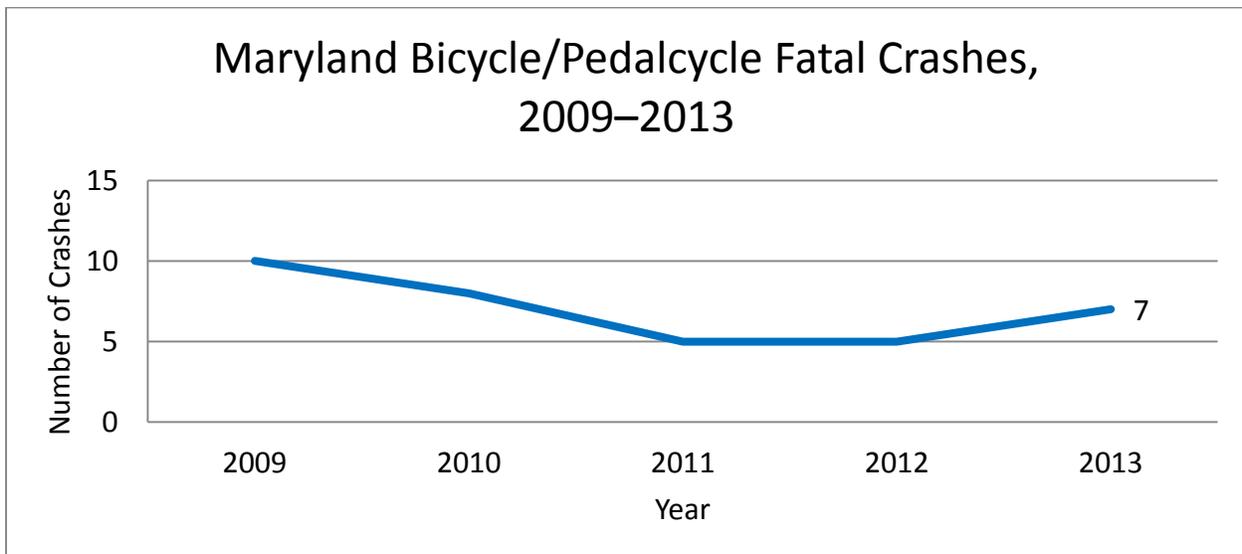
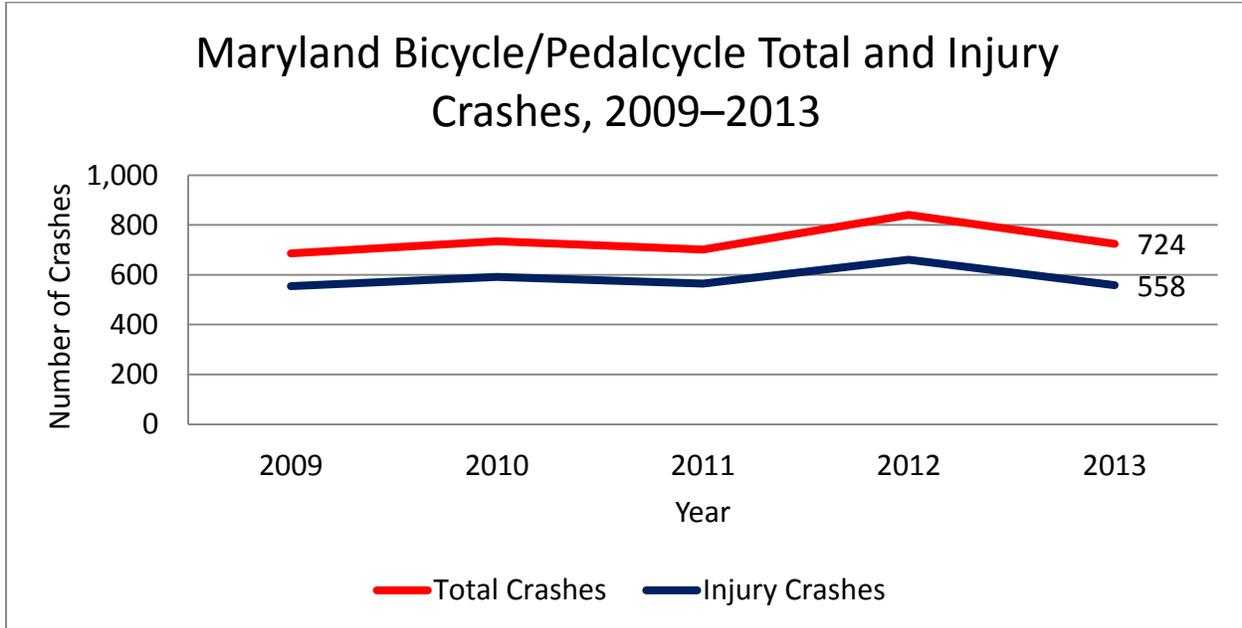


