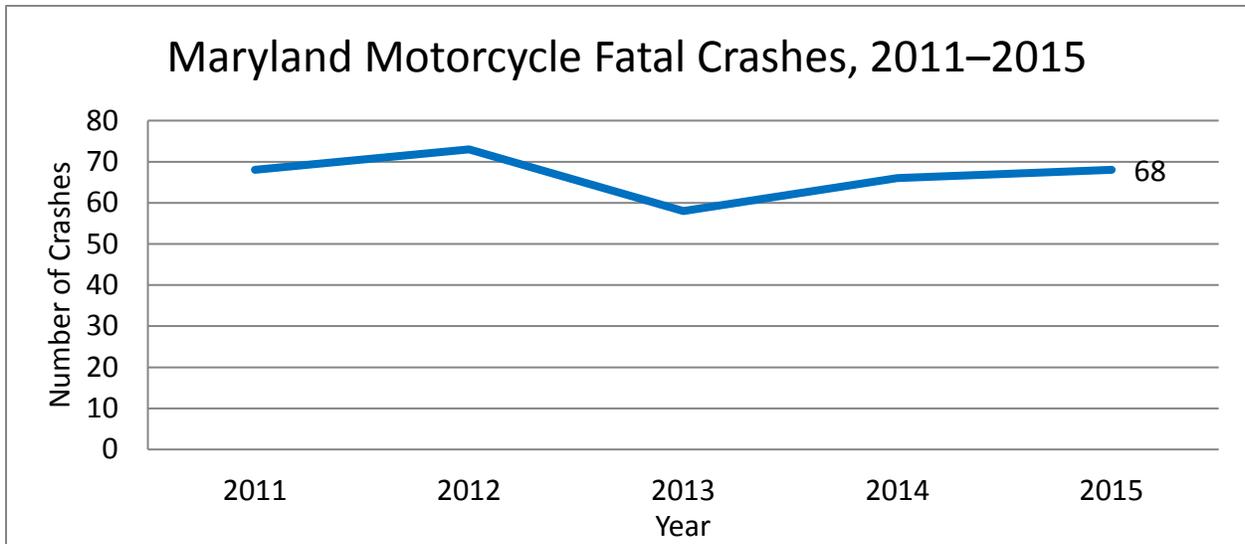
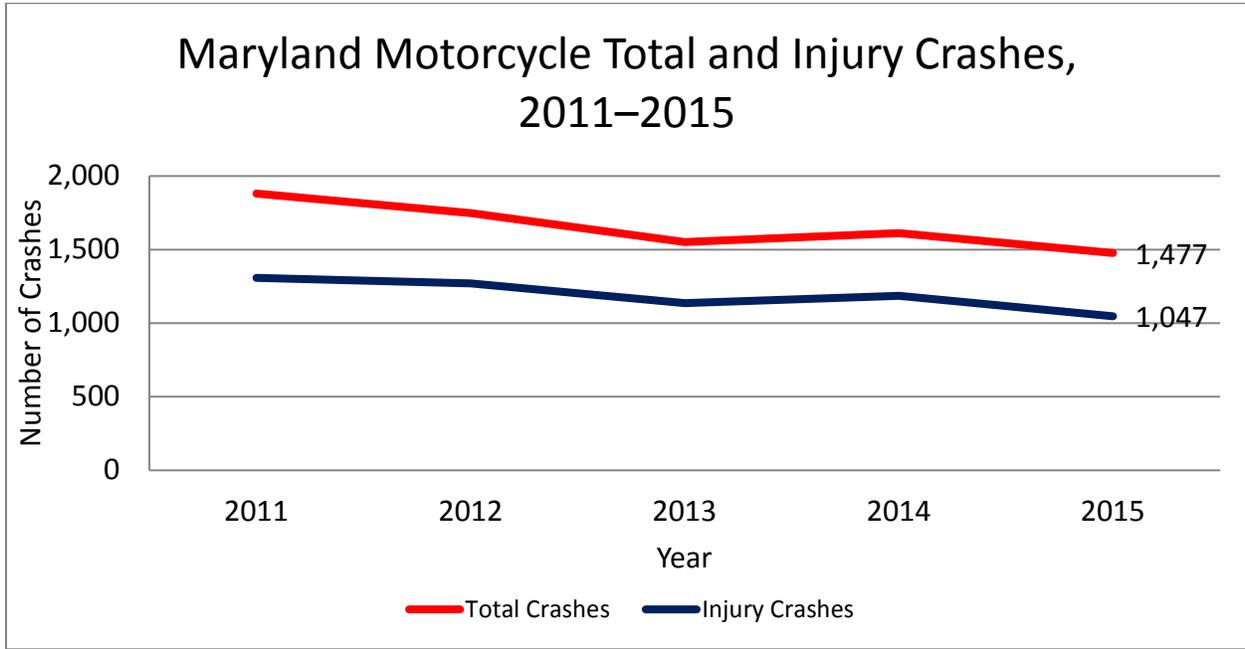


