



UMass Amherst police issue more traffic violations than most municipal departments

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Umass Amherst Police doled out 11,554 violations between 2010 and 2015, many of them for incidents involving pedestrian traffic.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) and [Todd Wallack](#)

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Drivers who are stopped by a police cruiser in Massachusetts might expect either a state trooper or a local city or town officer to walk up to their car window.

But there are a number of less-traditional law enforcement agencies scattered around the state, and some of them are more active in doling out traffic violations than you might expect.

The University of Massachusetts Police Department in Amherst issued more violations than most municipal departments from 2010 through 2015, state records show.

The college's department doled out 11,554 violations, the 49th highest total of any of about 375 police agencies in Massachusetts for which data were available.



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Deputy Chief Patrick Archbald said the campus department, which has about 60 full-time officers, is vigilant about traffic enforcement, and for good reason.

“We have a lot of pedestrian traffic here,” said Archbald.

More than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students study there along with more than 1,300 full-time faculty, in addition to other workers and visitors. Most residence halls and parking lots are on the periphery of the sprawling campus, while academic facilities are clustered in the middle.

For students and faculty “to get to classes, you have to cross a roadway,” he said. “It’s a recipe for a lot of close calls and the occasional serious accident at crosswalks.”



Strict enforcement helps ensure drivers remember to slow down and keep their eyes peeled for pedestrians, he said.

Archbald said concerns about vehicle-pedestrian accidents have risen in recent years.

“Distracted driving and distracted walking now with this age group particularly really creates challenges for us,” he said. “Everyone is plugged in nowadays and some people just blindly walk into crosswalks.”

Along with enforcement, there are programs around campus that aim to raise awareness of the problems of distracted driving and walking.

Archbald said that there’s no financial incentive for the department to issue violations. Half of the revenue from traffic fines goes to the town of Amherst, the other half to the state.

Violations written by the UMass department far exceeded those of any other campus police department for which data were available. State records did not include figures for private colleges.

Two other non-traditional law enforcement agencies also issue sizeable numbers of violations: Transit Police and Massachusetts Environmental Police.

Transit Police issued 8,298 violations from 2010 to 2015, the 85th highest total of any agency statewide.

The department, [created](#) about 50 years ago with a staff of 35 officers, is the fifth-largest police agency in the state, according to its [website](#). It has “full police powers” within the 175 cities and towns that make up the MBTA’s service area.

Environmental Police issued 6,280 violations between 2010 and 2015, the 119th highest total in the state among law enforcement agencies.

The department's mission "is to protect the environment and natural resources of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through enforcement, education, and public outreach," its [website](#) says.

Environmental Police currently employ nearly 90 officers, who have jurisdiction statewide, said Katie Gronendyke, spokeswoman for the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

State data show that many violations the department issues are to people operating recreational vehicles as dirt bikes, ATVs, and snowmobiles.

Traffic violations issued by non-municipal, non-state police departments, 2010 to 2015

This table is sorted to show departments that issued the most violations first. The "rank" column shows how each department compares with all police agencies statewide in terms of the total number of violations issued from 2010 through 2015.

Detailed data for more recent years than 2015 was not available.

(Note: If you're reading this on a mobile device, this table only does not show data for each year between 2011 and 2014. To see a full version of the table, view this story on a desktop computer.)

Department	Rank	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change 10 vs. 15	% Change
Univ of Mass Amherst	49	1,868	1,971	2,289	1,472	2,585	1,369	(499)	-27%
MBTA	85	1,460	1,321	1,090	1,289	1,748	1,390	(70)	-5%
Environmental	119	941	1,047	927	821	1,375	1,169	228	24%
Univ of Mass Boston	254	402	310	262	237	306	468	66	16%
Bridgewater State Univ	259	415	427	311	255	310	235	(180)	-43%
Univ of Mass Lowell	286	286	271	256	204	318	158	(128)	-45%
Massasoit Comm Coll	310	151	165	156	126	109	77	(74)	-49%
Salem State Univ	313	188	110	149	123	51	29	(159)	-85%
Univ of Mass Dartmouth	324	174	91	48	30	51	21	(153)	-88%
Bunker Hill Com Coll	327	34	84	75	75	84	41	7	21%
Quinsigamond Comm Coll	331	-	-	-	79	166	130	130	-
Univ of Mass Worcester	334	61	19	52	96	56	74	13	21%
Westfield State Univ	336	45	39	51	61	38	117	72	160%
Amtrak	349	-	-	3	76	16	10	10	-
State Fire Marshals Office	353	8	21	5	3	7	5	(3)	-38%

Fitchburg State Univ	354	-	5	3	21	12	4	4	-
Somerville Housing Authority	T-355	5	2	5	8	12	6	1	20%
Worcester State Univ	T-355	-	-	-	-	-	38	38	-
Mt Wachusett Comm Coll	360	5	1	-	4	8	-	(5)	-100%
Tufts Univ	361	8	4	-	-	-	-	(8)	-100%
Worcester County Sheriff	362	2	9	-	-	-	-	(2)	-100%
B&M Railroad	T-363	3	3	-	-	-	-	(3)	-100%
Dept. of Mental Health	T-363	6	-	-	-	-	-	(6)	-100%
CSX	365	-	-	-	4	-	1	1	-
Springfield Coll	T-366	1	-	-	-	3	-	(1)	-100%
Walter E. Fernald State School	T-366	-	2	-	-	-	2	2	-
Harvard Univ	T-369	3	-	-	-	-	-	(3)	-100%
Massachusetts Maritime	T-369	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Bentley Univ	T-372	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Westboro State Hospital	T-372	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Western New England Coll	374	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

SOURCE: Massachusetts Department of Transportation

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