



Deadly Limousine Crash

A deadly limousine crash in Schoharie, New York, left 17 passengers, their driver, and two pedestrians dead in what officials call the deadliest transportation-related accident in nine years.

Initial investigations reveal that a 2001 Ford Excursion limousine failed to stop at a stop sign and tumbled into a ditch on the roadside after striking two pedestrians and an unoccupied vehicle. It was also reported that the limousine had failed safety inspections prior and was ordered out of service multiple times, including twice in 2018. However, it is unclear whether driver error or vehicle malfunction contributed to the actual crash.

Meanwhile, Nauman Hussein, operator of Prestige Limousine Chauffeur Service that owned the limou-



NTSB officials inspect the limousine crash site.
Photo source: New York Times

sine that crashed, was arrested on charges of criminally negligent homicide. Although the National Transportation Safety Board is currently investigating the crash, initial reports suggest that Hussein may have authorized the use of the limousine even though it was not in shape to be on the road.

Source: New York Times. [Available online at [nytimes.com/2018/10/07/nyregion/wedding-limo-crash-schoharie-ny.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/nyregion/wedding-limo-crash-schoharie-ny.html)]; NPR. [Available online at [npr.org/2018/10/10/656219453/son-of-limo-company-owner-arrested-accused-of-homicide-after-deadly-crash](https://www.npr.org/2018/10/10/656219453/son-of-limo-company-owner-arrested-accused-of-homicide-after-deadly-crash).]

Custom Highway Signs



Submissions are open for the Dynamic Message Sign Contest until November 19.

Image source: Illinois Department of Transportation

messages will be displayed on the electronic billboard signs along the Interstates throughout the state.

IDOT has increased campaign activity to raise awareness of the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, texting and driving, speeding, and not wearing a seat belt. In the past two years, there have been an annual total of over 1,000 traffic fatalities. Visit idot.illinois.gov/dms-contest to submit your message. The contest closes on November 19.

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation. [Available online at idot.illinois.gov/dms-contest.]; WAND. [Available online at [wandtv.com/story/39337041/custom-highway-sign-contest-opens-in-illinois](https://www.wandtv.com/story/39337041/custom-highway-sign-contest-opens-in-illinois).]



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Last Month's Traffic Digest

September, 2018*

Total Crashes: 15,977
8,287 **fewer** than normal†

Total fatalities: 100
4 **more** than normal†

* Provisional, subject to change
Source: IDOT

† Based on 2012–16 five-year means

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Halloween Crash Stats

Each year, the Illinois Department of Transportation reminds drivers to refrain from driving after consuming alcohol on Halloween.

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), a total of 168 have died between 2012 and 2016 nationally on Halloween night related to drunk driving.

In Illinois, a total of 5,427 crashes have been reported on Halloween between 2012 and 2016, resulting in a total 1,554 injuries and eight deaths. Most recent estimates report 652 crashes on Halloween 2017, with a total of 192 injuries and two deaths.

Throughout the state, law enforcement agencies, including the Plainfield and the Naperville police departments are preparing to crack down on drunk driving and improper seat belt use this Halloween.

Source: National Highway Transportation Safety Administration; Illinois Department of Transportation; Positively Naperville. [Available online at [positivelynaperville.com/2018/10/22/this-halloween-and-every-day-naperville-police-remind-motorists-to-drive-safe-and-sober.](http://positivelynaperville.com/2018/10/22/this-halloween-and-every-day-naperville-police-remind-motorists-to-drive-safe-and-sober/)]; Patch. [Available online at patch.com/illinois/plainfield/plainfield-pd-announces-seat-belt-enforcement-campaign]

Don't
drink and
drive!



March Ambulance Crash Reveals Critical Loophole



A ambulance crash in March killed all three occupants in Bellwood. Photo source: ABC7 Chicago

An ambulance crash in March that killed both drivers and the patient being transported in Bellwood revealed a dangerous loophole that allowed unqualified persons to operate private ambulances.

This revelation comes after investigations revealed that none of the drivers of the ambulance that crashed were certified emergency medical technicians (EMTs). One of the operators was only a handyman

for the ambulance company who wanted to become an EMT, and the other—the ambulance driver—had a criminal history and may have been under the influence of drugs at the time of the crash.

