

# Traffic Safety Newsletter

June 2019

Image © Illinois Tollway

## Flood Reminds Drivers, “Turn Around Don’t Drown”

Several levees along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers overtopped or breached in May and June, closing major roads of low-lying regions from Pike County to Alexander County. Notable closed routes include parts of Illinois Routes 3, 16, 100, and U.S. Route 67. The flooding caused some segments of the Illinois River to reach record levels.

[One death](#) has been reported in Illinois related to driving through flooded roadways, although this incident could also be attributed to a recent thunderstorm-related flash flood. There have also been close calls, most notably of [a school bus driving](#)



Cell phone video footage of a school bus driving through a flooded intersection surfaced in late May, stirring concerns for the school district.

Video source: OurQuadCities

*Continued on page 4*

## Year-To-Date Traffic Fatality Snapshot

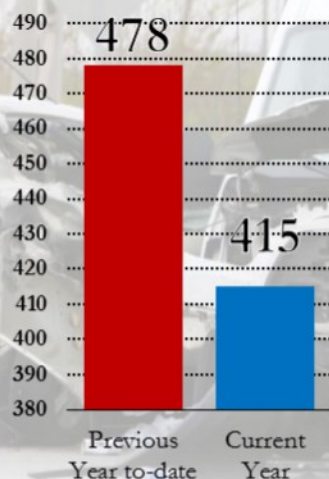
### Daily Cumulative Fatality

Current Year  
**415 Fatalities\***

Previous Year  
Year-to-date  
**478 Fatalities\***

**63 Below**

**Fatalities change**



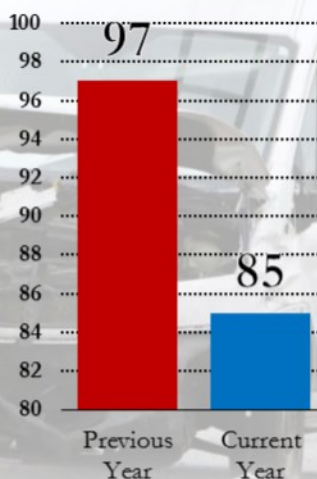
### Last Month's Fatalities

May, 2019  
**85 Fatalities\***

May, 2018  
**97 Fatalities\***

**12 Below**

**Fatalities change**



*\*As of June 25, 2019. Data are provisional and subject to change. Source: Illinois Department of Transportation*

## Increased Publicity for Scott's Law

Major Illinois news outlets are taking the time to help raise awareness for Scott's Law after a tragic start to 2019 for the Illinois State Police (ISP). Two ISP Troopers were killed in separate crashes that involved a vehicle that did not move over or slow down for emergency vehicles parked on the side of the road with their emergency lights activated. In addition to these two Scott's Law fatalities, a third state Trooper was fatally injured in a head-on crash involving a DUI driver.

The last time three ISP Troopers were killed within a year's timeframe was in 1951.

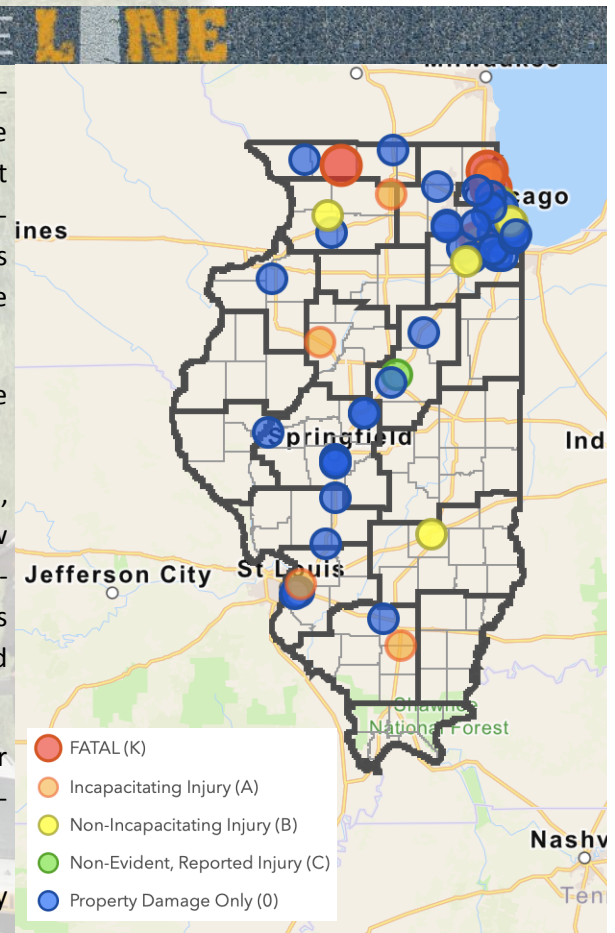
WREX began airing a special series on Scott's Law, "[Lives on the Line](#)", featuring several of the ISP Troopers that were involved in Scott's Law related squad car crashes this year, as well as [the brother of](#) late Lieutenant Scott Gillen, the Chicago firefighter and name sake for Scott's Law. Lt. Gillen was killed while assisting at a crash scene in 2000, and Scott's Law was passed in 2002 in honor of Lt. Gillen.

