



TRAFFIC SAFETY TALK

District Two Community Traffic Safety Program
News Update • Fall Edition • 2024



YOUR TRAFFIC
SAFETY TEAM

Bringing you home safely.

BIG Community Outreach



In October, we personalized a gift to local libraries and partners in District Two's 18 counties. We were happy to bring two fantastic [Clifford the Big Red Dog stories](#) to our community. Our team gift-wrapped the books and included "I am a SAFE Walker!" stickers to share with kids during storytime and hand-delivered packages to select libraries in Duval County.

The first book, *Clifford Takes a Walk*, teaches pedestrian safety. A limited quantity of these books were also available in Spanish. The second book, *Clifford and the Railroad Crossing*, emphasizes safety around trains and railroads.

These books were made available with generous support from FedEx, Union Pacific Railroad, and Safe Kids Worldwide.



In November, our Clay CTST Chair, FHP Master Sergeant Dylan Bryan, personally delivered copies to Clay County libraries. We are excited to help bring these important messages to our community, and our library partners are the perfect avenue for reaching young readers. The positive responses, smiling faces, and appreciation for quality children's books like these have been warming.



We also made these stories and other traffic safety-related books available as read-aloud videos online. Storytime is an excellent opportunity to connect and educate children about traffic safety through fun adventures.



Traffic Safety Storytime:
Clifford Takes A Walk



TrafficSafetyTeam.org



@TrafficSafetyTeam



@TrafficSafetyFL



Taking Action for Mobility Week



Promoting safety in alternative modes of transportation is an ongoing effort throughout the year, and it is a particular focus for Mobility Week in October. We highlighted Florida's Mobility Week during our team meetings and shared it in our meeting packets, newsletter, emails, and social media to encourage participation and explore various active travel choices.

In addition to the "Clifford Takes a Walk" book about pedestrian safety, we shipped 9,800 "Take Action for Your Safety" bookmarks. These are geared toward the preteen, teen, and young adult readers with walking, biking, and electric mobility safety reminders. Team members requested 6,635 "Walk 'n Roll" and 5,600 "Safety Scores" activity books to distribute at their upcoming Trunk-or-Treats, Halloween displays, and events.



Union County's Mary C. Brown Public Library had a blast participating in the "Reading is Not So Scary Literacy Night" at Lake Butler Elementary School. We love that they took this opportunity to give away our safety bookmarks!

Enhancements to Drive Down Pedestrian Fatalities



In case you missed it, during October's Pedestrian Safety Month, the FDOT released [enhancements to help drive down pedestrian fatalities and injuries](#). As we know, pedestrians and bicyclists are among the most vulnerable users of Florida's transportation system. These populations represented 28% of traffic fatalities

statewide between 2019 and 2023. With statistics like this leading FDOT's continued focus on ultimately eliminating serious injuries and fatalities for all road users, the Department took an aggressive approach to enhance pedestrian safety through the recent installation of innovative road design and engineering countermeasures on state-owned facilities, such as improved intersection lighting, advanced moveable bridge technology, and safer mid-block pedestrian crosswalks design standards.

As FDOT continues to carry out its mission of building and maintaining safe and efficient infrastructure through these projects and emerging technology capabilities, it's vital for all road users, including pedestrians and motorists alike, to recognize their essential role in their safety. Human behavior serves as the leading cause of pedestrian-related crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities statewide. The article included traffic safety reminders for pedestrians and motorists. All road users are encouraged to practice the following safety measures to help FDOT achieve its goal of preventing these tragedies altogether.

[Read More](#)



Submit a Concern



YOU are our expert eyes on the road! As you travel through District Two during the holidays, be on the lookout for any traffic safety issues. Please submit it with photos on our [Roadway Concerns form online](#).

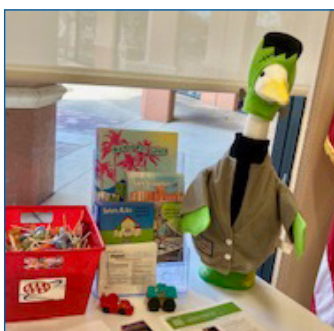
Community Outreach Corner

Over the last two months, Traffic Safety Team members have been promoting safety during events throughout District Two. So much of what the Traffic Safety Teams do is "behind the scenes," but they are consistently working to impact and improve safety in their local communities. We are happy to provide traffic safety resources and materials like educational and fun activity books. Your outreach efforts are fundamental in educating and saving lives.



Team member Lois Willneff, Safety Officer, and the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners handed out traffic safety activity books at a *Child Welfare Worker Day* event in September.

