

## **\*\*March 2026 Newsletter\*\***

**Our next regular business meeting will be this Wednesday  
March 4, 2026 at 10:00am**

The Meeting location is the AAA Building 700 Horizon Drive Hamilton,  
NJ

The February Newsletter has also been uploaded to the Association's  
website on the Newsletter Page.

**The next *Executive Session* will be held on Wednesday, May 6,  
2026, beginning at 9:00 a.m. This session will not be  
broadcast on Zoom.**

**[CLICK FOR REGULAR MEETING ZOOM LINK](#)**

**Coffee and refreshments for this meeting will  
be provided by Urban SDK**

**Urban SDK will also be giving a brief presentation as  
part of the meeting agenda, sharing how their  
geospatial AI traffic data and analytics platform helps  
law enforcement agencies identify speeding and  
collision risk areas and deploy resources more  
proactively.**

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### **2026 TUNING FORK TESTING**

Testing will take place during **March** for departments "**A**" through  
"**M**," and departments "**N**" through "**Z**" in **April**. If your needs  
preclude your following the schedule, then you can avail yourself of

either date.

Attached is a copy of the Weights and Measures tuning fork rules and a copy of the tuning fork application. Costs are \$10 per fork tested. It is advised to have your purchase order attached to the application so W&M can process it at the time of testing.

## Inspection and Test Radar Turning Forks Application

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Instruction Memo - Tuning Forks Application 2026

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W M Tuning Forks Invoice 2026

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## NJPTOA President's Message March 2026

As we transition from one of the harshest winter stretches in recent memory, I want to commend our traffic officers across the State of New Jersey for their professionalism and resilience. February tested us all, record snowfall, states of emergency, widespread power outages, downed trees, hazardous road conditions, and the inevitable increase in motor vehicle crashes that followed. Our members worked extended hours managing roadway closures, disabled vehicles, signal outages, and parking challenges, all while ensuring public safety remained our top priority. Your dedication does not go unnoticed.

With March comes a welcome break from winter weather and the opportunity to refocus our efforts on proactive traffic safety initiatives. As communities prepare for St. Patrick's Day parades and celebrations, we know historically this period brings an increase in impaired driving. I strongly encourage all agencies to support enhanced DWI patrols and fully participate in the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over enforcement campaign. These high-visibility enforcement efforts are critical in addressing the continued rise in alcohol- and

drug-related crashes and fatalities.

Equally important is public messaging. I ask each of you to increase your department's social media outreach throughout the month. Highlight your DWI patrol initiatives, share safety reminders, and reinforce the message that impaired driving will not be tolerated on New Jersey roadways. Education and visibility, combined with enforcement, save lives.

Thank you for your continued commitment to traffic safety. Together, through partnership, professionalism, and proactive enforcement, we can make March a safer month for everyone who travels our roadways.

Stay safe and stay engaged,

Antonio Ellis, President NJPTOA

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[fatalcrash](#)

## 2026 Statewide Fatal Crash Snapshot

New Jersey's 2026 fatal crash data shows measurable progress compared to the same point last year. As of February 24, 2026, the state has recorded 57 fatal crashes and 63 fatalities statewide, compared to 69 crashes and 71 fatalities at the same point in 2025. This reflects an 11.3% year-to-date reduction from 2025.

Looking at full-year trends, 2025 ended with 565 fatalities, a 16.5% reduction from 2024's total of 691 fatalities. While these improvements are encouraging, 63 lives lost in just the first two months of the year underscores that the work is far from over.

Fatal crash data serves as a barometer of our roadway health. Continued data-driven enforcement, high-visibility initiatives, and coordinated statewide engagement remain essential to sustaining progress and preventing families from experiencing irreversible loss on New Jersey roadways.

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## A CHIEF'S PERSPECTIVE: TURNING THE CORNER ON TRAFFIC FATALITIES - AND THE WORK AHEAD

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GZ Logo

### RESCHEDULING UPDATE

## Goal Zero Statewide Rollout

**Rescheduled Date: Tuesday March 10, 2026 from 3-7pm.**

#### **In memory of Tim & Bridgete O'Donnell**

Tim and his 5-year-old daughter Bridget were killed by an intoxicated driver in a crash that took place on the NJ Turnpike on Monday Feb 22, 2016. Pam O'Donnell, the wife and mother of the victims, has become a powerhouse in the traffic safety community. Her work with the Catch You Later Foundation has been instrumental in putting a human face on the consequences of impaired and distracted driving in New Jersey.

[The Catch You Later Foundation](#)

[GOAL ZERO REPORTING LINK](#)

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## Vehicle Safety Recalls Week

**March 2-8, 2026**

Join the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in recognizing Vehicle Safety Recalls Week, taking place March 2-8, 2026. This national initiative encourages drivers to check for open vehicle recalls and complete

necessary repairs to ensure their vehicles are safe to operate. Millions of vehicles on the road have unresolved safety recalls, many involving critical components such as airbags, brakes, and steering systems. NHTSA urges motorists to check their VIN at [NHTSA.gov/recalls](https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls) and address any outstanding issues promptly to reduce preventable crashes and injuries.

