

ARTICLE

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Survey Says: Drivers Who Lack Basic Knowledge Are Dangerous In New Jersey



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All motorists should drive cautiously to avoid crashes on U.S. roads, but drivers in New Jersey have a new reason to be more attentive while driving. A recent insurance company survey rated New Jersey poorly on licensed motorists' responses to typical driver's test questions. While the state has improved its seat-belt use lately and lowered its fatal crash rate last year, New Jersey drivers can still use this current ranking to continue improving driver education and knowledge of basic traffic laws and practices.

Dangerous Conditions

New Jersey roads and intersections continue to prove dangerous, as indicated by information from the New Jersey State Police (NJSP) and the number of intersection collisions, rear-end collisions and other car accidents on New Jersey roads. The NJSP reports there were 550 fatal crashes that killed 584 people in 2009. In 2010, these numbers decreased to 530 fatal crashes and 556 deaths. However, records for the first half of 2011 show 268 accidents and 288 fatalities, both of which are higher than the 2009 and 2010 crashes and deaths for the same period. Although front seat seat-belt usage is almost 100 percent, backseat seat-belt usage has hovered around 50 percent over 2009 and 2010.

Survey Results

GMAC Insurance recently published national survey results based on driver's test questions given to a sampling of licensed motorists. New Jersey ranked 48th in driver responses to this basic driving exam, which was an improvement from its last place position in 2010. New Jersey drivers averaged a score of 73.5 percent, with around 31 percent receiving a score of 70 or less, which is a failing grade. While it is unsure how many New Jersey drivers were surveyed, GMAC found that one in five drivers did not meet basic licensing standards.

Through various campaigns and enforcement efforts, New Jersey has attacked multiple driving hazards, such as distracted driving, drunk driving and seat belt safety to reduce both crash and fatality rates on state roads. Last year's Click It or Ticket campaign improved usage of seat-belts in front seats, but there is still improvement needed with backseat seat-belt enforcement. In addition, although accident and death rates fell in 2010, this year's trend seems to be an increase in both, proving that drivers still are not getting the right message.

More Road to Travel

While New Jersey state agencies could continue or step-up their efforts to educate and enforce road safety laws, it is ultimately up to motorists to know the rules that govern safe driving and follow them faithfully. According to GMAC, the more knowledge drivers have, the better their driving habits will be, which makes for less dangerous driving conditions, accidents, injuries and deaths on New Jersey highways. New Jersey may not have the most unsafe drivers in the U.S., but there is definitely room for improvement to make them the most educated and risk-free drivers in the nation.

If you were recently injured or you loved one was killed in a car accident where the other driver drove dangerously or violated basic traffic laws, [contact a New Jersey personal injury attorney](#) to discuss your car accident claims, as well as your legal rights and options for recovery.