Judy Cotton with **MADD Northeast Florida** said the activity books were a big hit with the younger kids at their table during *Trailmark's Boo Bash* in St. Augustine on 10/26/24.



Robin Price with the **AAA St. Augustine** branch office included our traffic safety materials in their mini-display for Halloween Safety this year.

We also continued to send seasonal traffic safety resources for team members and agencies to share. Thank you to the following partners who posted some of these materials:

- Atlantic Beach Police Department
- FDOT Northeast Florida
- FDOT West Central - Tampa
- Jacksonville Beach Police Department
- Orange Park Police Department



September & October CTST HIGHLIGHTS:

22,894
Traffic Safety
Materials Distributed

9,774
CTST Resource
Emails Sent

18
New Roadway
Concerns Submitted

30,214
TrafficSafetyTeam.org
Website Event Count
(engagement, views, clicks,
downloads, scrolls)

10.55%
Average Post
Engagement Rate
(on Traffic Safety Team social
media pages, all unpaid)

28,127
YouTube Views

Remember to tag @trafficsafetyteam on Facebook and Instagram us so we don't miss your posts.

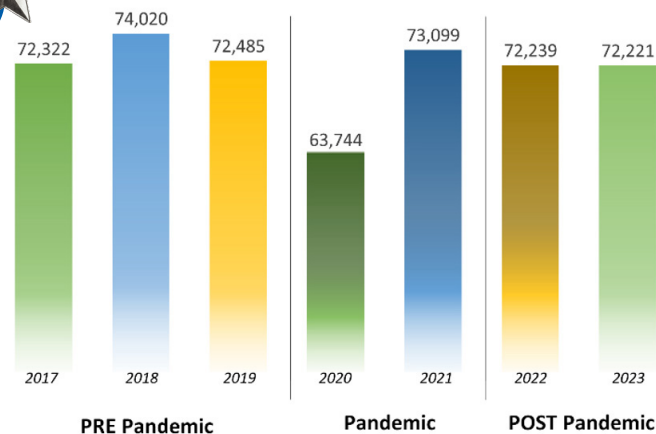


The Pandemic's Lasting Impact on Traffic Safety in Northeast Florida



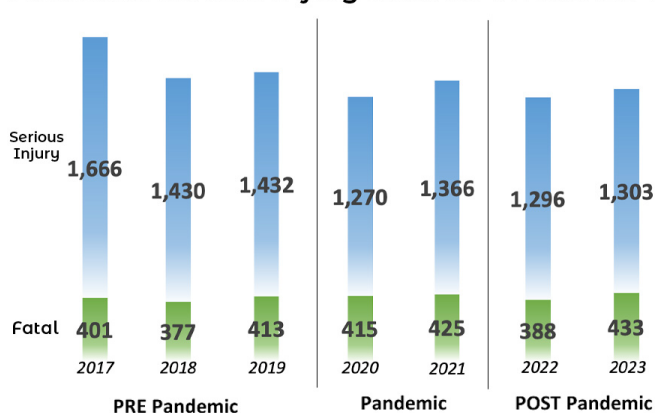
The COVID-19 pandemic brought substantial shifts to traffic patterns and safety in Florida's FDOT District Two, including urban areas like Jacksonville and rural regions such as Bradford and Hamilton Counties. By collecting and analyzing data across three phases—before (2017 – 2019), during (2020 – 2021), and after the pandemic (2022 – 2023)—key insights emerge on how the pandemic impacted road safety in Northeast Florida and what challenges lie ahead.

Total Crashes in District 2



Pre-Pandemic Traffic Safety (2017–2019)

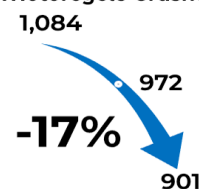
Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes in District 2



To establish the benchmark, a three-year comparison of crashes was conducted. Before the onset of COVID-19, traffic volumes in District Two were predictable, with congestion most prevalent in urban centers and less severe but faster-moving traffic in rural counties. This period saw a gradual reduction in overall fatal and serious injury crashes due to a combination of improved road infrastructure, enforcement of traffic laws, and public awareness campaigns targeting behaviors like speeding, impaired driving, and seatbelt non-compliance.

One notable trend during this time was the emphasis on motorcycle crashes. From 2017 to 2019, crashes involving motorcycles and mopeds decreased by seventeen percent (17%). Educational campaigns and law enforcement efforts helped mitigate crashes.

