

Nearly 900 drivers suspended in wake of deadly motorcycle crash in New Hampshire

Joey Garrison

USA TODAY

BOSTON — The embattled Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles has suspended an additional 330 drivers whose past violations in other states had gone unprocessed after thousands of notices piled up in mail bins inside a registry facility for the past 15 months.

The RMV's lapse in processing out-of-state suspensions was discovered in the aftermath of a horrific crash in Randolph, New Hampshire, in which Volodymyr Zhukovskyy, a 23-year-old truck driver, crossed a double-yellow line, collided with a group of bikers and killed seven motorcyclists.

In all, 876 Massachusetts drivers whose out-of-state traffic infractions had previously been overlooked have now had their licenses suspended in the two weeks since a deadly motorcycle crash in New Hampshire exposed severe deficiencies within the RMV.

A total of 1,106 new suspensions — including alcohol-related violations that weren't tracked — have been processed. Some drivers have accounted for multiple suspensions.

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and the state's transportation secretary, Stephanie Pollack, provided the updated figures at a news conference Friday, vowing to fix the problems that have plagued the RMV. That includes an RMV staff reorganization.

"The registry has a major role to play in keeping the commonwealth's roads safe, there's still much work to be done to ensure the integrity of the registry's data," Baker said.

Zhukovskyy, of West Springfield, Massachusetts, had received a drunken-driving charge May 11 in Connecticut, which should have triggered the automatic termination of his commercial driver license. It was the most recent of multiple drug- and traffic-related arrests in multiple states for Zhukovskyy prior to the crash. He's pleaded not guilty to seven counts of vehicular homicide.

Connecticut officials notified the Massachusetts RMV about Zhukovskyy's arrest electronically, but it was not processed because of the way the Massachusetts RMV's system for commercial driver's licenses is programmed, officials say.

Connecticut also mailed the Massachusetts RMV as notice, but like thousands of other out-of-state notifications, it was discarded into one of 58 mail bins in a state facility in Quincy, Massachusetts.

The seven victims of the crash June 21 were members of Marine Jarheads MC, a motorcycle club that includes Marines and their spouses. They were enroute to a nearby veterans fundraiser. Memorial services for multiple victims have taken place.

More:

[Marine veteran injured in deadly New Hampshire motorcycle crash sues truck driver, company.](#)

A preliminary report released by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Monday said 655 new suspensions from previously unprocessed suspensions had been found, encompassing 546 unique Massachusetts drivers. But the counting was not finished and was to continue into the Fourth of July holiday.

The latest round of suspensions, outlined in an interim progress report, were found in the bins at the Quincy headquarters as well as an archives facility in Concord, Massachusetts, where boxes of out-of-state violations from 2011 to 2017 were pulled.

The initial report had said it is unclear why the Merit Rating Board in March 2018 stopped processing out-of-state violations and put them in the bins. The transition came at the same time the Massachusetts RMV changed computer programs for the handling of out-of-state driving violations.

The RMV's registrar, Erin Deveney, resigned following the New Hampshire crash as the Massachusetts Department of Transportation conducts an investigation into the RMV's failures.

New personnel moves announced Friday include the creation of a new deputy registrar for safety overseen by Jamey Tesler, the new acting registrar. The report says the RMV will also establish "clear lines of responsibility for all driver licensing and enforcement functions that will be shifted to this senior manager."

Baker's administration says it also plans to draft legislation to beef up requirements to obtain and retain commercial driver licenses.

Among other moves prompted by the crash, the state has hired an auditing firm to conduct a new external audit of the RMV's state-to-state data sharing. That will include an "end-to-end review" of all electronic and manual processes for incoming and outgoing notices regarding commercial driver licenses.

The state is also planning to compare Massachusetts' 5.2 million driver's license records against the National Driver Registry, which provides a database of driving and traffic infractions.

Reach Joey Garrison on Twitter @joeygarrison.

A truck driver killed 7 motorcyclists. He shouldn't have had a license, officials say.

The head of Massachusetts's motor-vehicle agency has stepped down amid criticism that her division should have previously revoked the license of the driver charged in a crash that killed seven motorcyclists in New Hampshire.

Volodymyr Zhukovskyy, 23, faces seven charges of negligent homicide in connection with Friday's collision on a two-lane highway near the rural town of Randolph, N.H., according to Massachusetts State Police spokesman David Procopio. Zhukovskyy, of West Springfield, Mass., pleaded not guilty to all seven counts Tuesday, [the Associated Press](#) reported.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles had received information from Connecticut's motor-vehicle agency about a May 11 drunken driving incident that should have prompted the removal of Zhukovskyy's driver's license, Massachusetts Department of Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack said in a statement Tuesday.