MOTORCYCLE SAFETY IN MARYLAND

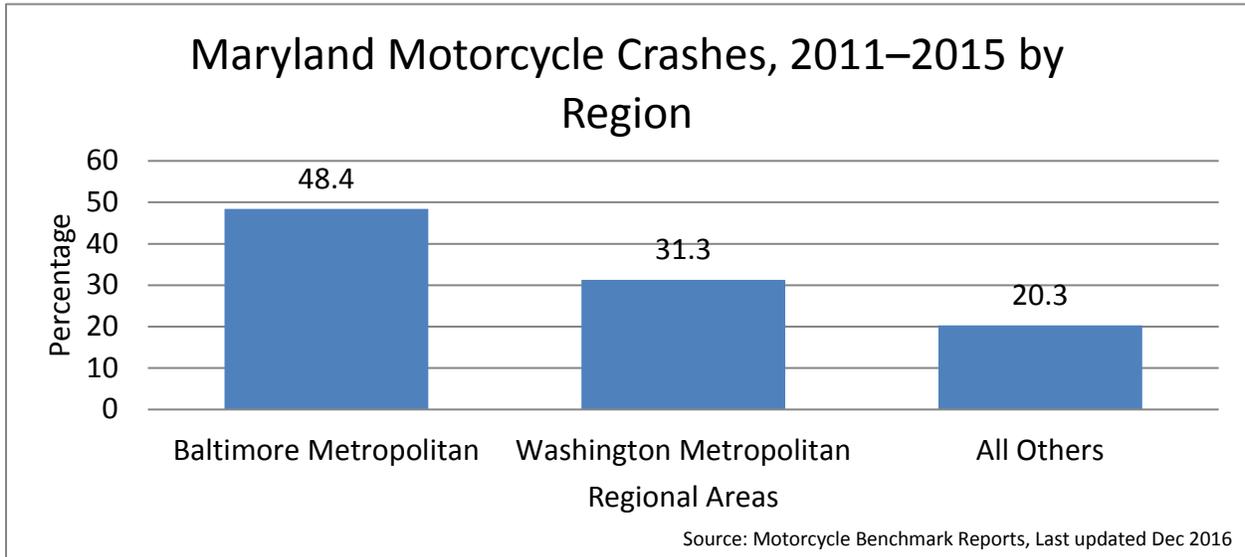
THE FACTS



- **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 States¹.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/deaths.htm>

- **Motorcycle-related crashes in Maryland show little change.** The number of motorcycle crashes in Maryland has decreased slightly over the past two years. In 2015, slight improvements were seen in the reduction of overall, injury, and fatal crashes.
- **Most motorcycle crashes result in either an injury or fatality.** In Maryland, crashes that involve motorcyclists result in injury or death at more than twice the rate of overall crashes across the state. In 2015, just over 1,470 motorcycle-involved crashes occurred statewide. More than 75 percent resulted in an injury or fatality. Between 2011 and 2015, motorcycle-related crashes accounted for 14 percent of the state’s crash-related deaths.
- **Highly-populated regions have the highest concentration of motorcycle crashes².** The majority of all motorcycle-related crashes occurred in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s Counties, and Baltimore City. The Baltimore metropolitan area accounted for nearly half of all motorcycle crashes. While fatal crashes remain a large concern, many jurisdictions have seen a decline from 2013–2015; of the metropolitan jurisdictions, fatal crashes have increased in Charles, Frederick, Harford, and Howard Counties, and Baltimore City.



- **Motorcycle-involved crashes are highest during the warmer months.** Unlike statewide crashes, which are distributed relatively even throughout year, motorcycle-involved crashes are more prevalent in April through October, with May and June being the peak months for motorcycle crashes. An estimated two out of three fatal and injury motorcycle crashes occurred between May and September. During the fall season, motorcycle-involved crashes gradually declined through the winter months.
- **Weekends and mid-day hours are dangerous times for motorcyclists.** More than half of all motorcycle crashes occurred between Friday and Sunday. Nearly 50 percent of all fatal motorcycle-involved crashes occurred on Saturdays and Sundays. In 2015, of the 1,477 motorcycle-related crashes that occurred, approximately 40 percent happened between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Fatalities were highest during the early evening hours.

² 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.

