



## **LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Pedestrian safety is a two-way street**

As warmer weather encourages more walkers and joggers to hit the road, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission reminds everyone that safety is a two-way street, with motor vehicle drivers and pedestrians sharing responsibility to avoid crashes.

“Drivers and pedestrians have a duty to watch out for each other,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. “We are seeing too many crashes involving pedestrians, and most of them are preventable.”

Louisiana has the sixth highest per-capita pedestrian fatality rate in the nation, according to a study by Smart Growth America. The report, which analyzed 2019 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, showed Louisiana with 2.4 pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people, well above the 1.6 national rate.

In Louisiana, 1,398 pedestrians were injured, and 122 pedestrians were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2019, according to data from the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU. Although those numbers are down slightly from 2018, they still show a general upward trend since 2010, when 79 pedestrians were killed.

“Many of the responsibilities a driver has also apply to pedestrians,” Freeman said. “Impairment – by alcohol or drugs – as well as distractions are two major issues that get pedestrians into trouble. If you’re impaired or texting on your phone while you’re walking, you may not notice that you’re walking into the path of an oncoming vehicle.”

NHTSA offers these tips for pedestrians:

- Walk on sidewalks whenever they are available. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible.
- Whenever possible, cross streets at crosswalks or intersections, where drivers expect pedestrians. Look for cars in all directions, including those turning left or right.
- If a crosswalk or intersection is not available, locate a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic. Wait for a gap in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely.
- Never assume a driver sees you. Make eye contact with drivers as they approach.
- Be visible at all times. Wear bright clothing during the day and wear reflective materials or use a flashlight at night.
- Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots.

For drivers:

- Look out for pedestrians everywhere, at all times. Safety is a shared responsibility.
- Use extra caution when driving at night or in bad weather.

- Slow down and be prepared to stop when turning or entering a crosswalk.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and stop well back from the crosswalk to give other vehicles an opportunity to see the crossing pedestrians so they can stop, too.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. There may be people crossing that you can't see.
- Follow the speed limit, especially around people on the street, in school zones and in neighborhoods where children are present.

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