Zhukovskyy was charged with operating under the influence and refusing a chemical test in connection with the May 11 incident, Pollack said. His lawyer in that case, John O'Brien, told [the Associated Press](#) that Zhukovskyy denies being intoxicated.

Zhukovskyy's driving history also includes a June 2013 arrest on a drunken driving charge for which he served suspensions and completed a youth alcohol program, Pollack said in the statement.

Erin Deveney resigned from the motor-vehicle agency's top post and will be replaced by former Department of Transportation chief operating officer Jamey Tesler, who Pollack said will review the motor-vehicle agency's state-to-state information-sharing processes.

Zhukovskyy, a commercial truck driver, was [driving a Dodge pickup](#) towing a flatbed trailer when the truck collided with a group of motorcyclists on Route 2, police said. In addition to those killed, three others were severely injured. [New Hampshire state police](#) said.

Michael Ferazzi, Albert Mazza, Daniel Pereira, Jo-Ann and Edward Corr, Desma Oakes and Aaron Perry died in the crash, according to the state's [deputy attorney general](#). Manny Ribeiro, who survived the collision, told [the Associated Press](#) that the motor-vehicle registrar's resignation showed the crash was avoidable but also felt "like someone was running around from the problem."

"We just get to quit and walk away and that's it," Ribeiro told the Associated Press. "Story over. See you later until the next time it happens and then the next person steps down. This is what happens every single time."

The bikers were members of JarHeads Motorcycle Club, which is composed of current and former Marines and their spouses, according to a [GoFundMe page](#) set up to assist the victims' families. The riders were traveling from a charity event at a nearby American Legion post when they collided with Zhukovskyy's truck.

Zhukovskyy expressed remorse when [WMUR-TV](#) reached him before his arrest. "It was a big tragedy. I'm trying to process this with my family," he told WMUR. "I'm feeling shocked. It happened so fast. I am cooperating with police. I feel mentally hurt." Zhukovskyy is scheduled to stand trial in November and December, [the Associated Press](#) reported.

The crash rattled New England's motorcycle community, members of which expressed deep affection for the bikers who were killed.

Andy Best, the road captain for another area motorcycle club who knew some of the JarHeads, tearfully told [WCBV-TV](#), "I couldn't even imagine if it was our guys," before adding, "They are our guys, because they're Marines."

The Jarheads held events at the Veterans of Foreign Wars outpost in Whitman, Mass., according to [the Patriot Ledger](#), where they were known as veterans who continued to serve their community long after they ended their military service.

New Hampshire State Police Capt. Chris Vetter earlier [told reporters](#) that "I don't know that I've ever seen a crash with this much loss of life."

A previous version of the story misidentified the state of the Veterans of Foreign Wars outpost frequented by the Jarheads. It has been corrected.

Gov. Charlie Baker: Mass. RMV ‘Failed To Act’

Before Crash That Killed 7 Motorcyclists

BOSTON (CBS) – The Baker administration said Monday preliminary findings of an RMV review revealed flaws in processing out-of-state information that would have allowed Massachusetts to revoke Volodymyr Zhukovskyy’s commercial driver’s license leading up to a crash that killed seven motorcyclists in Randolph, New Hampshire. A backlog of unprocessed records could also impact hundreds of other licenses as well.

Seven motorcyclists died last month in the New Hampshire crash. Prosecutors say Zhukovskyy was driving a pickup truck towing a trailer when he slammed into the group of motorcyclists. He is now charged with seven counts of negligent homicide.

Timeline: Driver In Deadly Randolph, NH Crash Has Been Arrested In 6 States
Zhukovskyy, who had a commercial driver’s license and worked for Westfield Transport at the time of the crash, has an extensive record that includes arrests in six state. He had been charged with drunk driving in Connecticut just weeks before the motorcyclists were killed.

The arrest should have led to Zhukovskyy’s license being suspended. But the request from Connecticut was not processed in Massachusetts.

Erin Deveney, head of the Massachusetts RMV, announced her resignation after Massachusetts DOT said Zhukovskyy should not have been on the road.

“In this case, the RMV failed to act on critically important information that had been previously communicated by another state,” Gov. Charlie Baker said. “This failure is completely unacceptable to me, to the residents of the Commonwealth who expect the RMV to do its job and track drivers’ records.”

