

NHTSA 2021 FIRST QUARTER REPORT

The National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum (NLEMM), through its continuing efforts to reduce fatalities and injuries to law enforcement officers, has compiled the following traffic-related fatality data for the first quarter of 2021.

As a part of our long-established partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the NLEMM collects, analyzes, and disseminates the latest data on law enforcement crashes. It is through this and other important collaborations that we work to provide law enforcement insight into the causes behind fatal crashes and the circumstances under which they commonly occur. This information is shared so that safety can be improved, and proactive steps can be taken to reduce these tragic incidents.

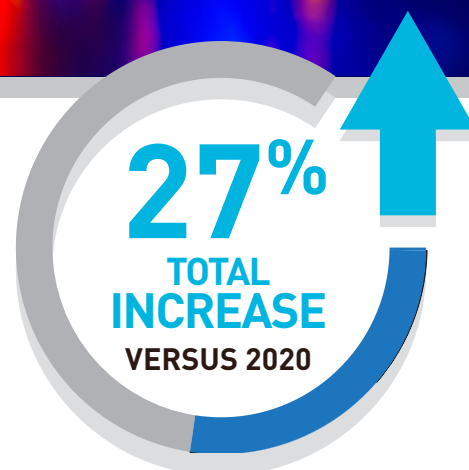
In the first quarter of 2021, there were a total of 19 law enforcement officers killed in traffic-related incidents. Nine of the officers were killed due to being struck by vehicles while on foot. Seven of the cases involved officers in vehicular collisions, with three of those crashes being single-vehicle crashes. Three officers were killed in motorcycle crashes.

In comparison to the first quarter of 2020, when there were 15 traffic-related line-of-duty deaths, **the current quarter represents a 27% increase in traffic-related fatalities.** In 2020, nine officers were killed in automobile crashes, five were struck by vehicles while on foot, and one officer died in a motorcycle crash.

The most concerning statistic is that of the “struck-by” category, where officers on foot were struck and killed by vehicles, generally while operating on the roadside. With nine such fatalities in the first quarter, we are on pace to surpass 2020’s annual total of 15 struck-by fatalities. An examination of the struck-by crashes in 2021 reveals that **five of the officers were struck and killed while on the scenes of existing crashes.**

Secondary crashes caused by distracted or impaired drivers continue to be the main circumstance for officers being struck and killed by vehicles. One officer was struck while assisting a disabled motorist, one was struck while trying to remove debris from the roadway, and one was intentionally struck by a fleeing suspect as he attempted to deploy a tire deflation device.

The seven vehicle crashes that occurred in the first quarter involved several different circumstances, but three were related to officers expediting to scenes or to assist a fellow officer. One crash occurred when the officer’s cruiser was intentionally rammed by a suspect in another vehicle, one involved an officer intentionally crashing head-on into a wrong-way driver on an interstate, one involved an officer on patrol, and one involved an officer whose cruiser tire blew out, causing him to lose control and crash.



AUTOMOBILE CRASHES

↓ 27%

1ST QTR
2020 = 9

1ST QTR
2021 = 7



STRUCK-BY CRASHES

↑ 80%

1ST QTR
2020 = 5

1ST QTR
2021 = 9



MOTORCYCLE CRASHES

↑ 200%

1ST QTR
2020 = 1

1ST QTR
2021 = 3

TOTAL ↑ 27%

1ST QTR
2020 = 15

1ST QTR
2021 = 19

The three motorcycle crashes each involved different circumstances. One officer was escorting a funeral procession and was struck, another officer was attempting to catch a speeder and was struck at an intersection, and the third was on his way to work when he left the roadway and crashed.

When examining the first quarter fatal crash incidents, it was confirmed that, in two of the cases, distraction was a contributing factor. Impairment was confirmed in three of the cases. Six of the cases involved a failure to "Slow Down and Move Over." There were also two confirmed instances where the officers involved were not wearing seat belts and were ejected from their patrol cars at the time of the crashes. Inclement weather was cited in only one of the 19 first quarter cases.

The largest number of fatal crashes in the first quarter of 2021 occurred in NHTSA Region 4, which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Four of these fatalities occurred in Florida, three in South Carolina, and one in Georgia.

The region with the next highest number of fatalities was NHTSA Region 9, with four cases. Three of those cases were in California and one in Arizona.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS:



Wear your seat belt!



**Wear high visibility gear
when operating on the roadside.**



**Learn and apply
the Traffic Incident Management
(Tim) principles**



OFFICIAL LINE-OF-DUTY FALLEN HEROES

RESPECT | HONOR | REMEMBER



MPO CHRISTINE PETERS
Greenbelt Maryland Police

Struck while on a crash scene



MPO JESSE MADSEN
Tampa Florida Police Department

Intentionally hit a wrong-way driver,
saving innocent lives



TROOPER JOSEPH GALLAGHER
New York State Police

Struck by distracted driver