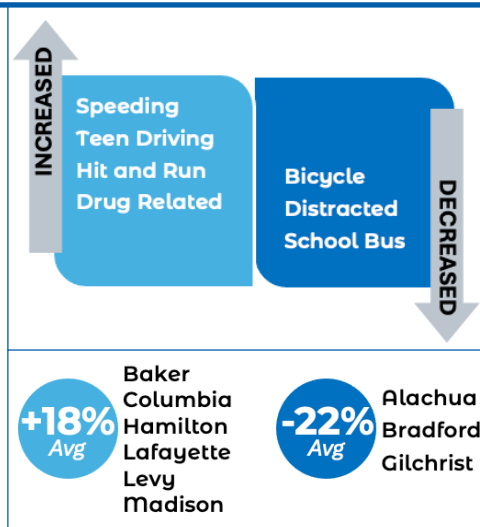
Motorcycle Crashes



Traffic Safety During the Pandemic (2020–2021)

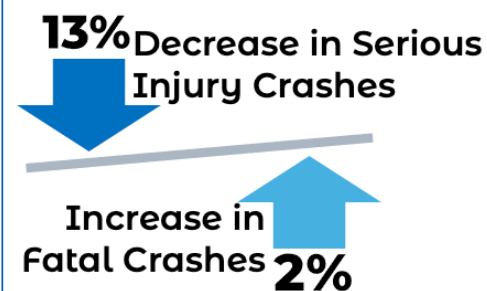
A comparison of crashes during the pandemic to the final year (2019) pre-pandemic was conducted. The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly decreased traffic volume across the country, including in District Two. Remote work, school closures, and stay-at-home orders resulted in fewer cars on the road. However, this drop in traffic did not correlate with a decrease in traffic fatalities. Instead, some motorists drove at higher speeds and displayed dangerous behaviors on less busy roads, increasing the number of severe crashes, especially in rural areas.

The data showed that while areas like Alachua County (-18%) and Bradford County (-36%) saw fewer crashes due to less congestion, the severity of crashes that did occur increased. Fatalities rose three percent (3%) throughout the district, as fewer vehicles and enforcement on the road allowed drivers to engage in riskier behaviors. Speeding (+5%), teen driving (+4%), hit and run (+9%), and impaired (+4%) related crashes contributed to higher-than-expected rates.



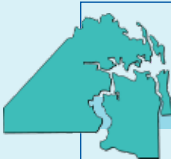
Post-Pandemic Traffic Safety (2022–2023)

A comparison of crashes two years after the pandemic to the final year (2019) pre-pandemic was conducted. As Florida began to emerge from the pandemic and traffic volumes returned to pre-2020 levels, the region faced new challenges. Many risky driving behaviors that increased during the pandemic persisted as law enforcement resources remained limited.



Traffic congestion has returned, but the severity of crashes has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. FDOT and local law enforcement agencies have introduced new measures to address the post-pandemic surge in dangerous behaviors, including targeted DUI checkpoints and speed limit adjustments in high-crash areas. However, these measures have yet to reverse the uptick in fatalities.

Duval County Spotlight – Duval County offers a clear example of the shifts in traffic safety during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, fatal crashes increased by 16%, with DUI-related fatalities spiking by 48% and fatalities involving unrestrained occupants surging by 53%. In the post-pandemic period, fatal crashes rose slightly by 1%, while DUI-related fatalities declined by 5%, and fatalities involving unrestrained occupants still showed a significant increase of 32%. When looking at serious injuries,



	Pandemic (2020 + 2021)	Post-Pandemic (2022 + 2023)
Fatal		
Crashes	378	317
Impaired	182	140
Unrestrained	100	78
Serious Injury		
Crashes	1171	1147
Impaired	139	118
Unrestrained	149	157

the pandemic saw an 8% increase in crashes, a 4% rise in DUI-related injuries, and a 39% jump in unrestrained cases. However, in the post-pandemic period, serious injuries related to crashes decreased by 2%, DUI-related injuries dropped sharply by 20%, but unrestrained cases continued to climb by 37%. These figures highlight both the immediate and lingering impacts of the pandemic on traffic safety in Duval County.

Duval County's data reflects broader national trends observed during and after the pandemic, where reduced traffic volumes created more opportunities for dangerous driving behaviors. During the pandemic, drivers took advantage of emptier roads, leading to higher speeds, increased impairment due to alcohol or drugs, and neglect of seatbelt use. Post-pandemic, while traffic volumes have rebounded, the risky behaviors adopted during the pandemic have proven harder to reverse, especially among unrestrained occupants, even as DUI-related incidents have declined. This highlights the lasting behavioral shifts brought on by the pandemic and the challenges they pose for traffic safety enforcement and education efforts.

