

NEWS RELEASE
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**High Delaware Pedestrian Deaths Concern Highway Safety Officials
13 Pedestrian Deaths So Far This Year**

Dover – It's proving to be a very dangerous year for those trying to walk near Delaware roadways, say state Office of Highway Safety officials (OHS). Since January 1st of this year 13 pedestrians have died in traffic related crashes in Delaware. That number is higher than at this time last year. This is particularly alarming because it is only mid-year, with the fall season yet to come – a time of year when travel and traffic increases, day light hours get shorter and sun glare becomes an issue, bringing an increased risk for more pedestrian and motor vehicle crashes.

That's why OHS has teamed up with DelDOT and DSP to step up the Don't Join The Walking Dead pedestrian campaign effort, and will be holding pedestrian safety checks in jurisdictions with an increased number of pedestrian crashes. The first pedestrian safety check will be Friday July 26th at the Starboard in Dewey Beach, followed by one on Second Street in Lewes on Saturday August 3rd, and others in Rodney Square in Wilmington on August 8th and September 6th. Many traffic safety partners will be on hand to provide safe walking tips and information, including Beebe Hospital, Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, Sussex County Paramedics, Lewes PD, Wilmington PD, & Dewey PD.

OHS started a pilot program for educational pedestrian safety patrols in the jurisdictional areas of DSP Troops 2 & 6, Wilmington PD, New Castle County PD, and Newark PD. These 2-officer patrols occurred over Memorial Day weekend and June 20-22, with additional weekends scheduled in August, September, and October. The officers patrol high pedestrian crash locations to identify pedestrians who are at risk of being involved in a crash, such as those not crossing at marked crosswalks or signaled intersections, walking at dusk/night without a reflective item or flashlight, or walking impaired. The officers stop the pedestrian to provide education about how to walk safely near traffic, as well as provide them an informational flyer and a reflective string backpack.

Ultimately, highway safety officials and their partners agree that solving the problem will require active participation and buy-in from the motoring public and pedestrians alike. By following these basic safety tips and pedestrian laws, everyone can learn to Walk Smart. Don't Join the Walking Dead.

- Cross only at crosswalks or intersections with signals or traffic signs. Look left, right, and left again. Only start to cross when it's clear.
- Do not risk crossing outside of a crosswalk or intersection just because it's more convenient, especially on high speed roadways. Cars cannot stop in time for you.
- Use sidewalks. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic and as far off the edge of the road as possible.
- Do not step into a crosswalk if it will create a hazard to motorists. When it is clear to cross, continue to watch for traffic while crossing the street until you have safely reached the other side.
- Carry a flashlight or other reflective item when walking at night. It's the law.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Teach children not to run into the street after balls or other toys, and don't allow them to cross alone until you've practiced the basics with them hundreds of times.
- Do not walk under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Impaired walking is like impaired driving; it is illegal and can be deadly.
- If your vehicle breaks down on an interstate or busy roadway, don't leave your vehicle. Instead call #77 or 911 for assistance. Motorists can also call #77 to report a disabled vehicle they see on the roadways.
- If you are driving, be on the lookout for pedestrians near the roadway.

For more information on the Pedestrian Safety campaign and to find materials about pedestrian safety tips and laws, please visit ohs.delaware.gov/PedestrianSafety, follow us on Twitter at @DEHighwaySafe, and like us on Facebook.com/ArriveAliveDE.