## BICYCLE SAFETY IN MARYLAND

### THE FACTS

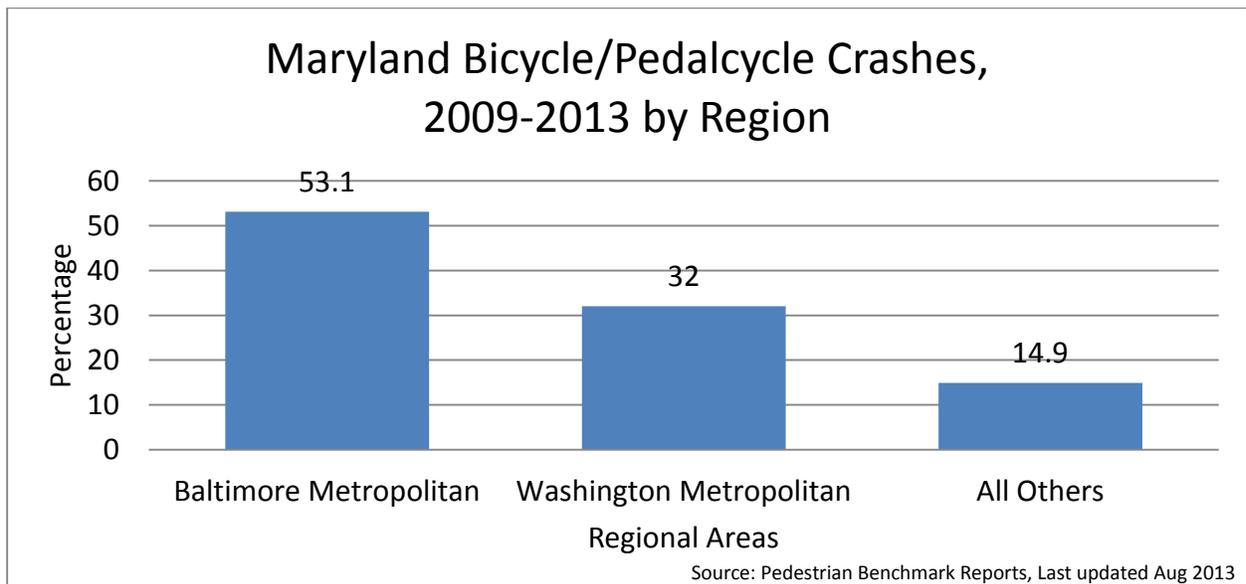


- **Motor vehicle crashes are a huge threat to public health.** Over the past decade, the number of crashes reported on the nation's roadways has declined annually. However, motor vehicle crashes continue to be a leading cause of death in the United States<sup>1</sup>. In 2012, approximately 5.6 million crashes were reported; approximately 30 percent resulted in an injury or fatality<sup>2</sup>. Less than two percent (1.4%) of those killed or injured were pedalcyclists.

