Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

NEWS RELEASE

D.C. region traffic crashes killed 110 pedestrians and bicyclists in 2024

With the arrival of spring, the Street Smart campaign urges commuters to safely share the road

Washington, DC (Apr. 7, 2025) – The DC region saw a modest 4 percent decrease in pedestrian and bicyclist deaths in 2024 – 110 pedestrians and bicyclists lost their lives in traffic crashes, representing more than 30 percent of total traffic deaths in the region. As warm weather brings more pedestrians and bicyclists to area streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks, local and state officials are urging residents to make our streets safe for everyone by obeying traffic safety laws.

At this critical time of year, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) – in partnership with transportation officials from across DC, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia – is launching its spring Street Smart campaign. The effort combines education and enforcement to encourage area drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians to follow laws and tips that prevent traffic crashes and deaths.

"Even one life lost is too many," said James Walkinshaw, Chair of the Transportation Planning Board at COG and Fairfax County Supervisor. "As a region, we have yet to fully reverse the dramatic increase in annual traffic fatalities that began in 2022, a record-setting year. The *Street Smart* campaign puts a face and a story to these preventable deaths on our roadways, while providing practical information about how drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians can safely share the road."

Created in 2002, *Street Smart* educates drivers and all commuters through memorable interactive exhibits, media and grassroots outreach, transit ads, and digital engagement. In particular, the campaign urges drivers to slow down, stay alert, and always driver sober to protect our most vulnerable road users, bicyclists and pedestrians.

This year's spring campaign will take place April 7 through May 4 and will partner with law enforcement officials in DC, suburban Maryland, and northern Virginia to increase enforcement of traffic safety laws. These enforcement actions focus on unsafe behavior, ticketing drivers who speed, fail to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, or drive distracted or under the influence. Fines range from $40 to $500 and violations may also add points to a driver's record.

The campaign works in conjunction with ongoing regional efforts to improve infrastructure and upgrade safety features for intersections and roadways. The Street Smart campaign offers safety tips for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists (see below). Learn more about Street Smart at BeStreetSmart.net and follow the program on X/Twitter at @COGStreetSmart.

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MORE: Learn more about Street Smart at BeStreetSmart.net and follow the program on X/Twitter at @COGStreetSmart.

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.
- Put away your phone and never text while driving.
- Be especially careful if you drive an SUV or pickup truck—crashes involving high profile vehicles are more likely to cause death or serious injury for 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 to request a signal change.
- Wait for the walk signal to cross the street.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Before crossing, look left, right, and left again.
- Try to make eye contact with drivers so that you're sure they see you.
- 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 . . .

- Be predictable. 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.

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.