- **Middle-aged motorcyclists account for a large share of the crashes.** Motorcycle operators ages 30–49 accounted for close to 35 percent of all motorcyclists involved in crashes. Approximately two out of five motorcycle operator injuries and fatalities were between the ages of 30 and 49.

Twice as many **fatal motorcycle crashes** occurred on the weekends than any other day of the week.

- **Males are involved in the majority of motorcycle crashes.** Male operators accounted for more than 90 percent of motorcycle riders injured and 96 percent of those killed.

BACKGROUND

Each year in Maryland, an average of nearly 70 motorcycle riders and passengers are killed in traffic crashes and nearly 1,400 riders and passengers are injured each year. Drivers *and* riders have the responsibility to share the road safely. When there is a crash involving a motorist and a motorcycle, the motorcyclist always loses. Because motorcycle riders are not protected by the vehicle like the occupants of a car, motorcyclists are injured in nearly 72% of crashes.

The Maryland Highway Safety Office is committed to helping reduce the number of motorcycle injuries and fatalities on our roadways. Maryland’s motorcycle safety program involves rider education and motorist awareness and addresses both motorcyclists and motorists on how to safely share the road.

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MARYLAND’S MOTORCYCLE SAFETY LAWS

Required equipment

- **Helmets:** All motorcycle operators and passengers are required to wear a helmet that is certified to meet the standards established by the Department of Transportation.
 - **About Motorcycle Helmets**
 - In the event of a crash while riding a motorcycle, a DOT-compliant motorcycle helmet can help minimize head injuries and prevent death due to head trauma.
 - A study conducted for the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA), published in 2009, reported that helmeted motorcyclists were less likely to experience facial and head injuries compared to un-helmeted motorcyclists.

Helmeted motorcyclists were significantly less likely to experience traumatic brain injury, according to the report.

- Helmets are estimated to be 37% effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcycle operators and 41% effective for motorcycle passengers. (NHTSA 2014)
 - Helmet manufacturers are responsible for certifying that motorcycle helmets are compliant with the FMVSS 218 standard. NHTSA publishes materials on identifying a helmet that is compliant with this standard.
- **Eye protection:** A person may not operate a motorcycle unless the motorcycle has a windscreen or the operator wears an approved eye-protective device. (TR§21-1306)

 - **Optional equipment**
 - A motorcycle may be equipped with, and an operator may use, auxiliary lighting, including blue dot illumination and/or light emitting diodes (LED), provided that the LED are non-blinking, non-flashing, non-oscillating, and are not blue or red in color (these colors are typically reserved for emergency vehicles).

 - **Operation of a motorcycle**
 - All of Maryland's traffic laws apply to motorcycle operators. (TR§21-1301)
 - The operator of a motorcycle may only ride the motorcycle on the permanent and regular seat. (TR§21-1302)
 - A passenger can only ride on a motorcycle designed to carry more than one person. (TR 21-1302)
 - A person may not carry anything that would prevent keeping both hands on the handlebars. (TR§21-1302)
 - A motorcycle is entitled to the full use of a lane and a motor vehicle may not be driven in any manner that would deprive a motorcycle of the full use of a lane. (TR§21-1303)
 - A person may not operate a motorcycle between lanes of traffic. (TR§21-1303)
 - Motorcycles may not be operated more than two abreast in a single lane. (TR§21-1303)

 - **Operator licensing**
 - A Class E license authorizes the licensee to drive a motorcycle. (TR§16-104)
 - A Non-commercial Class M license authorizes the licensee to drive a motorcycle. (TR§ 16-104.1)
 - The MVA may not issue a Non-commercial Class M license to a person under the age of 18 unless the individual has successfully completed a motorcycle safety course approved by the MVA. (TR§16-103)

 - **Motorcycle Safety Course**
 - Any Maryland resident who has a valid Class E or Class M license or learner's permit, or who is eligible for a Class M learner's permit, may enroll in the course. (TR §16-604)
 - Completion of the course shall be considered the equivalent of passing the skills and knowledge test required for obtaining a Class M license. (TR§16-604)

MARYLAND'S MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PROGRAMS

The Basic Rider Course (BRC)

This 17-hour course is designed for the true novice rider who has little or no riding experience. It includes classroom and riding instruction on the basic riding skills and strategies necessary for an individual to begin to practice street riding. Courses are taught by certified instructors from the Motor Vehicle Administration and Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

The Alternate Basic Rider Course (ABRC)

This seven-hour course provides an option for an individual to earn their license without having to take the full 17-hour basic course. This course is only for individuals that have some riding experience and are seeking a Class M license.