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## **St. Patrick's Day | Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving**

**March 9-17, 2026**

Join the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) St. Patrick's Day Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving campaign, running March 9-17, 2026. This national high-visibility enforcement effort targets impaired driving during one of the most alcohol-related holidays of the year. NHTSA reminds drivers that even one drink can impair judgment and reaction time. Plan ahead, designate a sober driver, and never get behind the wheel after drinking. If you feel different, you drive different and driving buzzed is driving drunk.

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**NHTSA Communications Calendar**

**2026 Highway Traffic Safety Events Calendar**

**NHTSA 2026 Communications Calendar**

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## NJDHTS State Traffic Officers Meeting Note March 2026

The link below will take you to the PDF referenced above. To access the embedded, clickable links within the document, you must open the PDF using the link below, as the links are active only within the full PDF version. The document is also available on the NJPTOA.ORG Forms page of the website.

**NJDHTS MARCH 2026**

**NJDHTS FEBRUARY 2026**

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## John's Law - 25 Years of Impact

This April marks the 25th anniversary of John's Law, one of New Jersey's most significant impaired-driving statutes and a cornerstone of our state's traffic safety efforts. Enacted in 2001 following the tragic death of Navy Ensign John R. Elliott, the law requires the impoundment of a vehicle for a minimum of 12 hours when a motorist is arrested for DWI. This provision prevents impaired drivers from immediately regaining access to their vehicle and remains a critical enforcement tool in protecting the public.

Alcohol-involved crashes continue to account for approximately 20-30 percent of traffic fatalities statewide, reinforcing the continued importance of consistent enforcement and accountability under John's Law.

In addition to legislative reform, the Elliott family established the HERO Campaign for Designated Drivers, which partners with law enforcement agencies to promote prevention through education and visibility. Agencies can participate by joining the HERO Patrol Car Program, transforming cruisers into highly visible "Be a HERO. Be a Designated Driver." vehicles, or by collaborating on community

outreach, designated driver initiatives, and awareness events.

Together, enforcement under John's Law and proactive prevention efforts through the HERO Campaign remain powerful tools in reducing impaired driving and saving lives across New Jersey.

For more information, visit the link below.

**HERO Campaign**

HERO Patrol Car Wrap Program 1

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## **Highlights from the February NJPTOA Meeting**

Key outcomes from the February 4, 2026 NJPTOA General Membership Meeting included:

- Special guest Pam O'Donnell delivered a presentation on impaired driving prevention and statewide enforcement advocacy
- NJPTOA continues modernization efforts, including website upgrades, electronic archiving of meeting minutes, and expanded member communications
- Treasurer reported the association remains in good standing
- Statewide training updates were provided, including crash investigation, reconstruction, heavy vehicle EDR programs, and Traffic Safety Specialist certification opportunities
- Members discussed recent DWI case outcomes and emphasized documentation, video preservation, and prosecutor coordination
- Grant coordinators reviewed upcoming reporting deadlines, funding opportunities, and compliance requirements
- Regional representatives provided updates on enforcement activity, mobilizations, and regional collaboration efforts

## Full Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes will be available by month at the link above.

Password: **njptoa**

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Rutgers

## Practical Traffic Engineering for Police Spring 2026

Dates: 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30, 5/14\*

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM\*

Sponsored by the New Jersey Police Traffic Officers Association (NJPTOA) and the Center for Government Services, Practical Traffic Engineering for Police Officers (PTEPO) is a 25-hour course offered every semester since 2014 and designed for the real-world responsibilities of traffic officers.

The course provides practical instruction in traffic engineering principles as they apply to roadway safety, giving officers the tools needed to identify, evaluate, and address a wide range of traffic-related conditions within the municipalities they serve. Officers gain working knowledge of applicable sections of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), evaluate traffic control devices, and identify problem areas within their communities. As part of the curriculum, each officer completes a traffic study, developing hands-on experience in data collection, analysis, and formulating recommendations to improve safety through traffic calming measures, signage and pavement markings, speed management, signal operations, and other engineering-based solutions.

The course also emphasizes effective communication with engineers, municipal officials, and planning boards, enabling traffic officers to clearly present findings and support safety-driven improvements within their own jurisdictions.

[Click here to register for this class](#)

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## Upcoming 2026 Rutgers Training

### CAIT Website

Any questions, contact: Dave Maruca at dem200@soe.rutgers.edu

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Rutgers CAIT UAS Flyer 2026

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Flyer2026

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2026SpringFlyer

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## Updated Kean University Crash Investigation Training

The New Jersey statewide crash investigation training program administered through Kean University has transitioned to a new two-course model designed to better align training with modern investigative practices, officer workload, and progressive skill development.

The former two-week Basic Crash Investigation and two-week Advanced Crash Investigation courses have been restructured into:

### Fundamentals of At-Scene Crash Investigation

This one-week (40-hour) course replaces the previous two-week Basic

Crash Investigation. It is designed as an entry-level, at-scene focused program that emphasizes evidence recognition, documentation, measurement, crash dynamics, human factors, and legally defensible investigative practices. The course concentrates on proper evidence preservation at serious-injury and fatal crashes, ensuring critical information is accurately captured for later analytical or reconstruction-level review.

