



NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND

RESEARCH BULLETIN

JULY 2010

www.LawMemorial.org

info@nleomf.org

Law enforcement officer deaths: Mid-Year 2010 Report

After 50-Year Low, Law Enforcement Fatalities Surge 43% in First Half of 2010

After reaching their lowest level in 50 years in 2009, law enforcement fatalities surged nearly 43% during the first six months of 2010. If this trend continues, 2010 could end up being one of the deadliest years for U.S. law enforcement in two decades.

Total fatalities: Mid-Year, 1960-2010



Preliminary data from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) show that 87 officers died in the line of duty between January 1 and June 30, 2010. By comparison, 61 officers were killed during the first six months of 2009. Officer fatalities rose 42.6 percent between the first half of 2009 and the first six months of 2010.

By June 30, 2010, officer fatalities had already reached 75 percent of

the year-end total for 2009, which was 116. That was the lowest number of line-of-duty deaths since 1959.

All major categories of officer deaths rose sharply during the first half of 2010, according to the NLEOMF's preliminary data:

- Firearm-related deaths increased 41 percent, from 22 in 2009 to 31 in 2010. This continues the trend from 2009, when gunfire deaths rose 22 percent.
- Traffic-related fatalities were up 35 percent, from 31 to 42. This year's total included 29 officers who died in automobile crashes, 4 in motorcycle crashes and 9 who were struck and killed while outside their vehicles—all increases from 2009.
- Deaths from all other causes combined jumped 75 percent, from 8 to 14, including eight officers who died this year from physical-related injuries or illnesses.

Thirty states and Puerto Rico experienced at least one officer fatality during the first six months of 2010. In addition, five federal law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty this year.

Over the last decade, approximately 48 percent of all fatalities occurred during the first six months of the year. If that percentage holds true for 2010, the year-end fatality figure could approach the 2007 total of 185. Outside of 2001 (when 240 officers died, including 72 killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11), 2007 was the deadliest year for U.S. law enforcement since 1989 (195 deaths).

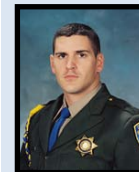
Mid-year statistics are released by the NLEOMF in conjunction with Concerns of Police Survivors. The data are preliminary and do not represent a final or complete list of individual officers who will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial for 2010.

A Closer Look: California Highway Patrol

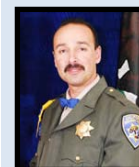
It has been a tragic six months for the California Highway Patrol. Five CHP officers have died this year, including three who were struck and killed during a five-day period in June.



• Pilot Officer Danny Benavides, EOW: 5/7/2010—aircraft accident while on observation patrol for the Border Division.



• Officer Thomas Coleman, EOW: 6/11/2010—motorcycle accident while pursuing a traffic violator.



• Officer Philip Ortiz, EOW: 6/22/2010—struck and killed while issuing a traffic citation.



• Officer Justin McGrory, EOW: 6/27/2010—struck and killed while investigating a suspected drunk driver.

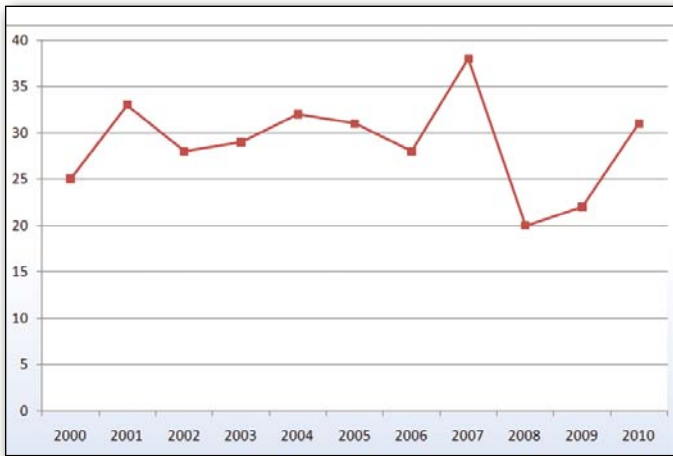


• Officer Brett Oswald, EOW: 6/27/2010—struck and killed while investigating an abandoned vehicle.

The California Highway Patrol currently has 217 officers on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, the seventh highest total among all U.S. law enforcement agencies.



