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Today's
Paper

HAWAII NEWS

Oahu's traffic fatalities nearly tripled in deadly start to 2025

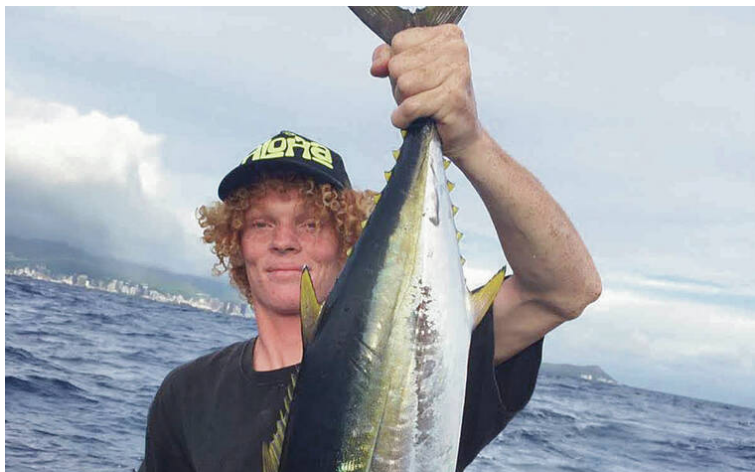


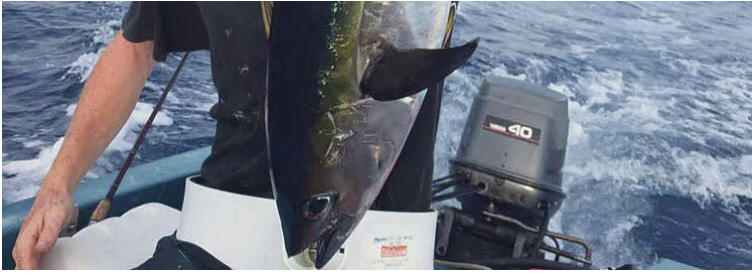
By [Nina Wu](#)

Today • *Last updated 7:57 a.m.*

Editors' Picks

Traffic






COURTESY LAYCIE LOVE

Kailon Tyndzik, 30, of Kauai, was a well-loved surfer and avid fisherman. Tyndzik died in February after he was struck by a car in a hit-and-run while skateboarding on Nawiliwili Road in Lihue.

Kailon Tyndzik, 30, of Kauai, was a well-loved surfer with an adventurous spirit, always willing to lend a helping hand, according to friends and family.

Tragically, on the night of Feb. 12, Tyndzik was struck by a car while skateboarding in the shoulder lane of Nawiliwili Road in Lihue in a hit-and-run incident that left him in critical condition. He was flown to The Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, where he remained in intensive care with multiple skull fractures, brain swelling and internal bleeding until [succumbing](#) to his injuries Feb. 20.

Family and friends honored the former lifeguard last month with a paddle-out on both Kauai and Oahu and are working to set up a foundation in his memory. A

[GoFundMe](#)  has been set up, along with sales of a “Kailon Stoked T” to carry out that wish.

ADVERTISING



Tyndzik was one of 15 pedestrian deaths counted in the state so far this year, according to preliminary statistics from the state Department of Transportation.

Two skateboarders were among those counted as pedestrian deaths. In late March, another skateboarder, Isaac Villegas, 38, of Kapolei, [died](#) after suffering critically injuries in a collision involving two cars in Makakilo.

There have also been four bicyclist deaths, double the number at this time last year.

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One of the fatalities, Wojciech “Voytek” Szymanski, 74, was an experienced cyclist and beloved member of the Hawaii Bicycling League. He was also the president of Bavarian Motor Experts in Kakaako.

Police said that at about 7:40 a.m. Feb. 28, Szymanski was [struck by a car](#) on Tantalus Drive as he was riding his bike. He was taken to a hospital in critical condition, where he later died. He was wearing a helmet.

Tytus Szymanski said his father often did his morning rides up at Tantalus before work. He was in amazing shape and could outride those half his age.

“He was a very experienced rider, and very cautious,” Tytus Szymanski said. “He takes a lot of precautions, but it just shows you

that these things happen and we need to educate drivers more about driving safer, paying more attention to cyclists and pedestrians. They don't enjoy the kind of protection that drivers do. ... Just be mindful and pay attention, not just to cyclists and pedestrians, but to people on skateboards.

"It's just so important. We have to share the road because Hawaii is a beautiful place."

Cyclists honored Voytek Szymanski at the Tantalus Time Trail race last month in which he was assigned the No. 1 race number and remembered for his spirit and competitiveness.

Deadly start

The year 2025 has been off to a deadly start on Hawaii roadways, with a total of 35 traffic fatalities in the first three months, a 25% jump from 28 at the same time last year.

The pace continued in April, with eight more fatalities recorded in the first 12 days of the month, bringing the total to 43. The latest occurred early Saturday morning when a juvenile passenger was killed in a one-car crash on Kamehameha Highway near Kipapa Gulch Bridge involving a suspected drunken driver.

The total includes 15 fatalities involving pedestrians; 12 involving motorcycles, mopeds and scooters; 12 involving motor vehicle occupants; and four involving bicyclists.