Basic Rider Course 2 (BRC2)

Formally known as the Experienced Rider Course (ERC), this six-hour course is for the licensed rider who wants to improve or refresh their skills, or who has recently completed the Basic Rider Course and wants additional practice on their personal motorcycle. The class consists of nine riding exercises.

The New Returning Rider Course (RRC)

This eight-hour course is intended for the former rider who has been away from riding for a lengthy period of time and wants to start riding again. The RRC consists of three hours of classroom and five hours of riding activities. It is designed to reacquaint a rider with riding a motorcycle and familiarize them with changes in motorcycling since they last rode.

3-Wheel Basic Rider Course (3WBRC)

This course is similar to the BRC, but the classroom sessions and range exercises are designed specifically for 3-wheelers. You will be required to provide your own vehicle for use in the course. Successful completion will earn you a Maryland Program Completion Card and a Completion Certificate to get the Class M license with a 'J' restriction added to your current license.

The Advanced Rider Course (ARC)

The Advanced Rider Course (ARC) is the civilian version of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's military sport bike course but it can be taken on any stock street legal motorcycle. It is a course designed for experienced riders. For the purposes of this course, an experienced rider is one who has the basic skills and is a current rider with a valid motorcycle license. The ARC is designed to complement and builds on, the skills learned and practiced in other rider courses.

RIDER TRAINING PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

Annual Motorcycle Safety campaigns include outreach to motorcyclists to promote rider responsibility and rider training. Efforts to reach motorcyclists with these key messages include:

- The MVA's Motorcycle Safety Program participates in a number of motorcycle events to promote rider training with the new MSP trailer and SmartTrainers.
- Internet advertisements placed to promote rider training.
- Training materials are developed to reinforce critical safety lessons for new, returning, and experienced riders.
- Content is routinely added to the MVA website to make the lessons from rider training courses more accessible.
- Video vignettes are developed to create a way for riders to speak to other riders about lessons-learned both in training and on the road.

FAST TRACK MOTORCYCLIST LICENSING

FAST TRACK Licensing is conducted from April through September at selected Motor Vehicle Administration branch offices. A learner's permit is not required and there is no 14-day waiting period. An applicant is not required to have an accompanying rider but is still expected to transport his or her motorcycle to the MVA branch legally.

MOTORIST AWARENESS

Maryland's Motorcycle Safety Program is promoting one key message to motorists: *Share the Road – Look Twice for Motorcyclists*. This is especially important before making turns and pulling out into traffic. The campaign includes a wide range of outreach efforts, including:

- Overhead highway dynamic message signs displaying motorcycle safety messages;
- Billboards placed in the Baltimore-Washington metro areas during the summer riding season;
- Motorist awareness messages displayed on electronic message boards in MVA branch offices;
- Banners placed at major MVA branch locations, with additional banners available to motorcycling organizations and businesses;
- MVA registration renewal envelopes printed with a motorist awareness message; and
- Yard signs distributed through motorcycling businesses and organizations in more rural areas of the State.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY TIPS

For Drivers:

- **Drivers Can Save a Life by Looking Twice for Motorcycles**
 - **Share the road with motorcyclists.** Motorcyclists are allowed to use the full lane so give them space and don't cut them off.
 - **Look twice for motorcycles.** When there is a crash involving a car and a motorcycle, the car driver is at fault more than half of the time. Always check two or more times before merging, changing lanes, and pulling into traffic.
 - **Remember that motorcyclists are smaller than cars.** Drivers tend to look for other cars and trucks, not for motorcyclists. And, because a rider and their motorcycle are smaller than a car, they are often difficult to see.
 - **Minimize and check your blind spots.** Motorcycles are easily hidden by a driver's blind spot. Check your mirrors regularly when driving and adjust them to show more of the road and less of your vehicle.

For Motorcycle Riders:

- **Riders Can Protect Themselves with Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude**
 - **Be courteous, non-aggressive, and respectful of other road users when riding.**
 - **Make yourself visible at all times.** Choose riding gear that increases your visibility in traffic in addition to providing protection in the event of a crash. Use bright colors and retro-reflective strips or decals, especially at night.
 - **Ride so you are seen.** There is no one safe place to ride. Use lane positioning to be seen by drivers. Ride with your headlight on and consider using a modulating headlight.

- **Give yourself space and time to react.** Allow space for emergency braking or for avoiding a crash.
- **Signal your intentions.** Signal before changing lanes. Avoid weaving between lanes. Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping. Make your lane changes gradually.
- **Learn early, learn often.** Motorcycle safety training courses have much to offer new, experienced, and returning riders. Keep your skills sharp by regularly participating in a motorcycle skills training course.

CONTACTS FOR MOTORCYCLE SAFETY IN MARYLAND

MARYLAND MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

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