



NEWS RELEASE

Reduced Daylight Increases Danger for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

New Street Smart Campaign Tells Drivers, Pedestrians, and Bicyclists to Watch Out for Each Other

WASHINGTON, DC – Angelo Brown still remembers getting the news that his brother, Kenard, was killed by a driver as he crossed the street in Oxon Hill, Maryland. Just after pushing her baby to safety, Helen Harris was hit by a dump truck and ended up needing to have her left leg amputated. Natasha Pettigrew was up early training for a triathlon when she was struck from behind and killed by a driver in an SUV.

These stories and others are at the center of the Street Smart pedestrian and bicyclist safety campaign launching today at a news conference in Oxon Hill, with family representatives, law enforcement, and regional transportation officials from throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

This kickoff is occurring just a few days before the end of Daylight Saving Time. Daylight hours continue waning during this season, making it an extremely dangerous time of year for pedestrians and bicyclists. In 2020, the metropolitan Washington region saw 99 pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

“This time of year, as it gets darker earlier, we remind everyone to slow down and make safety a top priority,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administrator Chrissy Nizer, who also serves as Governor Larry Hogan’s Highway Safety Representative. “Behind these statistics are families and friends whose lives will never be the same. We all have a responsibility to protect each other, so no other family has to experience this devastating loss.”

Today’s press event features the “Lives Shatter on Impact” Testimonial Wall that conveys the aftermath of pedestrian and bicyclist crashes as told by survivors and victims’ family members. Visitors can [read their stories and watch videos](#), in both English and Spanish, to see the cascading consequences of deadly and serious injury incidents. The wall will appear at outreach events in Virginia, Maryland, and the District in the coming weeks.

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. Pedestrians are urged to cross with caution, use crosswalks where available, and wait for the walk signal. Cyclists are reminded to follow the rules of the road and always use lights at night.

Area residents can expect increased enforcement of traffic safety laws that protect people walking and biking in the Washington metropolitan region. Police departments across the region will be ticketing drivers who fail to obey the speed limit or don’t stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

Street Smart, a pedestrian and bicyclist safety program sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), works in conjunction with ongoing efforts across the region to improve infrastructure and keep everyone safe with upgraded safety features for intersections and roadways. The campaign combines education and enforcement and offers safety tips to drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists through a combination of transit ads, media outreach, digital engagement, video testimonials and on-the-ground outreach.

See tips below and learn more about *Street Smart* at BeStreetSmart.net and follow us on Twitter at [@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.

*Laws and regulations differ between jurisdictions.
Visit BeStreetSmart.net for more information.*