



NEWS RELEASE

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DHSMV REMINDS MOTORISTS TO STAY AT THE SCENE OF A CRASH

~ February 2018 is Hit and Run Awareness Month ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and its division of the Florida Highway Patrol are recognizing Hit and Run Awareness Month this February and reminding all motorists to *Stay at the Scene* when involved in a crash. In partnership with the Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Sheriffs Association and Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, the initiative seeks to reduce the number of hit and run crashes in Florida and encourage individuals to anonymously report information to solve hit and run investigations.

“All motorists involved in a crash have the responsibility to *Stay at the Scene*,” said DHSMV Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes. “Leaving the scene of a crash may be deadly for those who are hit and ensures that the driver will face more severe penalties. Individuals with information on hit and run crashes are encouraged to report any tips anonymously to Crime Stoppers.”

Since 2014, in a quarter of all crashes every year, a driver leaves the scene. In 2017, there were 98,225 hit and run crashes in Florida with 177 fatalities. Under Florida law, a driver must stop immediately at the scene of a crash on public or private property that results in injury or death. Leaving the scene of a crash is a felony and a driver, when convicted, will have their license revoked for at least three years and can be sentenced to a mandatory minimum of four years in prison.

“It is your responsibility to remain at the scene and immediately report the crash to law enforcement,” said Florida Highway Patrol Director, Colonel Gene S. Spaulding. “You should do your best to provide immediate assistance to other motorists, passengers or pedestrians that may have been injured in the crash and wait for emergency first responders to arrive.”

Vulnerable road users, like bicyclists and pedestrians, are particularly at risk in hit and run crashes. In fact, of the 177 hit and run fatalities in 2017, more than 100 cases involved pedestrians and bicycles. During that same period, 95 percent of all hit and run charges were in-state drivers and 70 percent of all hit and run charges were issued to men.

“Across the state of Florida, Hit & Run crashes are rising at an alarming rate,” says Chief Kevin Lystad, FPCA President. We must reverse this trend and we ask our driving population to think and act responsibly. Report all accidents immediately to law enforcement and remain on the scene to provide assistance to those injured. While not only required by law, it is also the right thing to do. The consequences of leaving the scene of a crash are far greater than remaining both legally and morally. Do the right thing: Stop, report, and wait for first responders.”

“The protection of the lives and property of our citizens is one of the primary goals of our Florida Sheriffs,” said Sheriff Mike Adkinson, President of the Florida Sheriffs Association. “On behalf of the Florida Sheriffs Association, I proudly support the DHSMV’s Hit & Run Awareness Campaign and their efforts to educate the motoring public about this critical issue.”

“The Florida Association of Crime Stoppers programs encourage anyone with information on Hit and Run traffic crashes to provide the information,” said the President of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, Barb Bergin. You can do it anonymously by contacting your local Crime Stoppers program. Make a difference, make the call.”

The most important thing a driver can do when they are involved in a crash is to *Stay at the Scene* and call for help. The public is encouraged to report hit and run crashes by dialing *FHP (*347). For more information on hit and runs and staying at the scene, visit: <http://www.flhsmv.gov/stayatthescene>.

Please see the department’s [website](#) for a full list of active hit and run cases by county. Throughout the month of February, DHSMV will be highlighting local, active hit and run cases in an effort to solve these crimes. If the public has any information on these open cases, please contact Crime Stoppers immediately. Even small tips can make a big difference.

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[The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles](#) provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov, follow us on Twitter @[FLHSMV](#) or find us on [Facebook](#).