Firearms-related fatalities: Mid-Year 2000-2010

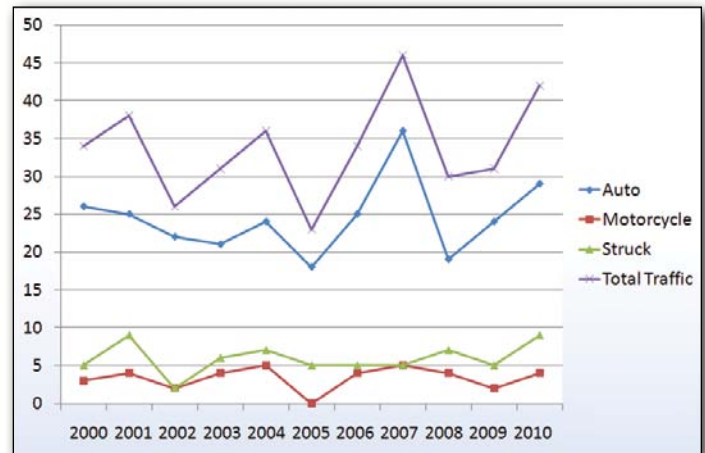


Thirty-one officers were killed in firearms-related incidents during the first half of 2010. That represents a 41 percent increase from mid-year 2009 (22) and a 55 percent rise from just two years earlier, when 20 officers were killed by gunfire during the first six months of 2008. While the 2010 mid-year total was not the highest in recent years, it still exceeded the annual average of 28.6 firearms-related deaths during the first six months of 2000 through 2009.

Of the 31 officers killed by gunfire this year, six officers died in three separate “cluster killings” (see page 4). In 2009, 15 officers were shot and killed in five multiple-fatality incidents.

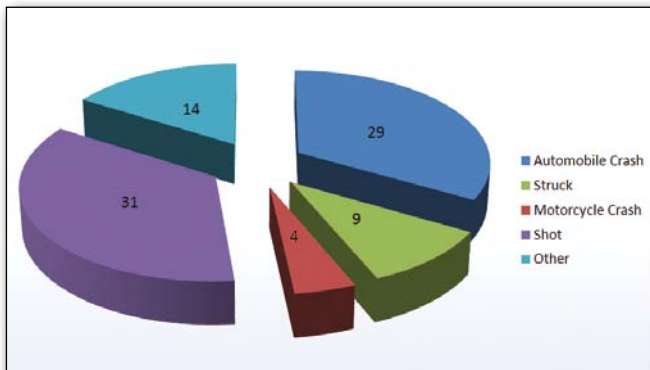
After generally decreasing the previous two years, traffic-related fatalities rose sharply during the first half of 2010. The 42 traffic-related deaths in 2010 were 35 percent higher than the 2009 mid-year total (31) and 40 percent greater than the mid-year figure for 2008 (30). The 2010 figure even approached the 2007 mid-year total of 46. In 2007, 84 officers—a record high total—died in traffic-related incidents for the entire year.

Traffic-related deaths: Mid-Year 2000-2010



All types of traffic-related fatalities increased during the first half of 2010. The increase in officers struck and killed was particularly sharp—from 5 in 2009 to 9 in 2010. Five of this year’s struck-and-killed deaths occurred in California, Massachusetts and New Jersey during one three-week period in June.

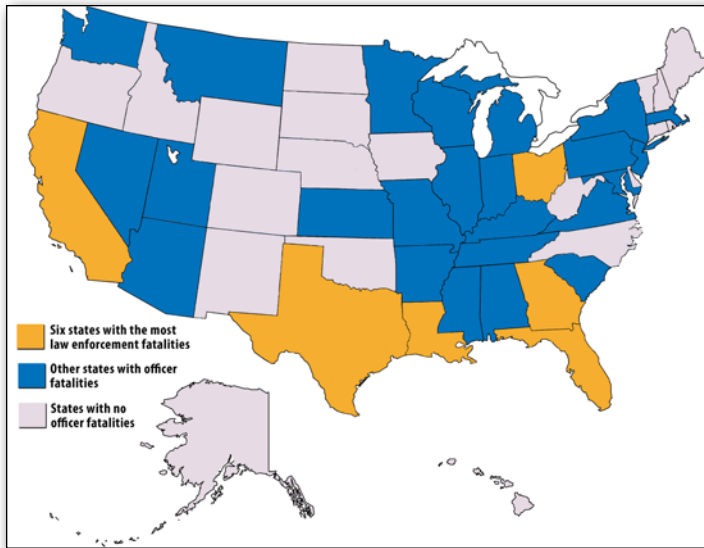
Causes of officer deaths: Mid-Year 2010



If current trends continue, 2010 will be the 13th consecutive year in which more law enforcement officers are killed in traffic-related incidents than die from any other cause. Traffic-related incidents—which include automobile and motorcycle crashes, as well as officers struck while outside their vehicles—accounted for more than 48 percent of the fatalities between January 1 and June 30, 2010.

Firearms-related fatalities made up nearly 36 percent of the mid-year 2010 deaths. Deaths from all other causes combined accounted for the remaining 16 percent.

Geographic distribution of officer fatalities: Mid-Year 2010



Thirty states and Puerto Rico experienced officer fatalities during the first six months of 2010. California had the most deaths, with nine, including five members of the California Highway Patrol who died this year (see page 1). Following California were Texas (8), Florida (6), and Georgia, Louisiana and Ohio (4 each). These six states accounted for more than 40 percent of all officer fatalities in the first half of the year.

Five federal law enforcement officers died in the line of duty between January 1 and June 30, 2010. That compares with two federal officers who died during the first six months of 2009.