Although the state requires EMTs and paramedics to disclose conviction history when applying for ambulance operating jobs, the state does not actively pursue a background check to validate the disclosure. The Illinois

Department of Public Health is introducing legislation to close the loophole by moving towards fingerprint screenings to quicken the background check process. While ambulance crashes are rare, the perfect storm of poor state oversight, regulation loophole, and poor driving behaviors may have led to this worst-case scenario in March.

Source: ABC7Chicago. [Available online at abc7chicago.com/illinois-officials-promise-tighter-regulations-after-i-team-exposes-private-ambulance-loophole/4556565, abc7chicago.com/3-killed-in-bellwood-ambulance-crash-idd/3296156, abc7chicago.com/crashed-ambulance-mystery-2nd-emt-was-actually-a-handyman-/3818314.]

USDOT Repeals Freight Train Regulation

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) repealed a federal regulation that required all trains carrying crude oil or flammable liquids to implement electronic braking technology by 2020. The electric brakes, called Electronically Controlled Pneumatic brakes, help prevent train cars from colliding into each other in the event of a train derailment. This technology, as a result, is designed to attempt to reduce the risk of freight loads spilling onto the soil or into rivers.

However, the USDOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration decided to remove the mandate in late September, citing the costs for the brakes to "outweigh benefits". While more recent estimates showed that benefits are lower than what was calculated during the Obama administration, mostly because of the change in oil traffic since President Trump took office, the decision to deregulate



A rail car is on fire after a 2015 derailment in Galena, Illinois. Thankfully, no oil leaked into the Galena River. Photo source: Environmental Protection Agency

late still received criticism from environmental organizations like the Sierra Club.

The effect of the computerized braking technology is not clear as well. Research called the results inconclusive, but reanalyses of train derailments did show that fewer punctures of rail cars occurred for derailments involving trains with the new brake system.

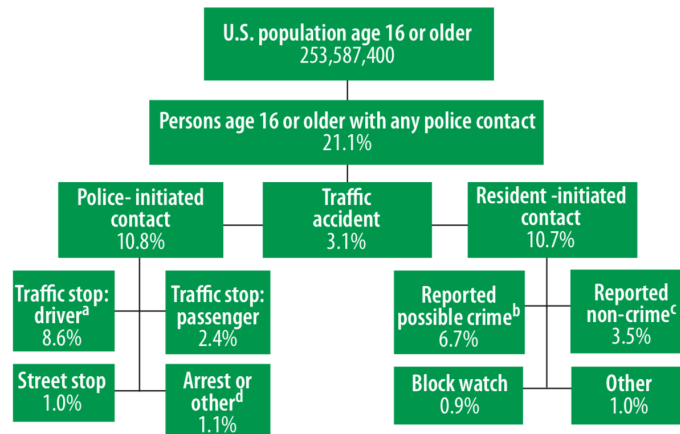
Source: NPR Illinois. [Available online at [nprillinois.org/post/stuck-traffic-youre-not-alone-new-data-show-american-commute-times-are-longer.](http://nprillinois.org/post/stuck-traffic-youre-not-alone-new-data-show-american-commute-times-are-longer/)]

Trends in Police Contact with Citizens

A recent study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) analyzed data from 2015 regarding police contact with the public. The data includes all residents of the U.S. aged 16 or older as well as data from 70,959 interviewed individuals.

Only 21.1 percent of U.S. residents aged 16 or older had experienced any contact with the police within the prior 12 months of the survey, and only three percent experienced any police contact after a traffic accident. Still, this evaluates to nearly eight million U.S. residents.

Interviews asked about perceptions of police behavior and justification of police contact. This included some questions regarding traffic stops and whether the public retrospectively agreed with the traffic stop.



Percent of the U.S. population age 16 or older that experienced police contact within the past 12 months of the survey, by type of contact.

Image source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Results of the study showed that traffic stops were the most common types of police-initiated contact. The percent of residents involved in a police contact related to traffic accidents was highest for those aged 18 to 24 than for any other age group.

Police gave reason for over 95 percent of traffic stops, and over 80 percent of drivers agreed that the stop was legitimate. In the rare case the police did not give reason for the stop, most drivers did not believe the stop was legitimate nor did they believe the police behaved properly.

