

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Chapter 12

Pedestrians and bicyclists are the most vulnerable of all road users. Most crashes result in some degree of injury – some very serious. A pedestrian crash occurs almost every day in Maine and can occur in any setting – from a busy urban intersection to rural lanes. As walking and biking continue to be advocated for exercise and as a commuting alternative, safety for this road-using segment must be considered. There is increased emphasis on providing pedestrian and bike-friendly facilities. There is ongoing public education reminding all road users to take appropriate safety precautions.



Pedestrian behaviors that contribute to crashes with motor vehicles include intoxication, crossing outside of crosswalks, darting into traffic or between stopped cars, walking with traffic and wearing clothing that does not provide adequate visibility.

In 2007, Maine passed a law designed to increase the safety of bicyclists on Maine roads. In 2009, this law was amended to include roller-skiers.

“An operator of a motor vehicle that is passing a bicycle proceeding in the same direction shall exercise due care by leaving a distance between the motor vehicle and the bicycle of not less than 3 feet while the motor vehicle is passing the bicycle. A motor vehicle operator may pass a bicycle traveling in the same direction in a no-passing zone only when it is safe to do so. (MRSA, Title 29-A, § 2070, subsection 1-A)”.

The number of pedestrians involved in crashes has been increasing since 2004. Pedestrian involved crashes are slightly higher than pedal cycle involved crashes, but the number of pedestrian deaths is over five times greater. While fatal bicycle (pedal cycle) crashes account for less than 1% of all pedal cycle crashes, pedestrian fatal crashes account for over 4% of total crashes involving pedestrians.

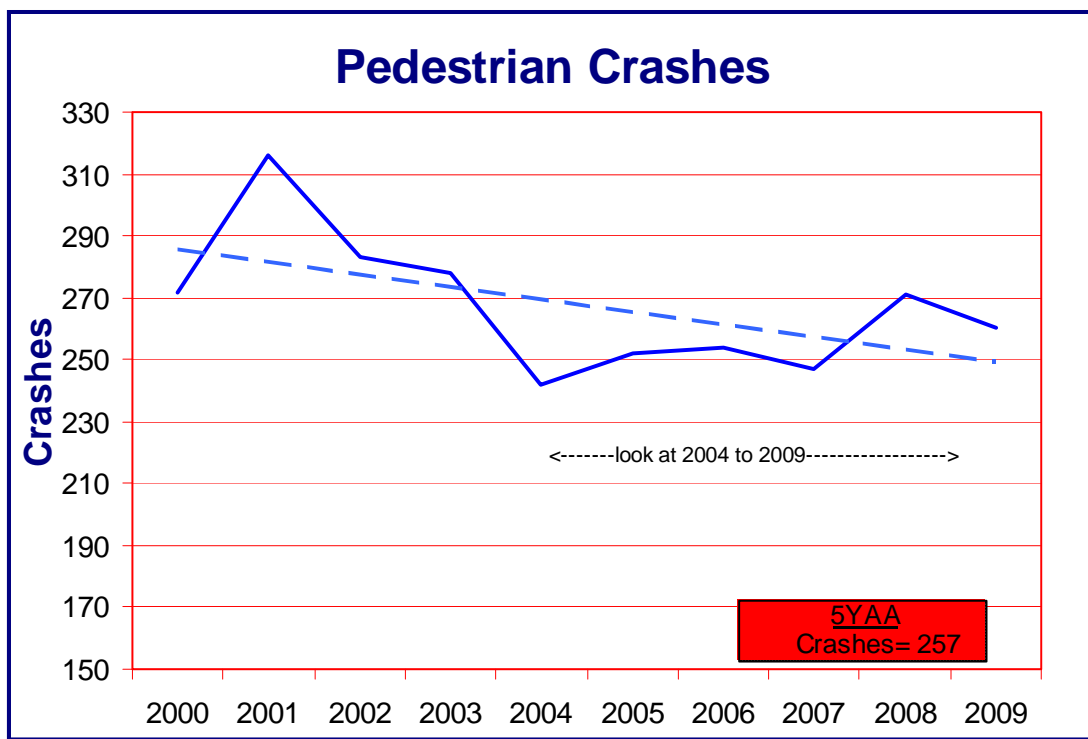
Statewide

- From 2000-2009 there were 2,675 pedestrian crashes (less than 1% of all crashes) resulting in 124 deaths (7 % of all crash fatalities).
- Over 97% of all pedestrians involved in crashes sustained some kind of injury.
- Youth under age 19 are commonly involved in pedestrian crashes. They account for 31% of the total.
- The most common cause of pedestrian involved crashes was pedestrian violations, followed by driver inattention.
- For pedestrian fatalities, 25% had a positive blood alcohol level.



National Trends

- January 1 and October 31 were the deadliest days of the year, having the highest number of pedestrian fatalities.
- The older age group (over 64) has a much greater possibility than other age groups of being killed in a crash.
- As a pedestrian's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) increases, the probability of a pedestrian being killed in a crash increases.
- Pedestrians have a higher probability of being killed in a crash under dark conditions than under other light conditions.
- Regarding posted speed limits, the higher the posted speed limit, the higher the probability of a pedestrian fatality.
- Nearly 46% of pedestrian fatalities are alcohol-involved.
- One in five pedestrians killed were killed in hit-and-run motor vehicle crashes.



Although the overall trend for Pedestrian crashes (above) and fatalities (pg. 42) have been decreasing when looking at the entire past 10 year period, numbers have been on the increase in the latter half of this review period.

