

Governor's
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
— — — — — *on* — — — — —
HIGHWAY SAFETY



TRAFFIC SAFETY DURING COVID-19

Update

Marshall M. Herman

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Office of the Secretary of Transportation

May 20, 2020

GHSA National Analysis

Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA)

GHSA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit representing the state and territorial highway safety offices that implement federal grant programs to address behavioral highway safety issues.

GHSA National Analysis



Governors Highway Safety Association
The States' Voice on Highway Safety

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Absent Traffic Jams, Many Drivers Getting More Reckless

Resource Type

News Releases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2020

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Traffic Safety Community Urges Safer Driving During Coronavirus Pandemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Emptier streets may be encouraging some drivers to flout traffic safety laws, including speed limits. Despite there being far fewer vehicles on the road due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, state highway safety officials across the country are seeing a severe spike in speeding. Many states have reported alarming speed increases, with some noting a significant surge in vehicles clocked at 100 mph or more.

Being a safe driver should always be a priority, but during the coronavirus pandemic, traffic safety experts at the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) say it is more important than ever. "While COVID-19 is clearly our national priority, our traffic safety laws cannot be ignored," said GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins. "Law enforcement officials have the same mission as health care providers — to save lives. If you must drive, buckle up, follow the posted speed limit and look out for pedestrians and bicyclists. Emergency rooms in many areas of the country are at capacity, and the last thing they need is additional strain from traffic crash victims."

GHSA National Analysis

- . GHSA reported a severe spike in speeding and other reckless driving behavior.**
- . “Empty streets may be encouraging some drivers to flout traffic safety laws, including speed limits. Despite there being far fewer vehicles on the road due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, state highway safety officials across the country are seeing a severe spike in speeding. Many states have reported alarming speed increases, with some noting a significant surge in vehicles clocked at 100 mph or more.”**

Virginia State Police – Speeding

- **Uptick in more extreme speeding by motorists on the interstates that are less crowded during the stay-at-home directives.**
- **An open road is not an open invitation to speed.**
- **State police troopers across Virginia are still actively enforcing posted speed limits.**

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) – Speeding

Preliminary data indicates that during the period of March 13, 2020 through April 30, 2020:

- **Speed-related crashes account for more than 23% of total crashes during the time period, which is an increase over the same period last year (18.5%), and higher than the 5-year average (19%).**
- **Speed-related fatalities make up approximately 48% of overall fatalities during this time period, which is a higher percentage than the 5-year average of 41%.**

Virginia DMV – Seat Belts

Preliminary Data on the rate of fatalities and injuries resulting from occupants not wearing seat belts from March 13 through April 30 compared to the same period last year:

- **Unrestrained fatalities have not decreased: 34 unrestrained fatalities during this period both in 2019 and in 2020.**
- **Unrestrained fatalities make up approximately 56% of total fatalities during this time period – a slightly higher percentage than the 54% recorded in the same period in 2019.**

Virginia DMV – Seat Belts (continued)

- **Number of fatalities involving both speed *AND* unrestrained occupants increased by approximately 41% during this time period compared to 2019 (24 speed-related and unrestrained fatalities in 2020 vs.17 in 2019).**
- **Unrestrained fatalities for the calendar year through April 30 have increased by approximately 16% over the same period in 2019 (102 deaths in 2020 vs. 88 in 2019).**

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) – Road Construction

VDOT conducts much of its maintenance and construction work along the roadway with live traffic.

- **While traffic has decreased due to the pandemic, work zone crashes remain a serious risk.**
- **For the safety of crew members and the traveling public, all motorists should use caution and drive slowly through work zones.**

Vulnerable Road Users – Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Due to significantly lighter traffic and spring weather, many individuals and families are walking and bicycling for exercise.

- **More than 90% of pedestrian injuries and deaths occur when they are crossing a roadway.**
- **It is important for pedestrians to use crosswalks and other pedestrian infrastructure tools that highlight the safest places to cross a road.**
- **Cyclists must comply with all traffic laws, and motorists must share the road and maintain 3-feet of separation when passing bicyclists.**

Actions

- **Phase One of the Governor's "Forward Virginia" plan reminds everyone that it is *still safer to stay at home*.**
- **If you must drive, buckle-up, follow the posted speed limits, be aware of pedestrians and bicyclists, and do not drive if you have been drinking.**
- **VSP is enhancing enforcement efforts with Memorial Day weekend approaching and schools "letting out" at the end of May. Increased traffic is anticipated on the main interstate corridors as beaches along the East Coast open.**

Actions (continued)

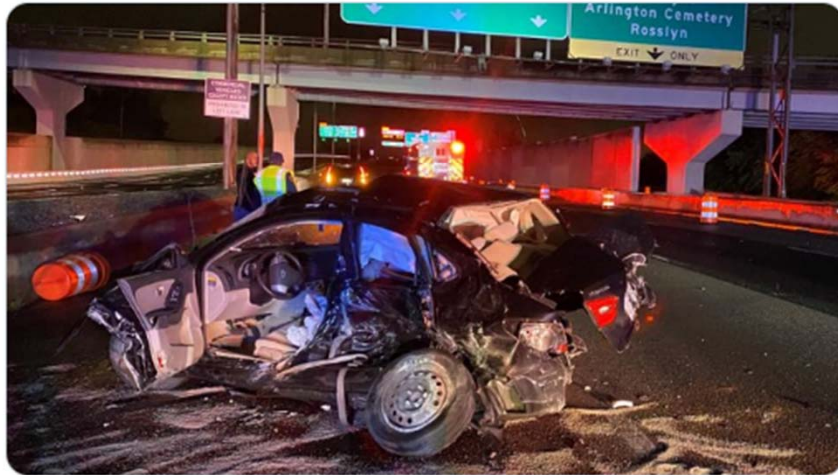
- **VSP, DMV and VDOT are issuing social media posts that combine traffic safety and COVID-19 messages.**
- **Posts focus on slowing down, not driving impaired, seat belt use, bicycle/pedestrian safety, and motorcycle safety.**
- **VDOT drafting creative safety messages on these topics for use on Changeable Message Signs (CMS).**