Unfortunately, blacks and Hispanics were less likely than whites to say the police behaved properly during traffic stops, even when the reason for traffic stop was given.

This pattern could substantiate the existence of a culture conflict between that of minority groups and the police that is suggested in the recent American sociopolitical environment.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. [Available online at bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6406].

Secretary of State Calls for Flood Vehicle Vetting

Traffic Safety and Business

In the wake of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, the Illinois Office of the Secretary of State warns car companies and car shoppers to be on the lookout for flood-damaged cars. Current estimates include 40,000 vehicles that have been damaged by Hurricane Florence this year, and the estimate for Hurricane Michael is yet to be determined.

Title applications originating from counties affected by floodwaters must submit a Hurricane Disclosure Statement to receive a clean Illinois title instead of an Illinois Flood title. On the disclosure statement, the insurance agent for the vehicle must provide documentation that no flood claim was filed for the vehicle. Typically, vehicles damaged by flood are considered “totaled” and are sold to parts companies for salvage. However, it is always possible that a vehicle may fall through cracks in the system.

The Illinois Office of the Secretary of State will assist in tracking any potentially flood-damaged vehicles that are being sold in Illinois. The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) has a vehicle ID number



Cars submerged in Hurricane Florence floodwaters in North Carolina. Photo source: Automotive News

search tool (nicb.org/how-we-help/vincheck) to help verify whether a vehicle had ever been tagged as salvage. Secretary of State Jesse White says CARFAX offers a similar service at carfax.com/press/resources/flooded-cars.

Source: CyberDriveIllinois. [Available online at cyberdriveillinois.com/news/2018/october/181025d1.pdf].



TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

Make Way For Roundabouts

Five new roundabouts have been constructed in Peoria in the last five years. The reason for the increase in roundabouts in the city is to reduce accidents and prevent dangerous ones from occurring.

Contrary to popular belief, fewer crashes occur at roundabouts than at traditional intersections. In fact, crashes—particularly those that can cause injury or death—are by design less likely to occur on roundabouts because drivers tend to slow down and proceed with caution, especially in the United States where roundabouts are less common compared to other countries like the United Kingdom.

Additionally, traffic would enter the roundabout at an angle instead of perpendicular to cross traffic as in a traditional intersection. This means that head-on or t-

bone collisions are virtually eliminated on roundabouts; if crashes do occur at a roundabout, they will mostly be glancing collisions and are less likely to cause injury or death.

While the traffic may slow down near roundabouts, there are no more full stops at these intersections anymore except for the occasional traffic jam.

Although the Illinois Department of Transportation supports the use of roundabouts as a safer alternative to traditional intersection, one of the major challenges to installing them is ending the popular myth that roundabouts are innately more dangerous than traditional intersections.

Year-To-Date Fatal Crash Snapshot

October 28, 2018

793 Fatal Crashes*

866 Fatalities*

On this day last year:

847 Fatal Crashes*

923 Fatalities*

57 Below

Fatalities change

* Provisional, subject to change
Source: IDOT

Source: Peoria Journal Star. [Available online at pjstar.com/news/20181012/officials-say-roundabouts-are-working-prepare-for-more-]



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Teen Driver Safety Week

The week of October 22 was National Teen Driver Safety Week. An inside look at the driver's education program at Carbondale Community High School illustrated what it is like to teach the rules of the road to teenagers with little to no experience behind the wheel.

Students tend to struggle with high traffic volumes, particularly at intersections where they often get confused in their attempts to understand right-of-way and inter-vehicle communication.

A new trend, however, is raising concerns for Carbondale Community High School's Greg Storm, who teaches the driver's education classes. Cell phone use is so prevalent in the teenager's daily life that some students feel that they need their phone to relieve their anxiety as they practice driving. But

