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Maryland Sees Sharpest Rise in Traffic Deaths Since 2000s

by [David M. Higgins II, Publisher/Editor](#) | July 13, 2024

Maryland has recorded its highest number of traffic fatalities in over 15 years, with 610 deaths reported in 2023, a significant increase from previous years and a 31% rise compared to a decade ago. This surge in road fatalities comes despite a national trend that shows a slight decrease in such incidents, according to a new report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit.

In 2023, the state saw an increase of 46 traffic deaths compared to 2022, continuing a troubling rise from 2020, when the fatalities were nearly 40 more than the year before. This recent upswing reverses a period of generally lower numbers compared to the early 2000s, when annual deaths often exceeded 600.

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) expressed its concern over these rising figures. Anna Levendusky, a spokesperson for MDOT, emphasized the department's dedication to improving transportation safety. "Maryland has unfortunately experienced an increase in fatalities and serious injuries over the past several years," Levendusky noted. She assured that despite discouraging recent data, MDOT remains committed to enhancing the safety and sustainability of the state's transportation system.

As part of its efforts to curb dangerous driving behaviors, the Maryland State Highway Administration allocated approximately \$301.5 million for maintenance programs in fiscal year 2023. Additionally, the Maryland Highway Safety Office has earmarked over \$2.2 million in overtime funding to support 54 law enforcement agencies across the state in 2024.

Levendusky also highlighted several MDOT projects aimed at improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety in counties such as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Montgomery, Washington, and Wicomico. These initiatives are part of broader efforts to address roadway safety nationwide, spurred by a significant federal investment through the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. This legislation increased federal funds for America's transportation infrastructure by 38% starting in 2022, aiming to mitigate a substantial backlog in needed safety improvements.

Despite these governmental efforts, Levendusky stressed the importance of personal responsibility in reducing traffic incidents. "It depends on the citizens of the state and all road users to commit to a new culture of safety on our roads," she stated. MDOT hopes these combined efforts will help drive down the number of traffic-related fatalities.

In alignment with these goals, MDOT launched the "Vision Zero" initiative in 2019, aiming to eliminate all traffic-related deaths or serious injuries by 2030. This program includes a [live dashboard](#) that provides public access to crash data, highlighting high-crash locations and helping to inform safer driving practices across the state.