As of June 19, there have been 22 Scott's Law related ISP squad car crashes reported this year, far more than the number of similar incidents reported in all of 2018.

A [WREX report](#) revealed that, based on ISP District 16 data, only about 10 percent of Scott's Law citations resulted with formal convictions. A majority of the Scott's Law citations either are dismissed or amended to a lesser charge. On the other hand, ISP has issued over 3,000 more move-over citations this year compared to last year to date, statewide. ISP Director Brendan Kelly is hopeful that the increased move-over traffic stops and increased publicity of Scott's Law help to raise awareness to move over for pulled over vehicles.

Governor J. B. Pritzker [applauded](#) the Illinois General Assembly after passing bills that strengthen Scott's Law by [increasing fines](#) and [developing a task force](#) to study Scott's Law enforcement and public awareness. It is expected that the Governor will sign these bills into law in due time.

On June 21, an [ISP Trooper was injured](#) after a vehicle lost control and flipped over in a construction zone, colliding with the Trooper's squad car that was parked within the closed lanes of the construction zone. The driver of the vehicle that lost control was pronounced dead on the scene.



Details on 60 ISP squad car crashes [have been released](#). Source: Illinois State Police.





# Illinois Moves Closer to Legal Recreational Cannabis

Governor J. B. Pritzker applauded the passage of a bill that legalizes recreational cannabis consumption. Governor Pritzker [signed the bill into law](#) on June 25, meaning that recreational cannabis would become legal as early as 2020.

Amid the celebration of those enjoying the prospects of legalized cannabis, however, is a wave of worry. Namely, law enforcement agencies throughout Illinois are nervous that police are “[incredibly unprepared](#)” to handle the ramifications of legal cannabis, particularly concerning driving under the influence of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

The underlying concern from law enforcement agencies is that driving while THC-impaired is difficult to diagnose with the current technology. While the bill addresses a 10 nanograms per milliliter legal limit of THC, saliva tests typically can accurately resolve only a minimum quantity of 40 nanograms. Truck drivers would be held to an [even higher standard](#) of no THC whatsoever.

Based on the stipulations of the bill, the Illinois State Police would participate in a “[DUI Cannabis Task Force](#)” that would present best practices and report the forefront of DUI cannabis diagnostic technology to Illinois state officials. However, law enforcement agencies believe that this research should have already been done before considering any cannabis legalization bills. Additionally, the year-and-a-half timeframe until legality in 2020 is believed to be too short for law enforcement to readily train officers to handle cannabis-impairment enforcement.

The momentum supporting cannabis use, however, continues to grow, particularly among the younger generations. In fact, the use of cannabis has increased not only in Illinois, but nationwide, regardless of each state’s current legal landscape. At the same time, unfortunately, the proportion of fatal crashes involving cannabis has also increased.

## Operation Bypass Cracks Down on Truckers Avoiding Weigh Stations

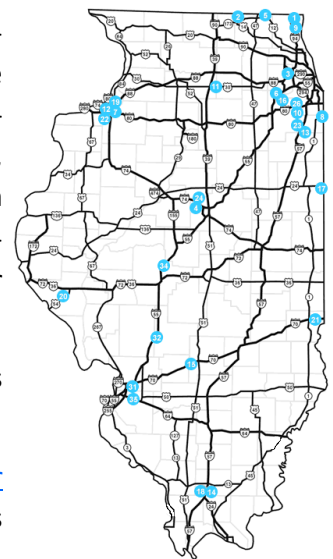
District 5 reminds truck drivers to faithfully weigh their trucks at open weigh stations. Vehicles weighing at least eight tons must stop by open weigh stations. However, Illinois State Police (ISP) expressed concerns that some truck drivers may be using cell phone apps to help themselves illegitimately skip weighing their vehicle. In addition to the dangers that this behavior may pose to other drivers on the road and to the health and safety of the roadway, the use of such cell phone apps in real-time means that texting and driving may also be occurring.