<sup>1</sup> CDC National Vital Statistics Reports – 10 Leading Causes of Death, United States, 2012

<sup>2</sup> NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts – Overview DOT HS 812 016

- **Crashes involving bicyclists and pedalcyclists in Maryland are increasing.** Between 2009 and 2013, Maryland saw an average of 738 bicycles and pedalcycle-involved crashes each year. However, over the past five years there was a six percent increase in the number of crashes. More than 80 percent of the crashes resulted in a death or injury.
- **Injuries are high in bicycle and pedalcycle crashes.** Each year nearly 600 people were injured in cyclist-involved crashes. Eighty percent of all crashes involving a bicycle and pedalcyclist resulted in an injury, more than twice the rate of those of all crashes statewide. Although the number of injury crashes declined slightly, fatalities resulting from bicycle or pedalcycle crashes increased in 2013.
- **Bicycle and pedalcyclist crashes are highest in metropolitan areas<sup>3</sup>.** Baltimore City saw an average of 181 cycle-involved crashes each year accounting for 25 percent of the state’s cyclist crashes. Over 85 percent of the crashes occurred in the Baltimore and Washington Metropolitan areas.
- **Bicycle and pedalcycle crashes occur more in warmer months.** More than 60 percent of bicycle and pedalcycle crashes occurred between May and September, with June, July and August accounting for the months with the highest number of injury and fatal crashes.



<sup>3</sup> Baltimore Metropolitan area is comprised of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties, and Baltimore City as designated by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The Washington Metropolitan Area is defined as Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties as designated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

## BACKGROUND

Riding a bicycle is great exercise, good for the environment, and just plain fun. Unfortunately, it can also be dangerous. Therefore, both bicyclists and motorists need to work together to be safe on the road. Bicycles are considered vehicles in Maryland, so bicyclists must devote as much attention to riding a bike as they would when operating a motor vehicle. Equally as important, motorists must allow cyclists the same respect and caution they would allow another vehicle.

Motorists can safely share the road with bicyclists by maintaining a (3) three foot gap when passing a bicyclist, stopping for cyclists in crosswalks, and being alert when making turns. Wearing a helmet properly, being visible and being alert and aware of surroundings, are a few ways that bicyclists can be safer while riding. When we “share the road,” we all get to enjoy Maryland’s roadways safely.

## MARYLAND’S BICYCLE SAFETY LAWS

By Maryland law, bicycles are vehicles. Bicyclists are authorized users of the roadway, and bicyclists have rights-of-way and the same duty to obey all traffic signals as motorists. But bicycles are less visible, quieter, and don’t have a protective barrier around them. Motorists should drive carefully near bicyclists; even a slight mistake can result in serious injury or even death.

### Traffic Laws for Motorists

- The driver of a vehicle passing another vehicle, including a bicycle, must pass at a safe distance and leave plenty of space. The driver should be able to see the passed vehicle in the rear view mirror before returning to the original lane. After passing a driver must make sure they are clear of the bicyclist before making any turns.
- Drivers shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with any bicycle, Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Device (EPAMD), or motor scooter being ridden by a person.
- The driver of a vehicle must not pass any closer than three (3) feet to a bicycle or motor scooter if the bicycle is operated in a lawful manner. It is not lawful to ride against traffic.
- The bicycle has the right-of-way when the motor vehicle is making a turn, and motorists must yield to bicyclists.
- Motorists must yield the right-of-way to bicyclists riding in bike lanes and shoulders when these vehicle operators are entering or crossing occupied bike lanes and shoulders.
- When riding on a sidewalk—where such riding is permitted—or a bike path, a bicyclist may ride in a crosswalk to continue on their route. Motorists are required to yield right-of-way to a bicyclist operating lawfully in a crosswalk. Drivers must look for bicycles coming from both directions. (TR §21-101, §21-202, & §21-1103)
- A person may not throw any object at or in the direction of any person riding a bicycle, an EPAMD, or a motor scooter.
- A person may not open the door of any motor vehicle with intent to strike, injure, or interfere with any person riding a bicycle, an EPAMD, or a motor scooter.
- Failing to yield right-of-way to a bicyclist, resulting in a crash in which the bicyclist is seriously injured, can result in a \$1,000 fine and three points on a driving record.