Population Trends Play a Factor in Northeast Florida – During the pre-pandemic years, the overall population in District Two increased by 4%. The population increase slowed to an average of 2% during the pandemic years over all 18 counties. In 2021, decreases occurred in five rural counties: Bradford, Hamilton, Lafayette, Taylor, and Union. Post-pandemic population trends saw a 2.5% increase overall. Urban counties, like St. Johns, Nassau, and Duval, continued to lead in population increases. The average trends in Northeast Florida exceed the U.S. National 0.5% average population growth yearly. With the influx of new drivers on our roadways, traffic safety engineering countermeasures, law enforcement, and education are more important than ever.

Focus on Improving Driver Behaviors, Infrastructure, Enforcement, and Education – The COVID-19 pandemic altered traffic safety trends in Northeast Florida. Although traffic volumes have mostly returned to normal, the dangerous driving behaviors that emerged during the pandemic—such as speeding, impaired driving, and seatbelt non-compliance—have left a lasting legacy on the region's roadways. For FDOT District Two, which encompasses a mix of urban and rural areas, addressing these behaviors requires ongoing infrastructure improvements, targeted enforcement efforts, and public awareness campaigns to reduce fatalities and improve overall safety. This is a balancing act but a needed endeavor to reach the goal of Target Zero.

Additional Resources: AAA FTS Research Brief - [Traffic Safety Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
AAA Research News - [The Pandemic's Tenacious Grip on Traffic Safety](#)
FDOT District Two CTSP - [County Crash Data](#)

[View Online](#)



Celebrating Safely this Holiday Season

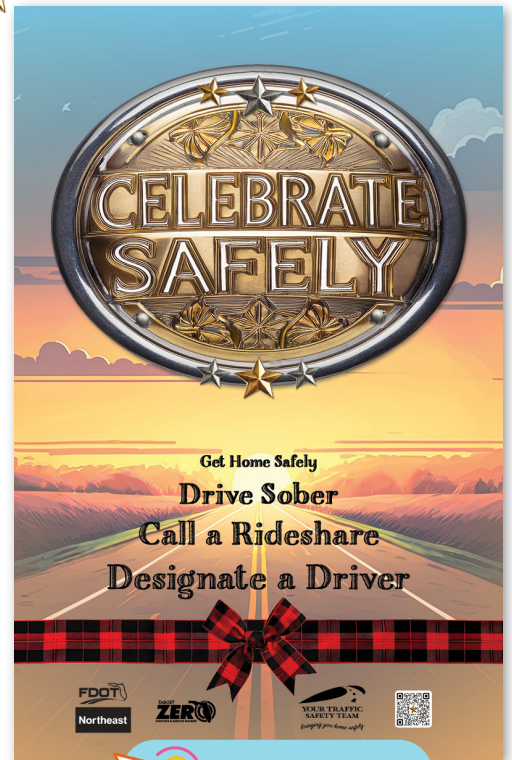
The Florida Department of Transportation is focused on the Target Zero goal of zero deaths on our roadways. District Two's Community Traffic Safety Program has addressed traffic safety issues in Northeast Florida for almost three decades. We have promoted the [Celebrate Safely, Designate a Driver](#) campaign and [Recipes for the Road](#) since 1998. According to Florida's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), one out of every four traffic fatalities in Florida involves a driver impaired by alcohol or drugs.

During the holiday season, team members reach out to local restaurants and bars to display the Celebrate Safely, Designate a Driver campaign. This year, we have created a new 11x17 full-color Celebrate Safely poster and a nonalcoholic recipe booklet. If you

[Click to Order](#)

have not already, please [order now](#) while supplies last for distribution between Thanksgiving and the New Year.

Celebrate Safely, Designate a Driver and *Recipes for the Road* focus on the SHSP strategies of both education and insight into creating safer communities by working with local partners. This includes law enforcement, team members, restaurants, and bars. The goal is to promote responsible alcohol service and personal use at events or party hosting. They also promote safe transportation choices that encourage alternatives to driving while impaired.



[Learn More](#)



[Learn More](#)

Impaired driving information, tips, and resources are available on the TrafficSafetyTeam.org website. We have free social media graphics, digital flipbooks, printable nonalcoholic recipes, and [mocktail videos](#). All *Recipes for the Road* editions are online from the present to the 1998 inaugural issue. Every issue features unique nonalcoholic drinks, mocktails, appetizers, treats, and traffic safety tips.

