



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Fewer Daylight Hours Spell Danger for Pedestrians, Bicyclists, and Drivers**

*Street Smart campaign warns that traffic crashes increase around the end of Daylight Saving Time*

Washington, D.C. (October 28, 2019\*) – Her son was only two months old when Georgette Jones was killed while crossing the street on the way to the convenience store across from her house in Washington, D.C. Now 6 years old, he has no memories of his mother. Fifteen-year-old Christina Ward was walking to school on Halloween morning seven years ago when she was struck by an SUV driver and died on Maryland Route 118 in Germantown, Maryland. It has been seven months since a driver crashed into Ren Werbin in an intersection in Arlington, Virginia. The crash shattered 19 vertebrae in her spine, broke her leg, collarbone, and shoulder, and landed her in the hospital for three months.

These gripping stories are the cornerstone of the new [Street Smart campaign](#) launched today by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in the wake of a 14 percent spike in pedestrian fatalities between 2017 and 2018 in the metropolitan Washington area.

Each of the aforementioned crashes happened after dark when the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 76 percent of all pedestrian fatalities occur. Campaign partners warn that the fall brings an increase in the number of pedestrians injured or killed when the end of Daylight Saving Time means it gets dark an hour earlier. Reports indicate pedestrian crashes in the metropolitan Washington region totaled 292 during November last year, the highest of any month.

“It’s important to realize that crashes have far-reaching consequences when someone is killed or seriously injured,” said Jeff Marootian, District Department of Transportation Director. “That’s why we’re urging people driving, walking and biking to make safety a top priority and to look out for each other – especially as the daylight gets shorter this time of year. One careless mistake can make the difference between life and death.”

Today’s event at 12th Street and Florida Avenue NE, near the site of two fatal crashes in recent years, featured the unveiling of the new *Street Smart* testimonial wall that reveals the aftermath of pedestrian crashes as told by those affected firsthand. Visitors can watch videos to learn about the tragic repercussions of deadly and serious injury incidents. The wall will appear at outreach events in D.C, Maryland, and Virginia in the coming weeks.

The *Street Smart* campaign offers safety tips for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists (see below). The campaign’s key safety tips include reminders for drivers to obey the speed limit, be on the lookout for people walking and biking, stop for people crossing, and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists when turning. People walking are urged to cross with caution, use crosswalks where available, and wait for the walk signal. Bicyclists are reminded to follow the rules of the road and always use lights at night.

In conjunction with the campaign, area residents can expect increased enforcement of traffic safety laws that protect people walking and biking. Police departments across the region will be ticketing drivers who fail to obey the speed limit or don’t stop for people in crosswalks.

*\*Updated October 30, 2019*

**MORE:** Learn more about *Street Smart* at [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net) and follow the program on Twitter at [twitter.com/COGStreetSmart](https://twitter.com/COGStreetSmart).

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*The Council of Governments is an independent, nonprofit association where area leaders address regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia.*

## **Street Smart Safety Tips**

### ***If you're driving . . .***

- Slow down and obey the speed limit.
- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks.
- Be careful when passing buses or stopped vehicles.
- When turning, yield to people walking and biking.
- Look for bicyclists before opening your door.
- Allow at least 3 feet when passing bikes.
- Avoid using your cell phone and never text while driving.

### ***If you're walking . . .***

- Cross the street at the corner and use marked crosswalks when they're available.
- Use the pushbuttons.
- Wait for the walk signal to cross the street.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Before crossing, look left, right, and left again.
- Be visible. Wear something light or reflective after dark.
- Watch out for blind spots around trucks and buses.
- Avoid using your cell phone while you're crossing the street.
- On an off-street trail, obey all posted signage and approach intersections with caution.

### ***If you're biking . . .***

- Obey signs and signals.
- Never ride against traffic.
- Ride in a straight line at least 3 feet from parked cars.
- Use hand signals to tell drivers what you intend to do.
- Wear a helmet.
- Use lights at night and when visibility is poor.
- On an off-street trail, obey all posted signs and approach intersections with caution.

*Note: Laws and regulations differ between jurisdictions. Visit [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net) for information on specific trail guidelines and regulations.*