During a Monday press conference, Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack said a backlog of documents also accumulated unprocessed in a room at the RMV in Quincy.

Pollack said the records backlog dates back to March 2018 and includes regular driver’s licenses as well. In the last five days, 600 serious violations have been found related to 500 drivers.

In what Pollack calls an “unprecedented” move, all 5.2 million licenses in Massachusetts will be checked against a national database to see if any violations have gone unnoticed.

Baker said Connecticut did nothing wrong in its handling of Zhukovskyy’s case.

“The loss of life in any motor vehicle crash is a terrible tragedy and our hearts go out to the friends and families of those who have been lost,” Baker said. “The fact that the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles failed to act on information related to the driver responsible for this is deeply troubling and completely unacceptable.”

Driver In Deadly Randolph, NH Crash Has Been Arrested In 6 States

BOSTON (CBS) – The driver charged in a tragic crash that killed seven people last week in northern New Hampshire has been arrested in at least six states, records show.

Two more incidents in [Volodymyr Zhukovskyy](#)’s past were uncovered by WBZ-TV Friday in Iowa and Ohio. He’s also been involved in incidents in Massachusetts, Texas and Connecticut.

Zhukovskyy, 23, of West Springfield, is charged with seven counts of negligent homicide in the [June 21 crash](#) in Randolph, New Hampshire. Police say he was driving a pickup truck and trailer that crashed into a group of motorcycles. Zhukovskyy had a commercial driving license and was working for Westfield Transport at the time of the horrific crash.

Here is a timeline of his incidents:

June 21, 2019

Randolph, New Hampshire crash. Seven people killed.

June 3, 2019

Lost control of an 18-wheeler and rolled over in Baytown, Texas. No charges at this point in the investigation.

May 29, 2019

Connecticut notified Massachusetts RMV of the May 11 incident.

May 11, 2019

Failed a sobriety test in a Walmart parking lot in East Windsor, Connecticut.

February 18, 2019

Arrested for improper use of lanes and failure to comply with safety regulations in Iowa.

February 11, 2019

[Arrested in Baytown, Texas](#) for possession of drug paraphernalia

August 3, 2018

Issued a commercial driver's license in Massachusetts.

June 24, 2014

Arrested for a drug offense in Macedonia, Ohio.

June 16, 2013

Arrested for drunk driving in Westfield, Massachusetts. Driver's license suspended for 210 days.

Zhukovskyy is being held in a jail in Lancaster, New Hampshire on the negligent homicide charges in the Randolph crash. The Department of Homeland Security issued an immigration detainer on Zhukovskyy June 23, which means he could be deported back to the Ukraine if he's released from police custody.

Truck driver charged with killing motorcyclists in New Hampshire shouldn't have had a license, Massachusetts official says

By [Elliott C. McLaughlin](#) and Taylor Romine, CNN

Updated 1:29 PM ET, Wed June 26, 2019

(CNN) A Massachusetts official is resigning after the state found that a truck driver charged with [killing seven motorcyclists in New Hampshire](#) should have had his license terminated after an intoxicated-driving charge last month, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation says.

Massachusetts DOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack said a miscommunication led to Volodymyr Zhukovskyy keeping his commercial driver's license. In a statement, she placed part of the blame on Connecticut.

[Survivor: 'It was just all fire'](#)

Zhukovskyy, 23 -- who investigators say was driving erratically, causing Friday's collision -- [has pleaded not guilty to seven charges of negligent homicide](#). He waived his arraignment Tuesday, according to court documents, and did not appear in a New Hampshire court to face the charges. He remains in custody.

Erin Deveney, registrar for the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, stepped down from her post Tuesday. Her resignation came amid indications that Zhukovskyy's

commercial driver's license should have been automatically yanked when he allegedly declined to take a chemical test after police suspected him of being intoxicated in East Windsor, Connecticut, on May 11.

Why did he have a license?

Zhukovskyy received his commercial driver's license August 3, despite having a June 2013 violation for operating a vehicle under the influence, the Massachusetts DOT said.

Because he was under 21 at the time of the violation -- and because he served suspensions and attended special classes, including a youth alcohol program -- there was nothing to disqualify him from obtaining a commercial driver's license in 2018, the department said.

However, after the May 11 charges in Connecticut, Zhukovskyy's alleged refusal to take a chemical test should have been reported to Massachusetts, setting in motion a seven-day process for suspending his noncommercial driver's license and immediately terminating his commercial license, the Massachusetts DOT said.