Actions (continued)



VA State Police @VSPPIO · May 6

#Speeding was the main cause of this crash in I395 #WorkZone @ArlingtonVA 12:29 AM. Hyundai going north when 23 YO driver lost control, struck constr trailer sign, crash impact attenuator, slid across the lanes, t-boned an SUV. Minor injuries. Lesson: #SlowYourSpeed @VaDOTNOVA



9

18

55



Virginia State Police

May 16 at 3:35 PM

Reason #2,685 for wearing a seatbelt! #SeatbeltsSaveLives

Fortunately this driver was wearing his seatbelt and walked away without injury. At 12:15 p.m. Saturday, #VSP Trooper S.H. Cho responded to the scene on the ramp from Braddock Road to southbound I-495 in #Fairfax County. The adult male driver was in the process of leaving the U-Haul facility on Port Royal Road, when he hit the gas pedal instead of the brake. The truck drove through the retaining wall and crash landed ... See More



453,698

People Reached

59,891

Engagements

Boost Post


1.5K

438 Comments 1.2K Shares

Actions (continued)

Virginia State Police April 4

OK, folks. We know school's closed, but this is not a new lesson for drivers. Let's review again, as #VSP #Trooper Smith issued this ticket today on I-81 in #Pulaski Co. #StayHome 🙏 Saves Lives #Speeding 🚗🚗 Kills
The rules of the road still apply during #COVID19 #DontSpeed #BuckleUp #DontDUI



000 [redacted] VIRGINIA UNIFORM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE
YOU ARE SUMMONED TO APPEAR IN THE (CITY OF / COUNTY OF)
Pulaski

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY (NAME)
DEFENDANT'S ATTORNEY (NAME)
NO ATTORNEY
NO ATTY WAIVED
NO ATTY JAIL WAIVED BY CT

ACCUSED WAS THIS DAY:
TRIED IN ABSENCE
PRESENT
CERTIFIED PLAINTANT TO § 19.2-190.1

ACCUSED PLEADED:
NOT GUILTY
NOLO CONTENDERE
GUILTY PREPAYMENT

WAS TRIED AND FOUND BY ME:
FINDING SUFFICIENT
DEFERRED \$
NOT GUILTY
GUILTY AS CHARGED

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT (TRAFFIC)
 GENERAL DISTRICT COURT (CRIMINAL)
 JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT

45 3rd STREET N.W. SUITE 102
PULASKI, VA 24301

ON July 21 ADDRESS 46.2-862 AT 09:31 A.M. P.M.

FOR VIOLATION OF 46.2-862 COUNTY PULASKI CITY W TOWN


LAW SECTION 46.2-862 DESCRIBE CHARGE:
RECKLESS DRIVING BY SPEED
SPEEDING 100 / 70 MPH ZONE (M-KNOW)

115,567 People Reached 26,073 Engagements **Boost Post**

👍👎👏 1K 314 Comments 270 Shares

VA State Police @VSPPIO · May 9

Would this make your mother proud? 😬 A traffic ticket for 115 in a 55 mph is not the #MothersDay 🌹 gift she wants. (Issued this AM on I-395 in #Arlington County by #VSP Trooper.) #NoNeed2Speed #Drive2SaveLives @VaDOTNOVA @VaPSHS



22 45 113

Actions (continued)

VirginiaDMV
May 7 at 9:42 AM · 🌐

Unrestrained fatalities are on the rise in #Virginia.

As of May 6, 100 people who weren't wearing a seat belt have been killed in traffic crashes, which is an increase of nearly 9% compared to 2019.

Wherever you're seated in the car, #BuckleUp! It could save your life.

#ArriveAlive www.dmvNOW.com

👍👎👤 9

17 Shares

VirginiaDMV
May 14 at 2:05 PM · 🌐

Life can fly by quickly. #SlowDown and enjoy the journey. No destination is worth your life -- #ArriveAlive.

👍 7

1 Share

VirginiaDMV
May 13 at 9:00 AM · 🌐

First responders and highway workers are still out there working to make the roads safer for you. Let's have their back so they can go home safely. See flashing lights? Do what's right and #MoveOver.

Give emergency personnel room to work safely.

MOVE OVER

It's the law.

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
www.dmvNOW.com

👍❤️ 23

2 Comments 118 Shares

Actions (continued)

 **VDOT** @VaDOT · May 9

Don't #socialdistance from the law. Please comply with the posted speed limits and drive safely. Let's help keep each other safe on #VA roads! @VSPPIO



2 15 42



**SAFETY IS
NOT CANCELED
SLOW DOWN**



Actions (continued)



VDOT @VaDOT · May 7

There are fewer ppl on our roadways as more people [#socialdistance](#) & [#stayathome](#) 🏠. Less traffic does NOT mean safety goes out the window. Please:

- ✓ Buckle up
- ✓ Ditch distractions
- ✓ Comply with the posted speed limits
- ✓ Drive sober
- ✓ Move over for red, blue & amber lights



THANK YOU

Marshall M. Herman

Special Assistant

Office of the Secretary of Transportation

May 20, 2020