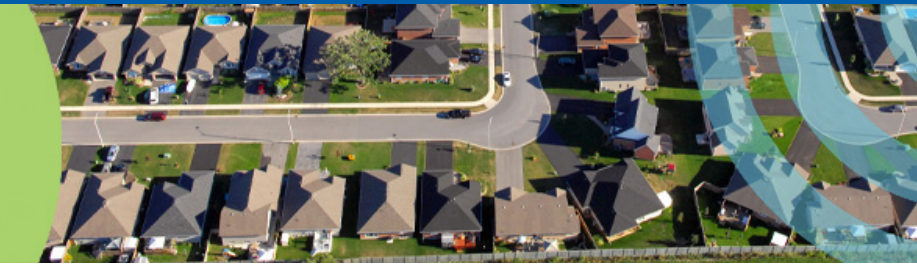
The goal is to help stop impaired driving and reduce alcohol-related traffic crashes and fatalities on our roadways this holiday season and throughout the year. We look forward to seeing many team members, agencies, partners, and neighborhood establishments throughout Northeast Florida participating again.



[Click Here](#)

Please take pictures of the traffic safety materials in use at your events or on display and email them to us at: trafficsafetyteam@dot.state.fl.us

Guide to Traffic Safety in HOA Neighborhoods

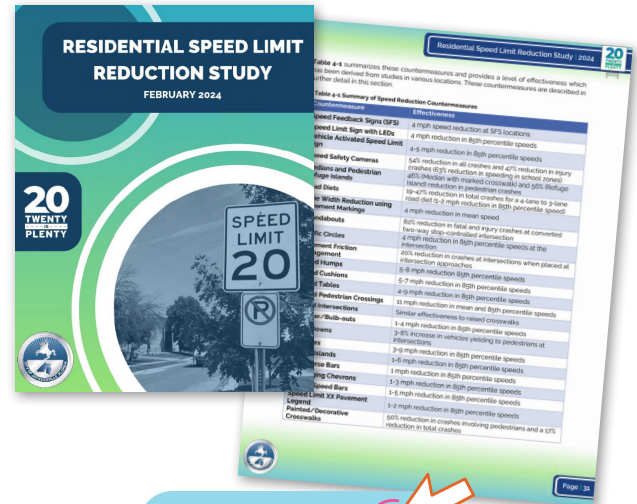


Speeding and disregard for traffic signs and safety in residential areas are common problems in Northeast Florida. We created a [blog post](#) with general recommendations and research materials for neighborhood communities.

Slowing traffic helps promote a more relaxed residential environment, and various options are available. However, an association does not need to choose one to the exclusion of all others. The key is to be consistent and properly apply the various options selected.

We appreciate all efforts to improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, and minimize reckless driving as we work towards Florida's Target Zero goal. Homeowner Associations are encouraged to post positive reminders for homeowners. We shared links to digital graphics, information, and resources to help educate communities on traffic safety and promote better driving behaviors.

The City of Jacksonville's 2024 Residential Speed Limit Reduction Study is an in-depth report that examines the impact of reducing the speed on all residential streets to 20 MPH. The study aimed to gauge the effectiveness, identify the best methods, and develop an action plan for implementation.



[Learn More](#)



The online article goes into ideas on how to prevent speeding in HOA neighborhoods, including establishing rules, enforcement, fines, and devices to measure speed.

CTST Meetings:

St. Johns / Putnam

11.12.24 & 1.14.25 @ 1:30 PM

Columbia / Hamilton

Lafayette / Suwannee

11.19.24 & 1.21.25 @ 10:30 AM

Duval 11.20.24 & 1.15.25 @ 10:00 AM

Clay 11.20.24 & 1.15.25 @ 2:00 PM

Alachua / Dixie / Gilchrist

Levy / Madison / Taylor

11.21.24 & 1.16.25 @ 10:00 AM

Nassau 12.3.24 & 1.28.25 @ 10:30 AM

Bradford / Baker / Union

12.4.24 @ 10:30 AM

Other Teams will not meet in December.

Team meetings are virtual and subject to change.

Upcoming Traffic Safety Events & Campaigns:

December

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Celebrate Safety Campaign

Bradford/Baker/Union Team's 27th Anniversary on 12/4/1997

12/2 - 12/6/24 Older Driver Safety Awareness Week

12/7 - 01/01/25 Holiday Season - Impaired Driving Campaign

January

Move Over Florida Month

New Year's Day - Enforcement Designated Driver Program

1/9/24 Law Enforcement Appreciation Day



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