ISP took their concerns to the road through

“Operation Bypass”, an enforcement campaign that focuses on commercial vehicle rules and regulations. Operation Bypass enforcement has already occurred in the past, and [recent details](#) in District 5 resulted in a total of 24 bypass citations, 19 bypass warnings, eight out-of-service orders, and four overweight violations.

A comprehensive list of IDOT weigh stations is available [on their website](#).

June also observed another round of [Trooper in a Truck](#), an ISP initiative that collaborates with semi-trucks to catch drivers who are texting while driving.



Map of IDOT weigh stations

# Flood Continues to Cause Road Closures *Continued from page 1*

[through a flooded road](#), with water reaching the hood of the bus. Investigations revealed that elementary school students were on the Monmouth-Roseville School District bus when the driver took it through floodwaters. The school district administration has handled the incident internally.

According to the [National Weather Service](#), the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention reported that more than half of flood-related deaths involve cars being driven into flooded roads. As shallow as one foot of water can lift a vehicle and drift it away.

The historic flood [prompted a recent demand](#) from state officials to temporarily raise Illinois Route 3 in Alexander County, near the Big 5 levee region, to preserve an im-

portant roadway connection within the flood-prone area.

According to the National Weather Service St. Louis, the river's water levels are expected to continue to slowly fall. The Kampsville ferry, a major network connecting Illinois Route 108 across the Illinois River north of Hardin, was [partially reopened](#) in mid-June. IDOT continues to list and update [emergency road closures](#) across the state, including the flooded regions.

"Turn Around Don't Drown" is a nationwide effort from the National Weather Service to remind drivers to refrain from driving through flooded roadways. Drivers tend to underestimate the depth of water on roadways and severely overestimate their vehicle's resistance to becoming waterborne.

### Stay up to date with Illinois construction!

Illinois Department of Transportation

- [General work zone information](#) (with map)
- [Construction releases](#)
- [Emergency road closures](#)
- [IDOT In Motion subscription service](#)

Illinois Tollway

- [Projects Overview](#) (with map)
- [Daily construction alerts](#)

Also, visit your local municipality or county website for local construction information.



## Enforcement Campaign for Fourth of July Holiday

**JULY**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Vehicle Theft Prevention Month**

**4 Fourth of July**  
**IMPAIRED DRIVING**  
Primary Message:  
*Drive Sober or  
Get Pulled Over*  
Secondary Message:  
*Buzzed Driving Is  
Drunk Driving*  
Twitter Chat:  
*Buzzed Driving*

**DRIVE SOBER OR  
GET PULLED OVER**

**buzzed  
drunk**  
driving is  
driving

**act fast.**  
Save a Life.

**where's  
baby?**  
Look before you look.

**31**  
**National Heatstroke  
Prevention Day**  
**HEATSTROKE  
AWARENESS**  
Paid Media  
Twitter Chat:  
*#Heatstrokekills*

Upcoming July NHTSA awareness campaigns. Source: NHTSA

Law Enforcement agencies across Illinois urge drivers to responsibly celebrate the Fourth of July by not drinking and driving. In addition to the Illinois State Police, several county sheriff's offices and local police departments throughout Illinois announced enforcement campaigns to make sure travelers are driving sober.

The total number of fatal crashes during July 4 holidays from 2014 and 2016 fluctuated, but alcohol-related fatalities have remained steady at three. This year's Independence Day holiday starts on Wednesday, July 3 at 6:00 PM and ends on Monday, July 7 at 11:59 PM.

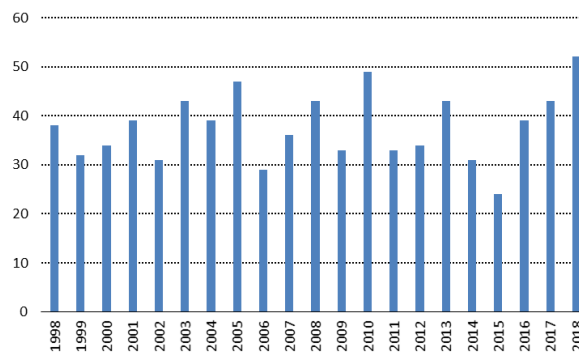
In 2017, 281 (25.8 percent) of the total 1,090 traffic fatalities for the year were reported to be related to alcohol.



## National Heatstroke Prevention Day

In addition to the Independence Day enforcement campaign, July will also observe the National Heatstroke Prevention Day on July 31 to raise awareness of the dangers of leaving pets and children in cars outside.

