



NEWS RELEASE

October Marks National Pedestrian Safety Month

Street Smart campaign urges motorists to make safety a priority to reduce pedestrian traffic deaths

Washington, DC (September 27, 2021) – October is National Pedestrian Safety Month, a time to remind drivers to look out for people walking on the region’s roadways.

Fall brings cooler temperatures and waning daylight hours. With this in mind, the [Street Smart](#) campaign is asking drivers and pedestrians to remain alert and watch out for one another, especially as DC area residents are out on foot to exercise, run errands, walk the dog, or access transit and other forms of transportation.

“National Pedestrian Safety Month is the perfect opportunity to remind area residents of the ways we can work together to make our region’s roadways safer,” said Kanti Srikanth, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Staff Director. “Safety is a top priority for the TPB, so its members are committed to reducing injuries and fatalities on area roadways. Everyone being Street Smart helps us work toward that goal.”

Even with fewer vehicles on roads last year due to the pandemic, the number of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic deaths in the region remained steady. In 2020, metropolitan Washington saw 94 pedestrian and five bicyclist fatalities, which accounted for almost one-third (30 percent) of the 314 total traffic fatalities in the region.

Local and state officials want everyone to reach their destination safely, so they are reminding motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to obey traffic laws and remain alert for each other as they travel around the region.

The *Street Smart* campaign offers the following tips for drivers and pedestrians:

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.

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

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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.*