

# Intersections

## Chapter 7

Every year in Maine, thousands of crashes occur at intersections. A number of factors contribute to these crashes, especially at signalized intersections. Disregarding of traffic signals is a major crash cause in Maine. There are many reasons why crashes occur at signalized intersections, including:



- There is a lot of activity. Signalized intersections are heavily traveled locations with slowing, stopping, and turning vehicles. The traffic scene constantly changes.
- Intersection layout and signal timing vary.
- Some drivers make mistakes - others take chances.
- Drivers looking for landmarks or signs lose sight of changes in traffic movement and traffic signals.
- Unsafe behaviors lead to taking chances such as: trying to make up time when running late; being aggressive or upset; or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### Statewide

- There were 8,300 crashes at Maine intersections in 2009, resulting in 18 fatalities and 3,500 injuries.
- The annual number of overall intersection crashes has been decreasing.
- The percent of intersection crashes to total crashes has been unchanged for most of the past 10 years.
- Common driver contributing factors over a 5-year period are:
  - Driver Inattention/Distraction – 22,831
  - Failure to Yield Right of Way -12,987
  - Following Too Close – 7,177
  - Illegal Unsafe Speed – 4,279
  - Disregard Traffic Control Device – 3,312
  - Improper Turn – 1,947



Traffic signals provide more defined instructions for vehicle movement, but do not ensure safe passage as the crash numbers below show:

### **Signalized Intersections**

In Maine, there are about 800 traffic signal controlled intersections.

- There were 2,700 crashes at these locations resulting in one fatality and 1,000 injuries in 2009.
- Red light running crashes account for approximately 12% of all crashes occurring at traffic lights.
- There are two common driver errors at Maine traffic lights: disregarding traffic control devices and failing to yield the right of way.

### **Comparison with National Trends**

- In 2002, there were more than 1.8 million intersection crashes.
- In 2001, there were about 8,500 intersection related deaths.
- In 2002, there were 219,000 red light running crashes resulting in 1,000 deaths and 181,000 injuries.
- 42% of all pedestrian injuries and 21% of pedestrian fatal injuries occurred at intersections.

