

To: Fund Commissioners, Risk Management Consultants, and Police Chiefs
From: Chief Keith Hummel (Ret.)
Date: July 24, 2018
Re: Law Enforcement Safety Bulletin 2018-08 - Motor Vehicle Injuries and Fatalities

This Fall, J.A. Montgomery Risk Control will offer the Below 100 Training Program in conjunction with the New Jersey State Chiefs of Police and the NJMEL.

If you have an interest in hosting and or having personnel from your agency attend this training, please contact Chief Keith Hummel (Ret.) khummel@jamontgomery.com or Chief Vince Quatrone (Ret.) vquatrone@jamontgomery.com at J.A. Montgomery Risk Control.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of Law Enforcement Officer Deaths. The goal of the highly regarded Below 100 Program is to reduce annual law enforcement officer deaths to below 100 from all causes including auto crashes. How officers operate their patrol vehicles, make decisions, and think about safe practices is a core part of this program.

Please take the time to review this information. Changing processes is the easy part, changing the minds of our personnel is the real challenge!

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund website, 319 officers lost their lives in auto crashes between 2009 and 2017.

Cause of Death - Auto Crash 2009-2017

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
39	51	44	27	29	33	36	29	31	319

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund website, 54 officers lost their lives in motorcycle crashes between 2009 and 2017.

Cause of Death – Motorcycle Crash 2009-2017

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
3	6	5	8	5	6	6	10	5	54

In 2011, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that 823 law enforcement officers were killed in motor vehicle crashes from 1980 to 2008.

- The crashes with LEO fatalities in passenger vehicles occurred more frequently during dark hours (8 p.m. to 4:50 a.m.), while the crashes with LEO fatalities on motorcycles occurred mostly during the daylight hours from noon to 3:59 p.m.

- 48% of the fatalities in the 2000s occurred when the LEO collided with another motor vehicle, 41% of the fatalities occurred when the LEO collided with a fixed object. Rollovers account for approximately 5% of the fatal crashes.
- The manner of collision; passenger vehicle crashes resulting in LEO fatalities were angle crashes (55%), followed by head-on crashes (27%), rear-end crashes (13%), and sideswipe crashes at (5%). Motorcycle crashes with LEO fatalities had mostly angle collisions (67%). Both head-on and rear-end collisions each accounted for 13% and sideswipe for 8%.
- 54% of the passenger vehicle crashes with LEO fatalities occurred on rural areas and 46% on urban areas. However, 89% of the motorcycle crashes with LEO fatalities occurred on roadways in urban areas and only 11% occurred on roadways in rural areas.
- Subsequent vehicle action after initial impact shows that the rollover of LEO vehicles has increased from 21% in the 1990's to 31% in the 2000s.
- 47% of the police passenger vehicles involving LEO fatalities had "front" as the initial impact point, 24% had "left side," 13% had "right side," and 7% had "rear."
- "Going straight" (61%) was the major vehicle maneuver type for police passenger motor vehicles involving LEO fatalities. This is followed by "negotiating a curve" (19%) and maneuvering to avoid animal/pedestrian/object" (6%).
- Drivers of 37% of the police passenger vehicles and 29% of the police motorcycles involving LEO fatalities did not attempt to avoid the crashes.
- Of the LEOs killed in passenger vehicle crashes, 28% used restraint systems in the 1980s. The restraint system use increased to 56% in the 1990s, which is a 28-percentage point increase. Recent data shows that the restraint system use decreased to 50%.
- Airbags deployed in 56% of the LEO fatalities in passenger vehicles in the 2000s.
- During the period from 1980 to 2008, 19% of law enforcement officers killed in passenger vehicle crashes were ejected from the vehicles (15% totally ejected and 4% partially ejected).ⁱ
- The data reveals that when it comes to the frequency of crashes, May, July and October are the worst months for LEO fatal crashes.ⁱⁱ

See: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/811411>, for additional details on the NHTSA Report on the Characteristics of Law Enforcement Officers' Fatalities in Motor Vehicle Crash

ⁱ Ibid. p.1-2.

ⁱⁱ Ibid. p.11.