



**For Immediate Release**

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**Vermont Crash Victims Recognized on World Day of Remembrance, November 21st**

*Vermont Highway Safety Alliance Calls Attention to 2021's High Number of Motorcycle Fatalities*

**Barre, Vermont** – Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup> marks the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. This year's [World Day of Remembrance](#) takes on extra urgency as the number of people dying and severely injured in *preventable* traffic crashes in the U.S. is rising at an alarming rate. In 2020, 42,060 people died in motor vehicle crashes – an 8% increase over 2019, despite fewer people driving due to pandemic conditions. This equates to a 24% spike in the rate of traffic deaths, according to [National Safety Council \(NSC\) estimates](#).

In Vermont, traffic fatalities mirror national trends. As of November 15th, there have been 57 crashes resulting in 62 fatalities. Included in the number of deaths are 16 motorcyclists which represents a 60% increase over the previous five-year rolling average. In 2021 there have also been seven pedestrians killed, but fortunately no bicyclist fatalities.

“With six weeks remaining and the busy holiday travel season, it’s likely that several more Vermont families will be impacted by the death or serious injury of a loved one before the end of the year,” said Sue Hoxie, Executive Director, Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA). “Vermont’s statistics show that DUI (alcohol, drugs, or both), speeding, seat belt use, and driver inexperience are the causal factors behind many of the state’s fatalities. In fact, 58% of this year’s fatalities, either driver or passenger, were unbelted which likely contributed to the survivability of the crash.”

With colder weather, fewer motorcycles will be on the road and fatalities should decline accordingly. In only a six-month span, 16 motorcyclists have died on Vermont’s roadways. Two were not wearing helmets and nine of the crashes, or 56%, have been attributed to excessive speed. The use of non-DOT compliant helmets may have contributed to some of the fatalities as well. There were ten deaths in 2020, eight deaths in 2019, and seven deaths in 2018. A list of all fatal crashes in 2021 can be found on the [Vermont State Police’s website](#).

**About World Remembrance Day**

Started in 2005, the World Day of Remembrance is an international event that honors the 1.35 million people killed and millions more injured on the world’s roads each year and organizing for change to prevent such tragedies.

Traffic violence is a preventable public health crisis. And on World Day of Remembrance, communities across the U.S. are organizing events to urge change at local and state levels which may include lowering speed limits and re-designing roads to safely welcome people walking and bicycling. Education and advocacy

organizations, such as VHSA, work to encourage behavioral changes such as seat belt use, impaired driving and distracted driving.

### **About Vermont Highway Safety Alliance**

The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance is a network of like-minded private and public organizations working together to collect, share and use data to develop highway safety strategies integrating road engineering and infrastructure; law enforcement and emergency medical services; and education and outreach. The VHSA can be found at [www.vermonthighwaysafety.org](http://www.vermonthighwaysafety.org).

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*Photo caption: The peak of Appalachian Gap (Route 17) is a favorite destination for many motorcyclists. Sixteen helmets memorialize the lives lost in 2021. Photo courtesy of Vermont Highway Safety Alliance.*

