

# The Center Square

## Maryland

### Report: Maryland traffic fatalities up over a decade, in line with national trends

By [Morgan Sweeney](#) | [The Center Square](#)

July 12, 2024



Mae Dulay | Unsplash

(The Center Square) — Maryland traffic fatalities in 2023 reached a level they haven't seen in more than 15 years, up 31% from where they were 10 years ago.

Nationally, traffic fatalities increased during the pandemic but are now trending slightly downward, though they're up 25% from 2013.

There were 610 traffic deaths in the Old Line State in 2023, up 46 from the previous year, according to a recent report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. Similarly, in 2020, nearly 40 more people were killed in car accidents than in the previous year.

Prior to 2020, Maryland's numbers were generally significantly lower than they were in the early 2000s, where they frequently surpassed 600 per year.

The Maryland Department of Transportation expressed concern over the recent increase.

"As indicated in the report, Maryland has unfortunately experienced an increase in fatalities and serious injuries over the past several years," said Anna Levendusky, a representative of the department, in an email to The Center Square. "While the most recent data can be discouraging, the Maryland Department of Transportation remains steadfast in its commitment to a safe, reliable, accessible, equitable, and sustainable transportation system."

In fiscal year 2023, Maryland's State Highway Administration spent roughly \$301.5 million on maintenance programs alone. In fiscal year 2024, the Maryland Highway Safety Office "obligated more than \$2.2 million in overtime funding to 54 law enforcement agencies across the state to help eliminate dangerous driving behaviors."

Levendusky highlighted a few current or recently completed department projects focusing on pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including those in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Montgomery, Washington and Wicomico counties.

More taxpayer dollars are being directed to roadway improvements in recent years, not just in Virginia, but across the country. In 2017, the U.S. had "a \$146 billion backlog in needed roadway safety improvements," according to a [report](#) from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety [cited by TRIP](#). With the passage of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, however, \$454 billion has been allocated through 2026 for America's transportation infrastructure, "a 38% increase in federal investment starting in 2022," according to TRIP.

However, none of the numerous investments and ongoing safety and maintenance projects will ever negate personal responsibility, though they can help motorists more easily navigate roads and avoid accidents.

"Although MDOT is consistently working with partners on a multifaceted approach to improving roadway safety, it depends on the citizens of the state and all road users to commit to a new culture of safety on our roads," Levendusky told The Center Square. "It will take all of us to drive the numbers down."

In 2019, the Maryland Department of Transportation developed "Vision Zero," committing to a goal of zero traffic-related deaths or serious injuries by 2030. The state deployed a [live dashboard](#) that tracks crash data so citizens can see and know high-crash locations.