



NEWS RELEASE

Increase in pedestrian, bicyclist deaths prompts action across D.C. region

Street Smart campaign urges drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians to watch for each other on area roads

Arlington, VA (April 26, 2022) – The number of pedestrians and bicyclist deaths in the metropolitan Washington area increased last year, and local and state officials are taking action to ensure everyone stays safe on the road. Today the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) launched the [Street Smart](#) campaign, which combines public education with increased enforcement of traffic laws.

Mirroring national trends, the region's number of pedestrians and bicyclists killed in traffic crashes last year increased as compared to 2020. Preliminary data indicate that pedestrian and cyclist deaths account for close to 30 percent of the 356 total traffic deaths in the region in 2021.

“A safe transportation network for people walking and biking requires a multidisciplinary approach with collaboration across government agencies and community stakeholders to promote traffic safety,” said Chief Andy Penn, Arlington County Police Department. “Through comprehensive safety programs, such as the Street Smart campaign, we can change behaviors that we know result in injury and death. Drive the speed limit and stop for people in crosswalks. When crossing the street, use the crosswalk and wait for the walk signal. Together we can save lives.”

The campaign will run April 22 through May 22 concurrent with 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 ticketing 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.

As more people take to the road this spring and summer, Street Smart will work 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, and grassroots outreach.

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.
- Be especially careful if you drive an SUV or pickup truck—high profile vehicles are more likely to kill or seriously injure people walking and biking.

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 information on specific trail guidelines and regulations.

MORE: 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.