Mid-Year demographic profile of officers killed: 2010

Race/Ethnicity

Caucasian	64
African American	11
Hispanic	10
Native American	1
Asian American	1

Gender

Male	82
Female	5

Average Age 40.16

Average Years of Service 11.24

State	Number of Fatalities	State	Number of Fatalities
CA	9	NY	2
TX	8	UT	2
FL	6	VA	2
GA	4	WA	2
LA	4	AL	1
OH	4	IN	1
AR	3	KS	1
IL	3	KY	1
MD	3	MN	1
NJ	3	MS	1
SC	3	MT	1
TN	3	NV	1
AZ	2	PA	1
MA	2	WI	1
MI	2	Federal	5
MO	2	Territorial	3
TOTAL		87	

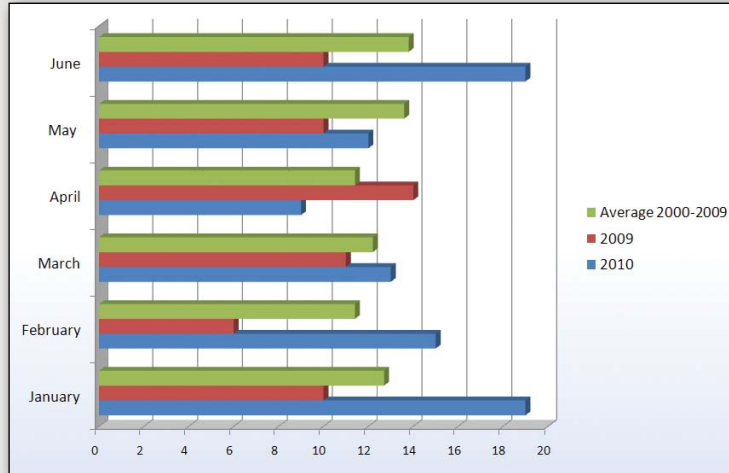
Causes of law enforcement officer fatalities: Mid-Year 2010

	2009	2010
Traffic-related		
Automobile crash	24	29
Struck (outside vehicle)	5	9
Motorcycle crash	2	4
<i>Subtotal:</i>	31	42
Firearms-related		
22	22	31
Other		
Physical-related incident	7	8
Helicopter crash	1	0
Aircraft accident	0	1
Beating	0	1
Drowned	0	1
Accidental	0	1
Boating	0	1
Fell	0	1
<i>Subtotal:</i>	8	14
TOTAL	61	87



Mid-Year fatalities: Distribution by month

Of the 87 law enforcement fatalities that occurred during the first half of 2010, nearly 44 percent took place during the months of January and June alone (19 deaths each). The next highest month was February, when 15 deaths occurred.



Comparing the first six months of 2009 and 2010, the number of law enforcement fatalities rose each month, with the exception of April, when they declined from 14 to 9.

Over the previous decade (2000-2009), June and May were the deadliest months during the first half of the year, averaging 13.8 and 13.6 fatalities, respectively. February and April have had the fewest deaths during the six-month period (11.4 each).

A Closer Look: Cluster Killings

The disturbing 2009 pattern of “cluster killings”—when more than one officer is shot and killed in the same incident—continued during the first half of 2010.

- On February 25, Fresno County (CA) Deputy Sheriff Joel Wahlenmaier and Reedley (CA) Police Officer Javier Bejar were shot while attempting to serve an arrest warrant on a suspected arsonist. Deputy Wahlenmaier died that day; Officer Bejar succumbed to his injuries on March 1.



- On May 20, Sergeant Brandon Paudert and Officer Bill Evans of the West Memphis (AR) Police Department were gunned down following a traffic stop by two suspects armed with AK-47s.



- On June 29, Tampa (FL) Police Officers David Curtis and Jeffrey Kocab were shot at close range following a traffic stop by a suspect with an outstanding warrant.



This **Research Bulletin** was produced by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, in conjunction with Concerns of Police Survivors.

Research:

- Berneta Spence, *Director of Research, NLEOMF*
- Carolie Heyliger, *Research Manager, NLEOMF*
- Jeremy Borrego, *Research Assistant, NLEOMF*
- Lynn Lyons-Wynne, *Senior Director of Memorial Programs, NLEOMF*

Content & Design:

- Tania Luciw, *Communications and Social Media Assistant, NLEOMF*
- Sally Hutchins, *Director of Electronic & Print Communications, NLEOMF*
- Kevin Morison, *Senior Director of Communications, NLEOMF*



901 E Street NW
 Suite 100
 Washington, DC 20004-2025
 202.737.3400 | info@nleomf.org
 www.LawMemorial.org

Craig W. Floyd
 Chairman & CEO



Concerns of Police Survivors

P.O. Box 3199
 Camdenton, MO 65020

573.346.4911 | cops@nationalcops.org
 www.nationalcops.org

Suzie Sawyer
 Executive Director