

DID YOU KNOW???

NY TOPS ALL STATES IN EFFORTS TO MAKE HIGHWAYS SAFER

Some good news in highway safety - New York is the top state in the nation in taking steps to reduce injuries and fatalities on its roadways, a recent report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says. No state has taken as many steps to curtail the number of crashes as the Empire State.

NHTSA's detailed analysis looked at a host of steps states can take to make driving safer. New York has implemented the following measures identified in the report:

- Allowing the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to revoke or suspend a driver's license if a motorist refuses a blood-alcohol test
- Publicizing sobriety checkpoints
- Authorizing the use of a device that prevents convicted drunk drivers from being able to start their cars if they have been drinking
- Implementing comprehensive laws to make sure children and youths are properly buckled into seat restraints
- Using automated cameras to reduce speeding
- Enabling police to stop drivers for cell-phone use and texting
- Requiring all motorcycle riders and passengers to wear helmets
- Creating a graduated licensing system that gives new drivers a chance to learn before driving with additional passengers and without a licensed adult
- Requiring youths to wear bicycle helmets
- Adopting a Complete Streets policy that seeks to make the roads safe for all users: motorists, motorcycle riders, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Former New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Matthew J. Driscoll said, "We are proud to lead the nation in the number of safety measures we've implemented on New York State's roads and bridges, and we are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to further improve highway safety. In support of Governor Cuomo's Complete Streets law, NYSDOT designs projects that take into account the safety and convenience of all travelers, including motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Last year, for example, New York matched its all-time high record for compliance with the seat belt law at 92 percent then broke it with a compliance rate of 93.4 percent in June of this year, the highest ever in an annual survey. It also marked the seventh consecutive year that seat belt use in the Empire State stayed at or above 90 percent. New York also engages in regular enforcement and public education campaigns targeting people who pass stopped school buses, fail to abide by the "move over" law, and who drive distracted by cell phones, texting or other unsafe behavior. These weekly articles are just one example of the public education initiatives.

All of this is good news for a change. However, there's still more that we can do. For example, NYS should pass a mandatory seatbelt law covering *everyone* in the vehicle. Currently, passengers 16 years and older in the back seat are not required to buckle up – they should be.

Credit goes to Sheriff Kevin Mulverhill and the National Sheriff's Association for the information in this article.