### **Technical Crash Investigation and Vehicle Dynamics Analysis**

This two-week (80-hour) course replaces the former Advanced Crash Investigation and serves as the Crash Analyst-level program. The course is math- and science-intensive and bridges the gap between at-scene investigation and full traffic crash reconstruction. Students are introduced to the physics and mathematical principles used to analyze crash evidence, estimate vehicle speeds and movements, and evaluate avoidability and potential criminal factors.

### **Why This Change Matters**

- Improves efficiency by focusing Basic-level training on at-scene evidence handling
- Establishes a clearer progression from investigation to analysis
- Better prepares officers for advanced reconstruction training

- Preserves investigative quality while reducing time away from agencies

Additional course dates and registration information will be provided as the 2026 schedule continues to be finalized. Check links below.

The training calendar is administered by the New Jersey State Police, Highway Traffic Safety Unit, in conjunction with the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHTS). Any questions can be directed to the Program Coordinator, DSG Paul Applegate #6774, by phone at (732) 439-0529 or by e-mail at Paul.Applegate@njsp.gov.

**PLEASE NOTE: Again for 2026, the registration links for each individual course will only go active 90 days prior to the start of the course.**

**Fundamentals of At-Scene Crash Investigation**

**Technical Crash Investigation and Vehicle Dynamics Analysis**

**Specialty Courses**

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**Advance Your Career**

**NJ Traffic Safety Specialist (TSS) Certification**

The New Jersey Traffic Safety Specialist (TSS) Certification Program (Levels I & II) is a free, voluntary statewide recognition program

designed to acknowledge sworn New Jersey law enforcement officers who have demonstrated advanced training, experience, and proficiency in traffic safety and highway enforcement. The program promotes professional development and recognizes officers who have achieved elevated standards in traffic safety enforcement across New Jersey.

TSS Level I is open to actively employed sworn officers in good standing who have completed the police academy, possess required certifications (Speed Detection Device and Standard Field Sobriety), and have at least three years of patrol/traffic experience. Applicants must also earn 30 elective points through approved training, education, military service, or traffic-related achievements. Supervisor approval and documentation of all coursework and certifications are required.

TSS Level II builds upon Level I and is intended for officers with advanced expertise in traffic safety. Applicants must first obtain Level I certification, have at least six years of patrol/traffic experience, complete an additional 30 elective points (separate from Level I), and possess advanced credentials such as Crash Reconstruction, ACTAR certification, Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), or Police Traffic Engineering training. Level II applicants must also hold an instructor certification and submit a written traffic study or project for review.

To obtain a fillable PDF electronic version of the TSS-1 or TSS-2 applications, email Michael Tullio, TSS Program Coordinator, at [Mtullio@kean.edu](mailto:Mtullio@kean.edu)

Follow the links below for more details and the application for TSS Level 1.

[\*\*New Jersey TSS Level-1 Application\*\*](#)

[\*\*TSS Approved Course List\*\*](#)

## TSS Program Marketing Packet

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### **The Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction**

ACTAR accreditation represents the internationally recognized professional standard for traffic accident reconstruction, demonstrating verified competency, ethical compliance, and advanced expertise in crash investigation and analysis.

**Apply for Accreditation**

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## **Honoring the Life and Service Of Lt. John Tate**

The New Jersey Traffic Officers Association is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of retired Seaside Heights Police Lieutenant John Tate.

Lieutenant Tate dedicated 25 years of distinguished service to the Seaside Heights Police Department before retiring in 2003. His commitment to public safety did not end there. In 2005, he continued his service to the law enforcement profession by accepting the role of Recruit Training Coordinator at the Ocean County Police Academy, where he played an instrumental role in shaping the next generation of police officers. If you come across an Ocean County police officer, there is a good chance they were taught, mentored, or influenced by Lieutenant Tate.

Lieutenant Tate was more than an instructor. He was a mentor to so

many in law enforcement. He helped shape not only the skills, but the character of the officers he trained. He instilled in them the values he lived by: discipline, integrity, service, faith, and unwavering commitment to doing the right thing. He remained true to his beliefs and true to his faith, and he delivered those lessons in a way only he could, often with a smile and a large cigar in his mouth.

Beyond the uniform, John was a larger-than-life presence with a gentle soul. His deep love of God, his devotion to his family, and his steadfast support for his fellow officers defined the man he was.

His legacy will live on through the countless officers he mentored and the communities they continue to serve.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Tate family, his friends, and the many officers whose lives he influenced. We ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

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## **Officer Down Memorial Page Reminder**

The Officer Down Memorial Page honors law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. NJPTOA encourages all members to remember our fallen heroes and reinforce the importance of officer safety every day.

**Officer Down Memorial Page**

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NJPTOA Color Logo

**Professional Presence. Meaningful  
Enforcement.**

Michael O'Hara

Executive Director,  
NJPTOA

[www.njptoa.org](http://www.njptoa.org)

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