## Traffic Laws for Bicyclists

- Maryland's traffic laws apply to bicycles and motor scooters. (TR§21-1202)
- A bicycle may not carry a passenger unless it is specifically designed for and equipped with a seat for each passenger. (TR§21-1203)
- Bicycles, motor scooters, and EPAMDs are not permitted on any roads where the speed limit is more than 50 miles per hour (MPH) or higher. (TR§21-1205.1)
- A person riding a bicycle shall ride as close to the right side of the road as practicable and safe, except when:
  - Making or attempting to make a left turn;
  - Operating on a one-way street;
  - Passing a stopped or slower moving vehicle;
  - Avoiding pedestrians or road hazards;
  - The right lane is a right turn only lane; or
  - Operating in a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle to travel safely side-by-side within the lane (TR§21-1205).
- Where there is a bike lane, a person must use those and not ride a bicycle or motor scooter in the roadway except: (TR§21-1205.1)
  - If passing safely cannot be done within the bike lane or shoulder;
  - When preparing for a left turn;
  - To avoid hazards; or
  - When the bike lane is also a right-turn or merge lane.
- A person riding a bicycle or motor scooter may not cling to any vehicle on the roadway. (TR§21-124)
- A motor scooter may not be operated at a speed in excess of 30 MPH. (TR§21-1205.1)
- An EPAMD may not be operated at a speed in excess of 15 MPH. (TR§21-1205.1)
- A person cannot carry anything that prevents them from keeping both hands on the handlebars or that interferes with the view or balance of their bicycle, motor scooter, or EPAMD. (TR§21-1206)
- A bicycle, motor scooter, or EPAMD may not be secured to a fire hydrant; a pole, meter, or device in a bus or taxi-loading zone; a pole, meter, or device within 25 feet of an intersection; or where it would obstruct or impede traffic. (TR§21-1206)
- A person may not ride a bicycle, motor scooter, or EPAMD while wearing a headset or earplugs that cover both ears. (TR§21-12010)

## Helmets

- Helmets are required for everyone under the age of 16, including passengers, who ride their bicycles on the road, bicycle paths, or any public property. (TR§21-1207.1)
- Helmets are also required for everyone under the age of 16 who is riding on a scooter or on in-line skates. (TR§21-1207.2)
- The helmets must meet or exceed the standards of the American National Standards Institute, the Snell Memorial Foundation, or the American Society for Testing and Materials. (TR§21-1207.1)

## Required Equipment

- A lamp is required on the front of a bicycle or motor scooter if the bicycle or motor scooter is used on a highway when people and vehicles are not clearly visible at 1,000 feet. (TR§21-1207)
- A red reflector on the rear is required if the bicycle or motor scooter is used on a highway when people and vehicles are not clearly visible at 1,000 feet. (TR§21-1207)

- A bicycle or motor scooter may be equipped with a bell or other audible device, but not a siren or whistle. (TR§21-1207)
- A bicycle or motor scooter must be equipped with a brake. (TR§21-1207)

## MARYLAND'S BICYCLE SAFETY PROGRAMS

### **Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign**

Established in 2002 in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, the *Street Smart* campaign continues to address pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues through coordinated education and enforcement activities. The *Street Smart D.C.* campaign is managed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and its Transportation Planning Board.

In 2009 the *Street Smart* program was expanded to include the Baltimore metropolitan region. The Baltimore *Street Smart* campaign incorporates media and public outreach efforts and coordinated regional enforcement efforts targeting specific corridors.

The *Street Smart* campaign components include:

- Media campaign with television and radio public service announcements, outdoor advertising, and outreach materials;
- Editorials in numerous newspapers describing the pedestrian and bicycle crash problems;
- Street Teams and outreach in High Crash Corridors;
- Literature distribution utilizing geographic-specific information; and
- Law enforcement operations targeting priority corridors and neighborhoods.