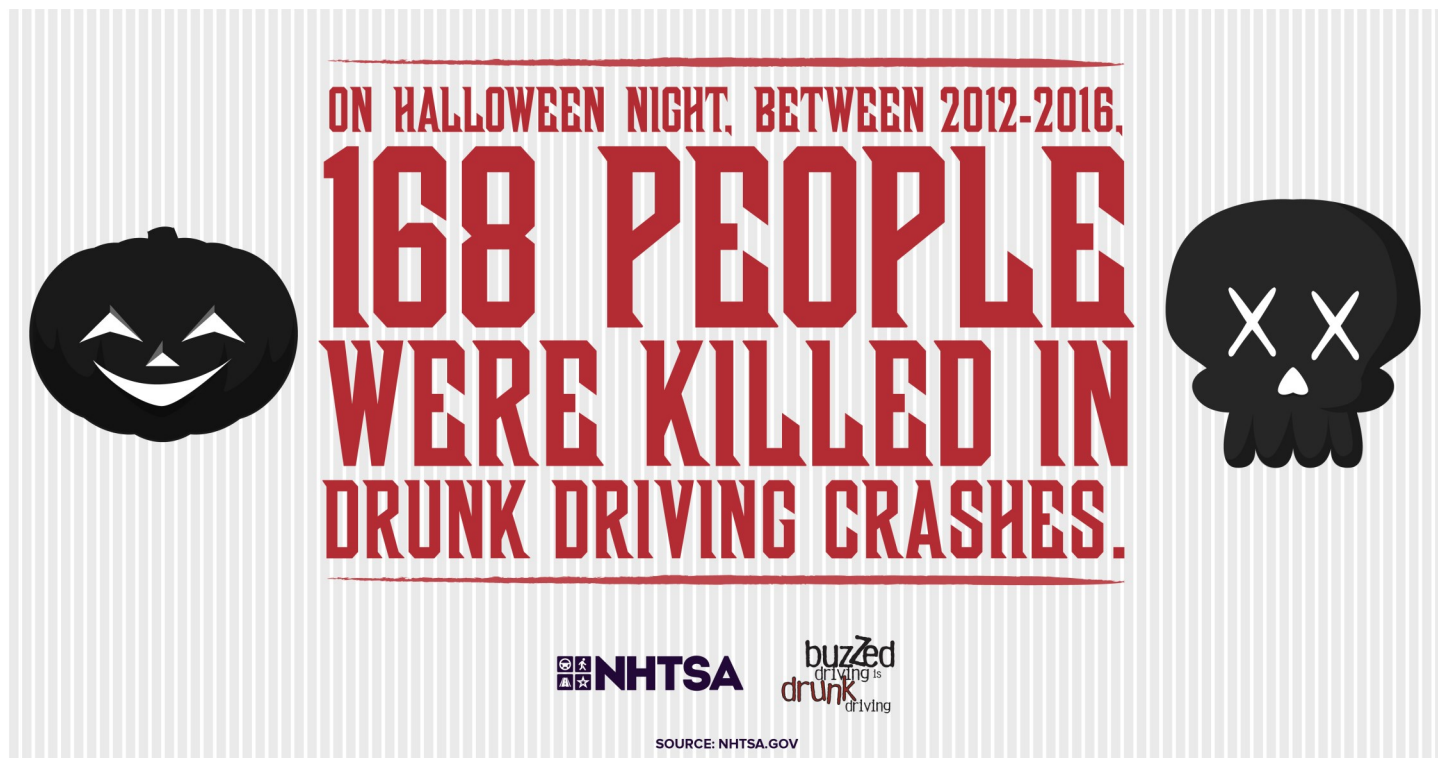
Storm does not allow cell phones, even when it is not the student's turn to practice driving, because it is so distracting from the learning environment.

In Illinois, driver's education is required to obtain a driver's license. Teens must also practice 50 hours of driving with parents or guardians.

A video about teen driving safety was produced by teenagers and released on the Secretary of State's website. Watch the video at youtu.be/h0Z-hevlsuQ.

As of October 29th, there have been approximately 29 fatal crashes in 2018 that are related to a teen driver, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation. For teenagers age 15 to 18, car crashes are the leading cause of death.

Source: WSIL. [Available online at wsilv.com/story/39345692/student-drivers-need-more-practice-before-class-]; WGEM. [Available online at wgem.com/2018/10/27/drivers-education-instructors-promote-safety/]; Illinois Department of Transportation.



A Special Halloween Message from IDOT and NHTSA

The Illinois Department of Transportation and the National Highway Transportation Administration would like to remind drivers to not drink and drive, especially on Halloween evening, when many children are out on the streets and vulnerable to traffic hazards.

Remember, *Buzzed driving is drunk driving.*