A witness told police that Zhukovskyy was revving his truck engine and jumping around outside his vehicle at an East Windsor Walmart, according to a police report. Police arrived, performed a field sobriety test, charged him with operating a vehicle under the influence, released him on a \$2,500 bond and took him to Hartford Hospital for evaluation, the report says.

Zhukovskyy was scheduled to appear in court Wednesday in the Connecticut case, court records say, but Coos County Attorney John McCormick said Zhukovskyy was being held on a detention order in New Hampshire. Defense attorney John O'Brien told CNN that he expected the Connecticut hearing to be postponed.

Mix-up between Connecticut, Massachusetts?

"To the [Registry of Motor Vehicles'] knowledge, Connecticut failed to provide sufficient information" through the federal system that states use to share information on violations, the Massachusetts DOT said.

Instead, the department said, Connecticut's Department of Motor Vehicles waited 18 days and used a special state-to-state messaging system to alert Massachusetts to the charges against Zhukovskyy -- and then, the message did not contain sufficient information to automatically add the May 11 charges to his Massachusetts driving record.

Volodymyr Zhukovskyy has pleaded not guilty to seven charges of negligent homicide.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles flagged the Connecticut notification for manual review, the Massachusetts DOT said, but as of Sunday, no one with the registry had conducted a review.

A representative for the Connecticut DMV could not immediately be reached Wednesday for comment.

"The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles has a responsibility to enforce the laws governing safe operation of vehicles," said Pollack, the DOT secretary. "But in this case, the RMV had not acted on information provided by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles about a May 11 incident that should have triggered termination of this individual's commercial driver's license."

Massachusetts DOT Chief Operating Officer James Tesler will take over as acting registrar after Deveney's resignation and will review the processes states use to share information, Pollack said.

More charges possible?

Investigators say Zhukovskyy was driving erratically and crossed a double yellow line in Randolph before plowing into members of the Jarheads Motorcycle Club, killing seven of them, including some Marines veterans and their spouses. Located just west of the Maine border, Randolph is about 100 miles north of Concord, the New Hampshire capital.

A driver for Springfield, Massachusetts-based Westfield Transport Inc., Zhukovskyy was the sole occupant of the pickup, said McCormick, the Coos County attorney.

The deadly, fiery collision occurred on Route 2 in Randolph, police say.

Friday's wreck occurred during Zhukovskyy's second trip with the company on the third day of his 30-day trial period, said the company's principal, Dartanyan Gasanov.

State police collision analysis and reconstruction teams are investigating the crash, along with local police, McCormick's office and the National Transportation Safety Board.

Zhukovskyy could also be charged with possessing illegal narcotics, Massachusetts State Police said. The agency's lab is testing wax packets containing suspicious residue that were recovered from his home, it said.

Melissa Davis, Zhukovskyy's attorney in the New Hampshire case, did not respond to a request for comment.

Driver Accused of Killing 7 Motorcyclists in New Hampshire Crash

Had DUI Arrest Last Month: Court Docs

The driver of a pickup truck in a fiery collision on a rural New Hampshire highway that killed seven motorcyclists was charged Monday with seven counts of negligent homicide, and records show he was stopped on suspicion of drunken driving last month and in 2013.

Volodymyr Zhukovskyy, 23, was arrested Monday morning at his home in West Springfield, Massachusetts, the New Hampshire attorney general's office said. He will be arraigned Tuesday in Lancaster, New Hampshire, authorities said.

He was handed over to New Hampshire authorities after a brief court appearance Monday in Springfield, Massachusetts. Zhukovskyy looked down at his feet as he was led into the courtroom with his hands cuffed behind his back.

Connecticut prosecutors say he was arrested May 11 in an East Windsor Walmart parking lot after failing a sobriety test. Officers had responded to a complaint about a man who was revving his truck engine and jumping up and down outside the vehicle.

Zhukovskyy's lawyer in that case, John O'Brien, said he denies being intoxicated and will fight the charge. Zhukovskyy refused to submit to a blood test, prosecutors said.

Additionally, Zhukovskyy was arrested on a drunken driving charge in 2013 in Westfield, Massachusetts, state motor vehicle records show. He was placed on probation for one year and had his license suspended for 210 days, The Westfield News reported.

Records from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration indicate that the company Zhukovskyy was driving for, Westfield Transport, has been cited for various violations in the last two years, MassLive.com [reported](#) .

There were two instances where drivers were in possession of narcotic drugs. Other violations including a driver without a commercial driver's license, one for speeding and another for defective brakes.

