



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE
TROOP 7
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LEWES, DELAWARE 19958
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Traffic Safety Alert and Announcement

Be Watchful, Attentive, Prepared, Aware, Vigilant, Observant and Ready!

The Delaware State Police wants to let the public know we are going to continue to promote the compliance with safe driving and pedestrian safety through education and enforcement at the beach and surrounding areas to enhance a successful vacation and a fun-filled summer while on vacation at the beach.

The easiest way to ruin a vacation is to spend it in an emergency room or a tow yard following a crash that could have been prevented. Troop 7 of the Delaware State Police is alerting incoming visitors how to avoid potential traffic dangers and maximize their time in the resort area by giving proper time and attention to safe driving.

Most local residents would agree with what Delaware State Police statistics reveal about Troop 7's service area: The highest crash area is on State Route 1 from New Road in Lewes (south of the Nassau Bridge) to the northern limits of Dewey Beach.

"Motorists who travel this stretch of road regularly going to work and home know to expect congestion and visual distractions here. They generally use an extra degree of caution," said Troop 7 Traffic Lieutenant Kristopher Thompson. "However, our visitors can also benefit from knowing in advance that this area presents challenges. The part of their trip that is most exciting – arriving -- can also be the most dangerous if they are not fully focused on the road and surrounding vehicles."

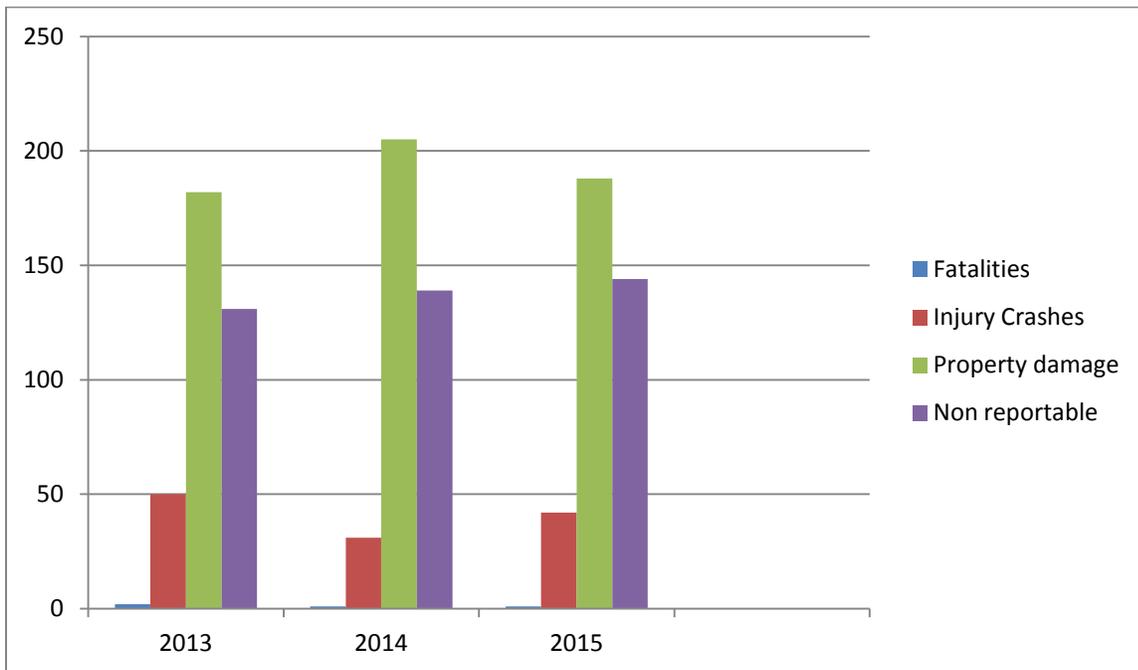
Studying the past three years, the primary causes of crashes in this traffic hot spot have been:

- 1) inattentive driving,
- 2) following the vehicle in front too closely, and

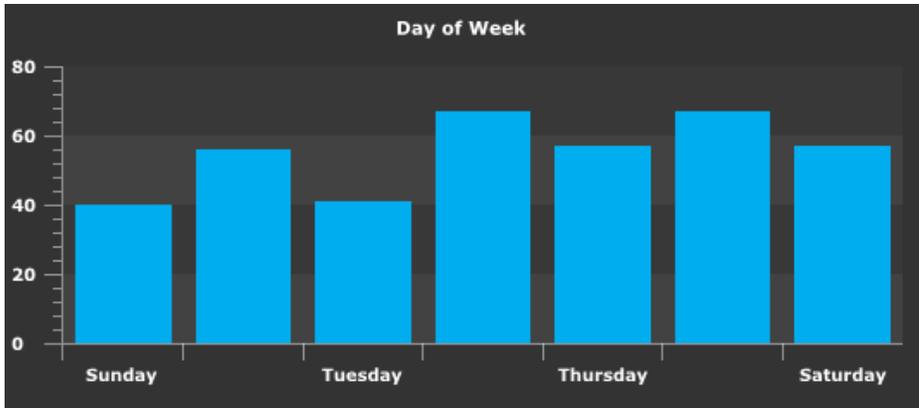
3) improper passing (bus lane).

