



NEWS RELEASE

Less daylight brings increase in crashes involving pedestrians

Law enforcement steps up efforts to ticket violators of traffic laws

Washington, D.C. (November 14, 2022) – Safety experts warn that waning daylight hours and the end of Daylight Saving Time will bring darker evening commuting, reduced visibility, and greater risks for pedestrians and bicyclists. To enhance safety, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) [Street Smart](#) campaign is urging drivers to be mindful of people walking and biking on the region's roadways this fall.

Cooler fall temperatures encourage area residents to exercise, commute, and spend leisure time walking, biking or riding scooters outdoors. Combined with earlier sunsets, it's important that drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians exercise caution and obey traffic laws.

“Fall is an important time to remind everyone in our community to focus on their safety, and the safety of their neighbors, whether you're driving, walking, biking,” said COG Executive Director Chuck Bean. “As a community, we can help to reverse the nationwide trend of record pedestrian deaths during the fall season by knowing and obeying the traffic laws and speed limits in the region and making our Street Smart tips a part of everyone's transportation routine.”

Nationally, pedestrian deaths reached a 40-year high in 2021, and in the metropolitan Washington region, 93 pedestrians and seven bicyclists lost their lives in traffic crashes.

Throughout the campaign, law enforcement agencies across the region are conducting increased enforcement of laws that protect people walking and biking. By working together as a community, local and state officials are aiming to achieve zero pedestrian and bicycle deaths every year.

Street Smart, a pedestrian and bicyclist safety program created by COG in 2002, works in conjunction with ongoing efforts across the region to improve infrastructure to 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.

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—crashes involving high profile vehicles more often result in the death or serious injury of 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 more information.

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.