pedestrian and bicycle travel. MaineDOT is committed to providing a safe and efficient transportation system for all users.

Walking is a great way to exercise, recreate, and a great way to get around. The physical and psychological benefits of walking are well documented. Walking helps control obesity, helps prevent heart disease, and contributes to your overall quality of life. When you walk, you have more interactions with friends, family and neighbors than you do while driving. Walking helps you leave a smaller footprint on the environment too. By choosing to walk, you are making a healthy decision for your body, your mind, and your environment. However, as a pedestrian, you are a vulnerable user of the road system. As a user of the road system, you have responsibilities just like motorists.

It is imperative that we all know how to walk carefully so we get to where we are going safely. As a group, pedestrians comprise about 6 percent of all highway fatalities each year. On average, a pedestrian is killed in a traffic crash every 113 minutes and injured in a traffic crash every 8 minutes in the United States. On average, a pedestrian is hit by a motor vehicle in Maine once a day. In the past five years, there have been 1358 crashes and 51 fatalities involving pedestrians in Maine. In 2008, 4,378 pedestrians were killed in the United States in traffic crashes, according to the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration.

**General Safety Tips for all Pedestrians**

**Look and Listen**
Accidents involving pedestrians occur throughout the year because of pedestrian inattention and carelessness. Always be alert while walking and don’t assume that motorists, bikers and other pedestrians can see you.

**See and Be Seen**
Dress brightly and do not assume that motorists can see you.

Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if you are walking at dusk, dawn, or night.

Carry a flashlight if you are walking at night.

Stay out of a driver’s blind spot at all times.

Make eye contact with motorists when crossing the street.

Do not let children play near traffic or cross the street by themselves. Children are small, and drivers may not see them if they run into the street.

**Walk on the Sidewalk**
Walk against traffic if necessary

The sidewalk is the safest place for pedestrians to walk. You should always walk on the sidewalk if one is available. If you must walk on or near a road, remember to walk against the flow of traffic. This allows you to see oncoming traffic and to react if necessary.

When crossing the street, use a crosswalk

Properly located and warranted marked
crosswalks are the safest places for pedestrians to cross the road because they are more visible and motorists are more aware that a pedestrian may be crossing. Maine law requires motorists to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in marked crosswalks. Even though motorists must yield, it is important to wait, look both ways, make eye contact, and proceed only when you know it is safe. When at a crosswalk with a signal, wait for the WALK signal before crossing the street. It is very unsafe to jaywalk diagonally across any intersection. The safest crossing points will have:

- Enough room for you to stand back from the roadway
- Crosswalks that are clearly defined on the pavement
- Crossing signals that indicate when you should cross
- A crossing guard to stop traffic to allow you to cross
- Allow plenty of time to cross streets

When crossing the street it is important to allow enough time to cross from one side to the other even when using a crosswalk. A signalized crosswalk usually allows plenty of time to cross the street, however be aware of how much time the signal allows you. A crossing guard gives you as much time as you need to cross the street.

Follow these rules when crossing the street:

- Cross at a cross walk whenever you can.
- Stop, look left, look right, and look left again before crossing.
- Cross with a crossing guard’s help when they are available.
- At traffic lights, wait for the white WALK sign before crossing.
- Watch for turning traffic at intersections even when using a crosswalk.
- Wait, watch, and wave. Be certain to wait until all cars have stopped in all lanes and drivers see you before you cross the road. Wave to cars as you cross to thank them.

Walk at a constant speed and in a predictable manner.

**Walk Defensively**

Don’t simply assume that motorists know that by law, pedestrians have the right-of-way. Many of them don’t. Be on guard at all times as a pedestrian.

**Don’t be Distracted**

As a pedestrian, it is easy to be distracted by your environment, listening to music, talking on a cell phone. However it is important to remain alert and aware of your surroundings in order to remain safe. Pay attention to traffic and other hazards of the road.

**Watch out for Cars**

Both pedestrians and motorists have responsibilities when using the roadways. Operating a motor vehicle is very difficult. It is easy to become distracted behind the wheel. Motorist distractions are a primary cause of pedestrian crashes. Therefore as a pedestrian, do not assume that motorists see you. Make yourself visible and don’t assume the right of way.

**Plan Safe Walking Routes**

Some walking routes are safer than others. Use the routes that have the least amount of traffic, the largest sidewalk, the least amount of street crossings and the best lighting.

**Be Alert to Engine Noise**

Parked vehicles pose a major threat to pedestrians. Be aware of cars that have turned on their engines, they will be pulling out soon. Be alert

For More Information

Maine pedestrian laws

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Pedestrian Safety Resources
http://maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/bikepedsafe.html
What Is Aggressive Driving?

Aggressive driving is extremely common among U.S. drivers. A recent study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that nearly 80 percent of drivers expressed significant anger, aggression or road rage behind the wheel at least once in the previous year. Previous research by the AAA Foundation found that from 2003 to 2007, over half of fatal crashes involved at least one driver who performed a potentially aggressive action.

Aggressive driving has increasingly become a major cause of concern for many road users. Learn more about aggressive driving risks and tips to avoid aggressive driving behaviors here.

What is Aggressive Driving?

Any unsafe driving behavior, performed deliberately and with ill intention or disregard for safety, can constitute aggressive driving. Examples of aggressive driving behaviors include:

• Speeding in heavy traffic
• Tailgating
• Cutting in front of another driver and then slowing down
• Running red lights
• Weaving in and out of traffic
• Changing lanes without signaling
• Blocking cars attempting to pass or change lanes
• Using headlights or brakes to “punish” other drivers

What is Road Rage?

