



NEWS RELEASE

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DHSMV encourages drivers to Stay Right at Night

~Most fatal wrong way driving crashes occur in the center or left-hand lane~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Throughout the month of July, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) is encouraging motorists to “Stay Right at Night” to avoid being in a wrong way driving crash. DHSMV is partnering with the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida Police Chiefs Association and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to commemorate July 2016 as Wrong Way Driving Awareness Month.

“Driver safety and education are paramount at DHSMV and data shows that on Florida’s roadways, wrong way fatalities continue to increase each year,” said DHSMV Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes. “Wrong way crashes are high impact crashes, which means drivers and passengers involved are occasionally injured, if not killed. Motorists are encouraged to stay in the right lane, especially at night, and always pay attention to posted street signs to avoid becoming a wrong way driver themselves.”

Preliminarily in 2015, there were 1,490 wrong way driving crashes in Florida, resulting in 1,454 injuries and 96 fatalities. In the majority of wrong way crashes, vehicles are hit head-on, resulting in 81 percent of all wrong way fatalities. Head-on collisions are some of the most dangerous and deadly crashes. In more than two-thirds of all wrong way crashes, the driver was either injured or killed.

DHSMV data shows the following:

	2013	2014	2015*
Wrong Way Crashes	1,351	1,490	1,490
Wrong Way Injuries	1,371	1,521	1,454
Wrong Way Fatalities	70	94	96

*Source: Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles **preliminary** data as of June 30, 2016

According to DHSMV data, drivers in wrong way collisions aren’t always impaired, which is why it’s critical for drivers to be prepared and educate themselves on how to avoid being in a wrong way crash. In fact, preliminarily in 2015, 51 percent of wrong way crashes noted that the condition of the driver as normal. Drivers are urged to pay attention and comply with all posted street signs.

“In 2015, there were 1,490 crashes in Florida resulting from wrong way drivers as well as the tragic loss of Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Deputy John Kotfila earlier this year,” said Sheriff Sadie Darnell, President of



the Florida Sheriffs Association. "On behalf of our Florida Sheriffs, I fully endorse DHSMV's July Wrong Way Driving campaign."

"Wrong-way collisions are dangerous and often deadly, and driver education is critical to lowering the number of these incidents in our state," said Winter Park Police Chief Brett Railey, President of the Florida Police Chiefs Association. "Our chiefs encourage Florida drivers to eliminate distractions when they get behind the wheel so their entire focus is on their driving. This will help us better protect everyone on the road."

FDOT Secretary Boxold said, "Safety on our roads is top priority at FDOT. Partnerships with law enforcement are critical to reducing fatalities and injuries from wrong way crashes. We remind motorists to always drive sober and stay alert."

DHSMV offers the following safety tips to avoid wrong way driving crashes:

- Stay Right at Night to avoid crashes with wrong way drivers.
- Call 911 immediately to report wrong way drivers. If a motorist sees a wrong way driver approaching, immediately reduce your speed and pull off the roadway.
- Learn and obey all traffic signs. If a motorist drives past a wrong way sign, turn around as soon as it's safe to do so.
- Look for FDOT dynamic messaging signs for wrong way driver alerts.
- When a motorist sees a posted red sign, think: "Stop." "Do Not Enter." "Wrong Way."
- Stay alert - do not drive distracted or impaired.

FDOT is implementing various wrong way driving countermeasures, such as wrong way signage, roadway reflectors, large painted pavement markings to help motorists identify the proper entrance and exit ramps on the interstate, flashing signs at exit ramps with radar detection, and emergency alert signage when wrong way drivers are detected.

Visit the DHSMV's website <https://www.flhsmv.gov/safety-center/driving-safety/wrong-way-driving/> for more information and use the hashtag #StayRightatNight throughout the month to add and share important wrong way driving safety information.

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