Because of vehicles' tendency to absorb the sun's heat, temperatures in a parked car can rise beyond 100°F within just a couple of hours. Having windows slightly open is not enough to circulate the air.



Heatstroke deaths in vehicles by year, 1998–2002. Source: [noheatstroke.org](http://noheatstroke.org)

In 2018, 52 children died from heatstroke inside a vehicle nationally, the highest number of heatstroke deaths reported in a year since records began in 1998. The last time Illinois reported a vehicle heatstroke death was in 2014. Based on 1998–2018 data from [noheatstroke.org](http://noheatstroke.org), Illinois reported 16 heatstroke deaths, while Texas reported the greatest

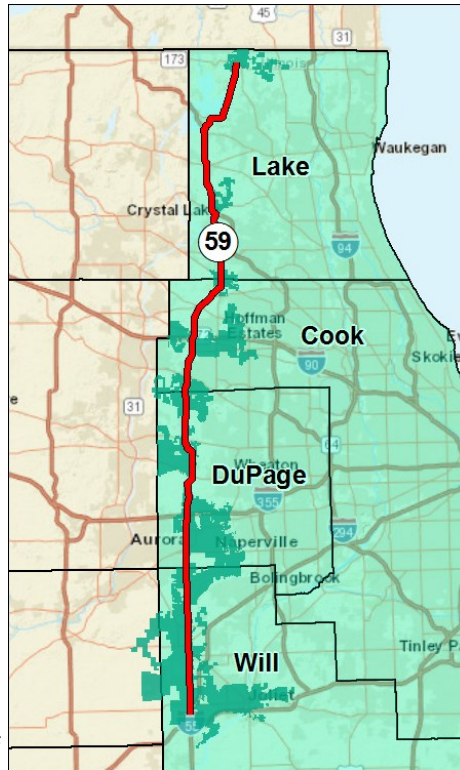
number of 118. Nationally, an average of 38 heatstroke deaths occur in a given year, but there shows no signs of any particular increasing or decreasing trend.



## Recent Local Traffic Safety Enforcement Initiatives

Over a dozen local police departments in northeastern Illinois partnered to perform a special traffic enforcement campaign [along Illinois Route 59](#) in early May. The Illinois Route 59 is a north-south corridor that runs through several major western Chicago suburbs. Based on Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) data, between 2013 and 2017, there were 25 fatal crashes and 228 incapacitating injury crashes reported along the route.

The Naperville Police Department reported the results of the collaborative enforcement effort, which included 162 speeding citations, 85 electronic communication device citations, and seven occupant restraint citations. A total of 368 traffic stops occurred with 261 citations issued overall.



Counties and municipalities that participated in the IL-59 enforcement

Meanwhile, the Illinois State Police recently [released statistics](#) on a Kane County [High Visibility Enforcement \(HiVE\)](#) campaign, organized by the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, that occurred on April 26 as part of Distracted Driving Awareness Week. The purpose of the enforcement was to monitor crash-prone streets of Kane County during peak traffic hours.

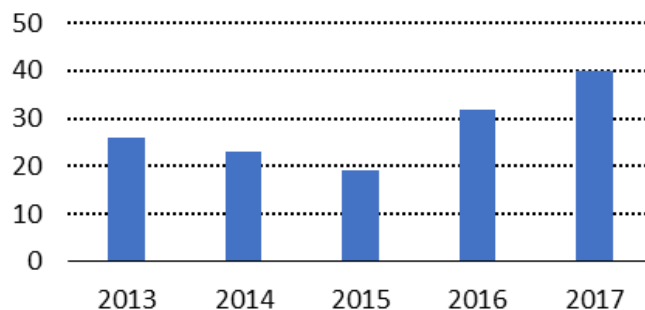
Results of the enforcement showed over 1,800 citations issued, including 527 distracted driving citations, 111 seat belt citations, and 23 DUI arrests.

According to IDOT, Kane County reported 28 fatal crashes in 2017 with a total of 30 killed.

## New Distracted Driving Penalties In Effect

A [new law](#), signed by then-Governor Bruce Rauner in 2018, is effective July 1. The law increases the penalties for unauthorized cell phone use while driving by making the first offense a moving violation. Three moving violations within a year's time frame could mean a suspended license.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, fatal crashes involving distracted driving have increased. In 2013, 28 were killed as a result of crashes related with distracted driving, but 2017 reported 41 deaths.



Fatal crashes involving distracted driving, 2013–17.

Data source: IDOT

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