Oahu, the most populated isle, usually has the greatest share, and so far this year has 22 fatalities, nearly triple the eight fatalities at the same time last year.

The number of bicyclist fatalities doubled from two to four, and the number of motorcycle and moped fatalities tripled from four to 12.

Many of the fatalities have multiple contributing factors, according to DOT, including drivers who were impaired or speeding.

“HDOT is very concerned with traffic deaths,” the department said in a statement.

“That’s why we continuously work to implement engineering countermeasures such as speed humps, lower speed limits, roundabouts, guard rails and lighting; support enforcement of traffic laws through training and overtime for law enforcement and the operation of red-light and now speed safety cameras; and provide education on the most common contributing

factors in fatal crashes.”

Those factors include speed, impairment and distracted driving.

In response, DOT has conducted media campaigns and posted messages on social media and highway signs. More speed humps and raised crosswalks are also ahead, as DOT plans to install 40 more this year and is also working to build a sidewalk on Nawiliwili Road on Kauai.

Legislative efforts

The department also supports a number of bills pending at the state Legislature that require moped drivers and skateboarders under age 16 to wear a helmet, in addition to an increase in penalties for repeat speeding offenses.

Eduardo Hernandez, the Hawaii Bicycling League's advocacy director, said it is hard to pinpoint why there have been so many traffic fatalities in the first quarter of the year. But based on patterns from previous years, pedestrians and bicyclists are often the most vulnerable, and this year is no different despite the state's safety measures.

The pedestrians struck by vehicles so far

this year ranged in age from a [1-year-old boy](#) on Maui to a [90-year-old woman](#) in Kahuku.

Maui police reported another pedestrian fatality Friday night in which a car struck a 28-year-old man crossing Kahului Beach Road.

Of the two bicyclists killed this year, two were riding e-bikes, according DOT. Honolulu officials have been trying to address e-bike safety with a new set of rules and regulations. Honolulu police are [enforcing these rules](#) near Campbell High School in Ewa Beach.

Hernandez said his group is supporting efforts to update state codes on e-bikes that reflect existing technology, noting that some e-bikes are essentially high-speed electric motorcycles.

“It’s hard to put it on any one thing,” he said. “But what we have been observing generally across time is that cars are getting bigger, and so I think they’re safer for car occupants but more lethal for people walking and riding.”

Human behaviors and errors play a role, but so does road design.

“For a long time I’d say transportation policy in Hawaii has been about prioritizing vehicles, and we’ve seen this in roadway design,” Hernandez said. “Roads are giving you embedded signals to go faster.”

Some examples include Fort Weaver Road in Ewa Beach with its long straightaways that encourage speeding. Kalanianaʻole Highway in Hawaii Kai is another example, where the speed limit is 35 mph but where drivers typically drive 50 mph or faster.

In the case of Tyndzik, Kauai police arrested [54-year-old Salvin Hilario](#) for several charges including suspicion of first-degree negligent injury, driving without a valid driver’s license and reckless driving.

Hilario posted \$250 bond and is now seen out and about in the neighborhood, according to Tyndzik’s hanai sister, Laycie Love, who is still seeking justice for the deadly hit-and-run. Love is also waiting to see a final police report.

Kauai police said the investigation is ongoing.

Hernandez said traffic fatalities are heartbreaking and can happen in a matter of seconds, changing lives forever.

“It just has to be part of a repeated message over and over that we all share responsibility,” he said. “We’re all road users. Some of us happen to walk and bike more, but you know, it’s not us against them.”

TRAFFIC-RELATED DEATHS

*Jan. 1 to April 12, 2025**

>> **State:** 12 motor vehicle occupants, 15 pedestrians, 12 motorcycle/moped operators, 4 bicyclists (43 total)

>> **Honolulu County:** 3 motor vehicle occupants, 9 pedestrians, 7 motorcycle/moped operators, 3 bicyclists (22 total)

>> **Hawaii County:** 5 motor vehicle occupants, 2 pedestrians, 3 motorcyclists (10 total)

>> **Maui County:** 4 motor vehicle occupants, 3 pedestrians, 1 motorcyclist (8 total)

>> **Kauai County:** 1 pedestrian, 1 motorcycle operator, 1 bicyclist (3 total)

* Two fatalities involved e-bikes, one pedestrian was homeless

Source: State Department of Transportation

TRAFFIC SAFETY BILLS*

>> **Senate Bill 30:** Requires moped drivers to wear a safety helmet, regardless of age.

>> **Senate Bill 97:** Increases penalty for a third or subsequent offense of excessive speeding to a Class C felony; authorizes court to subject driver's vehicle to forfeiture.

>> **Senate Bill 1117:** Establishes Electric Mobility Rebate Program; expands eligibility and amends helmet use requirement for e-bikes from ages 16 to 18; establishes rules for e-bike operation.

>> **Senate Bill 1667:** Authorizes more photo red-light imaging detector systems, including in school zones; prohibits vehicles from blocking marked crosswalks.

>> **Senate Bill 1285:** Establishes process to automatically suspend the license of a person arrested for driving under the influence.

>> **Senate Bill 344:** Requires skateboard users under age 16 to wear a helmet.

*Bills supported by the state Department of Transportation



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