The company did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

A man who answered the phone at the home of Zhukovskyy's family and would identify himself only as his brother-in-law said Monday that the family is in shock and feeling the same pain as everyone else but couldn't say whether the driver was right or wrong.

Since the accident, the brother-in-law said, Zhukovskyy had remained in his room, not eaten and talked to no one.

Defense attorney Donald Frank called Friday's crash a "tragedy" but said it's important to let the criminal justice system play out.

Zhukovskyy's pickup truck, towing a flatbed trailer, collided with a group of 10 motorcycles Friday on a two-lane highway in the northern New Hampshire community of Randolph, investigators said. The truck was traveling west when it struck the eastbound group of motorcycles.

The victims were members or supporters of the Marine JarHeads, a New England motorcycle club that includes Marines and their spouses, and ranged in age from 42 to 62. Four were from New Hampshire, two from Massachusetts and one from Rhode Island.

George Loring, a JarHeads member who lives in Hingham, Massachusetts, and was a few hundred yards from the crash, said Zhukovskyy has "got to live with it for the rest of his life."

"Everyone's suffering so much," Loring said. "It's so sad for the brothers and sisters who died. You can be angry at him, you can be whatever. I don't know. I'm glad he's been arrested."

Joseph Mazza, whose nephew Albert Mazza Jr. was killed in the crash, welcomed the arrest but called it a poor consolation for the loss of a loved one.

"As long as he pays a price. He has caused lot of harm to a lot of families," Mazza said from his Haverhill home. "If he has a problem, he shouldn't be on the road. If he is a bad actor, he doesn't belong on the street. He caused enough of a tragedy. Enough is enough."

Authorities have only said they are investigating the cause of the collision.

JarHeads president Manny Ribeiro, who survived the crash, said the group had just finished dinner and was heading to a fundraiser at an American Legion post in nearby Gorham. A total of 21 riders and 15 motorcycles were in the group. Mazza, who was riding next to Ribeiro, was among those hit by the truck.

“It was just an explosion ... with parts and Al and everything flying through the air,” he said. “He turned hard left into us and took out pretty much everyone behind me. The truck and trailer stayed attached and that is why it was so devastating ... because the trailer was attached and it was such a big trailer, it was like a whip. It just cleaned us out.”

After the crash, Ribeiro recalled seeing Zhukovskyy “screaming and running around” in the middle of the road before he was taken away by authorities. Motorcycles and bodies were everywhere, he said, and several people were yelling at Zhukovskyy, demanding to know what he had just done.

“It was very surreal,” he said, adding that he had put a tourniquet on the leg of one rider who remains hospitalized in Maine.

“I saw Al. I knew he was gone right away,” he continued. “At that point, we just tried to figure out who needed help and got to work. There was debris everywhere and the truck was on fire. I was just looking for

survivors, familiar faces and trying to find out who I had lost and ... trying to help the living.”

Zhukovskyy was questioned at the scene of Friday’s crash and allowed to return to Massachusetts, the National Transportation Safety Board has said.

Authorities identified the dead as Michael Ferazzi, 62, of Contoocook, New Hampshire; Mazza, 59, of Lee, New Hampshire; Desma Oakes, 42, of Concord, New Hampshire; Aaron Perry, 45, of Farmington, New Hampshire; Daniel Pereira, 58, of Riverside, Rhode Island; and Jo-Ann and Edward Corr, both 58, of Lakeville, Massachusetts.

This story has been updated to correct Zhukovskyy’s hometown to West Springfield, instead of Springfield, and corrects the spelling of his first name to Volodymyr, instead of Volodoymyr, per the attorney general’s office.

- **7 Killed, 3 Hurt in Collision Involving Several Motorcycles, Pickup Truck in New Hampshire**

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On June 21, 2019, a company pickup truck towing a flatbed trailer collided with the group of 10 motorcycles on U.S. 2 in Randolph, New Hampshire.

The driver, [Volodymyr Zhukovskyy](#), faces charges of negligent homicide, manslaughter, driving under the influence and reckless conduct. The Springfield resident has pleaded not guilty.

The Springfield Republican reports Dartanyan Gasanov faces up to 16 months in prison and a \$55,000 fine.

The 2019 crash also led to the resignation of the head of the Massachusetts motor vehicle division and other reforms at the state agency.

A state probe found that the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles failed to terminate Zhukovskyy's commercial driving license after the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles provided information about his drunken driving arrest in that state.

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