As depicted in the graphs below, collisions in this area have been high from January 1st to July 24th consistently in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Fortunately, the number of crashes resulting in injuries, deaths, and serious damage has not been as high as the less-serious ones.

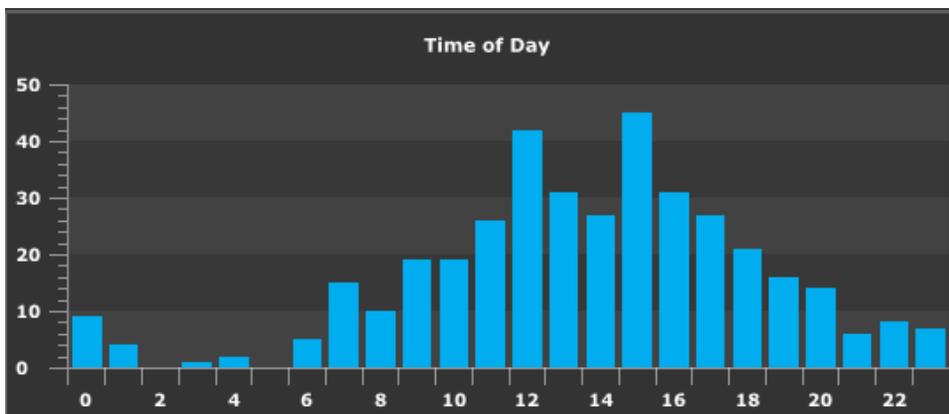
“Regardless, anyone who has had even a minor crash can attest to how inconvenient it is to face unexpected delays, vehicle tows, insurance claims, and vehicle repairs,” Thompson explained. “We know it can take one small change in driving decisions to make the difference between a crash with a fatality or serious injury, a crash with minor damage, or the prevention of a collision altogether.”



In the year to date, crashes in along this area of State Route 1 have been fairly steady throughout the week, but are slightly higher as the week is ending. (The chart below shows the days of the week for crashes in the specified area of Route 1 to date in 2015.) This is a change from 2014, when 52% of crashes in the specified area occurred on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.



Crashes in Troop 7's traffic hot spot occur when traffic volume is heaviest – between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. This is consistent with the peak for crashes throughout all of 2014.



The Delaware State Police would also like to remind pedestrians to cross only at designated crosswalks and only when safe to do so. Some areas of SR 1 stretch approximately 120 feet wide from sidewalk to sidewalk.

“The average person takes approximately 28 seconds to walk that distance. In that time, vehicles approaching at 45 mph will have covered approximately 1,848 feet (.28 miles). A vehicle traveling 55 mph will have covered 2,258 feet (.42 miles) in the same 28 seconds,” said Thompson. “This is just a reminder of how quickly an approaching vehicle arrives in a short time frame.”

Thompson offered a few reminders to help motorists reduce the number of collisions on Route 1:

- Handheld cell phone use in Delaware is illegal when driving, even at a stop light.
- Maintain a safe distance when following another vehicle. (A driver can self-check this. Begin counting when the vehicle in front of you passes a stationary object. At least two seconds should pass before the front of your vehicle reaches that same stationary object.)
- Stay in your lane of travel, and remember the bus and bike lane is not for passing stopped traffic. If you aren't immediately turning right, the lane needs to stay clear for buses and bicycles. The lane is designated for their safety.
- Using a seatbelt reduces the number of serious injuries during crashes.

To reduce collisions and prevent injuries, the Delaware State Police is continuing its partnership with DelDOT and the Office of Highway Safety to increase awareness and enforcement in the Troop 7 traffic hot spot. Over the next two months, using both regular scheduled duty assignments and Office of Highway Safety funding, Troop 7 will increase patrols and target enforcement action in this specific area of State Route 1.

If we know the location and time frame of incidents that occur, we can use the right resources at the right place at the most favorable times and redirect our focus and attention to all hot spots. Sharing this message with local and visiting travelers helps them strive toward the same goal of arriving safely. We would like to remind everyone that "driving safely is no accident."