



NEWS RELEASE

Pedestrians, Bicyclists Make Up One-Third of Traffic Fatalities across Metropolitan Washington

Street Smart campaign urges residents to look out for each other to help save lives, prevent crashes

Washington, D.C. (April 19, 2021) – The pandemic shutdown saw fewer motorists on metropolitan Washington roads last year, but still 98 people were killed in traffic crashes while walking and biking.

Despite the reduction in vehicle traffic, early data from 2020 indicate the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed in traffic incidents remained steady across the region – accounting for 29 percent of all traffic fatalities. With the launch of the 2021 regional [Street Smart](#) campaign, local and state officials combine education with increased enforcement of safety laws to ensure everyone reaches their destination safely.

“Even one life lost is too many – zero fatalities are acceptable on our region’s roads,” said Floyd E. Holt, Prince George’s County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer. “In Prince George’s County, our number one priority is safety on our streets. Every year, we work hand in hand with the *Street Smart* campaign to encourage drivers to look out for people walking and biking and remind everyone that we need to work together to keep each other safe on the roads.”

The 2021 *Street Smart* campaign will run from April 19 through May 16 and includes increased enforcement of traffic safety laws that protect people walking and biking in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Law enforcement officials will be focusing on drivers who disobey the speed limit or fail to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Violations can cost up to \$500 and add points to a driver’s record.

Street Smart, a pedestrian and bicyclist safety program created in 2002 sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 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 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](https://www.beStreetSmart.net) and follow us on Twitter at [@COGStreetSmart](https://twitter.com/COGStreetSmart).

CONTACT:

Jeff Salzgeber: jeffs@sherrymatthews.com, (512) 743-2659

Megan Goodman: mgoodman@mwcog.org, (937) 243-3182

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.*