Extreme cases of aggressive driving can escalate to road rage. Examples of road rage are:

• Cursing and rude or obscene gestures
• Throwing objects
• Ramming
• Sideswiping
• Forcing a driver off the road

How Common Do U.S. Drivers Exhibit Aggressive Driving Behaviors?

According to estimates by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, drivers engaged in the following angry and aggressive behaviors during the previous year, including:

Purposefully tailgating: 51 percent (104 million drivers)
Yelling at another driver: 47 percent (95 million drivers)
Honking to show annoyance or anger: 45 percent (91 million drivers)

AAA Offers These Tips to Help Prevent Aggressive Driving

Manage your behavior, manage your responses.

You will see other drivers doing things that are illegal, inconsiderate and even incomprehensible. Don’t respond personally. Most drivers are not thinking about their impact on you; they are just rushed, distracted or upset.

Follow the rules of the road:
Maine BMV Unveils Video to Prepare Road Test Applicants

Road test applicants now have a chance to view the entire process before their test date, in a new video offered on the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles website. “What to Expect During the State of Maine Class C License Road Test” features driver license examiners from throughout the state, guiding an applicant through the process. Viewers will get a first-hand look at all aspects of the road test process, from the vision screening to the parallel parking maneuver, and have a better sense of what to expect during their own test at http://maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/exam.html

“Our goal in providing this video is to take away some of the anxiety that many people experience before taking their road test,” said Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap. “We’re hopeful that once people watch it, they’ll see that our examiners are friendly and approachable people, and gain a sense of comfort from knowing how the process will proceed.” The live-action video is available to view on the BMV website Exams Page at http://maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/exam.html and on the Maine Department of the Secretary of State YouTube page at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuNcdIvL41&feature=youtu.be

The video was created in-house, filmed at the Augusta Bureau of Motor Vehicles branch during the spring of 2017. It is one of several resources for aspiring drivers in Maine, along with the road test study guide and the guides at http://maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/studyguides.html for both parents and teens on our Teen Driver Resource page at http://maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/teen.html

What Is Aggressive Driving?

Maintain adequate following distance.
Use turn signals.
Allow others to merge.
Use your high beams responsibly.
Tap your horn if you must (but no long blasts with accompanying hand gestures).
Be considerate in parking lots. Park in one spot, not across multiple spaces. Be careful not to hit cars next to you with your door.
Remaining calm and courteous behind the wheel lowers your risk of an unpleasant encounter – with another driver and with law enforcement.

Dealing with Confrontation

• Avoid eye contact with angry drivers.
• Don’t respond to aggression with aggression.
• If you feel you are at risk, drive to a public place such as a police station, hospital or fire station.
• When you park, allow room so you can pull out safely if someone approaches you aggressively.
• Use your horn to attract attention but remain in your locked vehicle.

Always Remember

Don’t Offend: Never cause another driver to change their speed or direction. That means not forcing another driver to use their brakes, or turn the steering wheel in response to something you have done.

Be Tolerant and Forgiving: The other driver may just be having a really bad day. Assume that it’s not personal.

Do Not Respond: Avoid eye contact, don’t make gestures, maintain space around your vehicle, and contact 911 if needed.

Safety Issues

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A New Interstate 95 Interchange Now Open in Waterville

Waterville – A new Interstate 95 interchange opened in Waterville in July.

The interchange at Exit 124 at Trafton Road in Waterville is open for vehicular traffic. This interchange allows a direct access to I-95 and will help to foster business growth opportunities within the area.

The Maine Department of Transportation along with the funding partners of U.S. Department of Commerce, the Economic Development Administration, City of Waterville and Trafton Properties utilized MaineDOT’s Business Partnership Initiative (BPI) in the development and delivery of this new $5.3 million interchange.

“This is an exciting opportunity for businesses in the area to utilize this new interchange,” said MaineDOT Commissioner David Bernhardt. “The city of Waterville and surrounding communities now have a new point of access that allows an easy connection to the interstate, saving time and direct fuel costs which will positively affect their bottom line.”

Sargent Corporation began constructing the new interchange in late September of 2016. Work began with clearing, excavation, ledge removal, installation of drainage pipes along with gravel placement on both the north and southbound ramps.

MaineDOT’s Business Partnership Initiative (BPI) is a one third state, two third business/municipal demand response program, designed to respond to Municipal/Business Entity requests, such as responding to changing local transportation needs on State and State-Aid highways, developing economic opportunities, and relieving safety concerns on or adjacent to these highways. The program is designed to promote public/private partnerships between MaineDOT and municipalities, public utilities, private businesses and other entities by leveraging additional resources on a voluntary basis to match limited state resources. It will make improvements to State and State-Aid highways often utilizing more flexible project delivery methods when the nature of the highway and project allow.

For more information on the BPI program, please visit:


For more Information:

Ted Talbot, Press Secretary 207-885-7046

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MTSC: Promoting Safe Transportation in Maine

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Date(s)
For the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition Meeting

Monday, October 30 at BPS/BHS in the Champlain Room from 9:30-Noon

(Please Note: This date is rescheduled from the original October 23rd meeting)

Check the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition at www.themtsc.org for upcoming meetings and events.