### **Maryland Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)**

- The Federal Highway Administration administers the SRTS program funds and provides guidance and regulations about SRTS programs.
- Federal SRTS funds are distributed to states based on student enrollment, with no state receiving less than \$1 million per year.
- SRTS funds can be used for both infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities to increase safety for children walking or biking to school.
- Managed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Maryland's federally funded SRTS program is the source for state coordinator contact details, federal funding amounts, applications and guidelines, and state program information for the SRTS program.

### **Bicycle Safety Law Enforcement Video Training**

The Maryland Department of Transportation, with a grant from the Motor Vehicle Administration's Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO), developed a training video for law enforcement agencies and officers on traffic law enforcement for bicyclist safety.

## Bicycle Safety Ambassadors/Bike-Minded Project

Bike Maryland, under a grant from the MHSO, is implementing a bicycle safety outreach program for the Baltimore City area, targeting high risk areas and populations.

## BICYCLE SAFETY TIPS

### For Bicyclists

- **Obey the rules of the road:** Ride straight and single file in a predictable manner. Plan ahead and allow time to maneuver around road hazards and to negotiate with traffic and open car doors. Yield to pedestrians and obey all traffic signals and signs.
- **Ride with traffic:** Always ride on the right side of the road. Use caution when passing other traffic on the right. When approaching an intersection, use the appropriate lane for the direction you intend to travel (left, straight ahead, or right).
- **Signal all turns:** Be predictable and look quickly behind you before changing lanes or turning. Signal safely in advance.
- **Make left -hand turns safely:** You may turn left as a vehicle by moving into the left side of the travel lane (or left turn lane) OR cross like a pedestrian by stopping, dismounting, and walking across crosswalks.
- **Be prepared for conditions:** When braking in the rain or snow, allow extra distance to stop and look for pavement markings, utility covers, and debris which may be slippery.
- **Be visible – use lights at night or all the time:** When riding at night, Maryland State Law requires a white headlight on the front and a red reflector on the back visible from at least 600 feet. In addition, we recommend you wear bright clothing in the daytime and reflective clothing for night riding.
- **Maintain your bicycle:** Check your tires, chain, and brakes before every trip. Take your bicycle to a bike shop at least once a year for a professional inspection and tune-up. Make sure your reflectors and lights are in working condition.
- **Wear a helmet and wear it properly:** Helmets are required by law for anyone under 16, but everyone should wear a helmet to prevent a head injury. Your helmet should be level and snug and should not shift while riding.

### For Motorists

- **Expect bicyclists on the road:** Always expect to encounter a bicyclist on the road—on all types of roads, in all types of weather and at all times of the day and night. Bicyclists may be riding out in the travel lane for their own safety due to narrow roads, obstacles, or pavement hazards which you may not see. Before opening your car door, check for bicyclists who may be approaching.
- **Pass with care; give bicyclists at least (3) three feet:** Pass a bicyclist as you would any slow-moving vehicle. Slow down, wait until oncoming traffic is clear, and allow at least (3) three feet of clearance between your car and the bicyclist when passing. After passing a bicyclist, check over your shoulder to make sure you have allowed enough room before moving over. Experienced bicyclists often ride 20 to 25 MPH and may be closer than you think.
- **Be careful at intersections:** Always assume bicyclists are traveling through an intersection unless they signal otherwise, and yield to them as you would any other vehicle. Do not turn left or right

in front of bicyclists unless you can do so safely. You can be fined \$1000 and receive three points if you injure a bicyclist by violating their right-of-way.

- **Watch for children:** Children on bicycles are often unpredictable – expect the unexpected. Pay extra attention for children and strictly observe speed limits in school zones and in residential areas.
- **Use extra caution in poor weather conditions:** In bad weather, give bicyclists extra trailing and passing room. When uncertain in any situation, slow down until it's safe to proceed.

## CONTACTS FOR BICYCLE SAFETY IN MARYLAND

### MARYLAND MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

- Contact: MVA's Press Information at 410-762-5188