



NEWS RELEASE

January 13, 2013

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State Officials Join Pedestrian and Bike Safety Advocates to Urge Wearing Reflective Gear *At darkest time of year, pedestrians and cyclists advised to “Get Glowing”*

(STATEWIDE) The Governor’s Office of Highway Safety is joining pedestrian and bicycle safety partners to remind both walkers and riders to wear reflective gear as winter continues and days remain darker.

Data shows that in 2012, there were an estimated 132 pedestrian fatalities in Georgia. That accounts for 1 percent of all traffic deaths. While that number is below the national average of 14 percent, it still accounts for far too many deaths, the majority of which are happening at night. In 2011, 70 percent of all nationwide pedestrian fatalities happened at night, with 32 percent happening between 8pm and midnight and 24 percent happening between midnight and 4am.

“Walking, jogging or riding your bike is a great way to get exercise as well as being a necessity for many people getting to and from work,” said GOHS Director Harris Blackwood. “But we want to make sure people are being safe as pedestrians and cyclists. This is the darkest time of year so it’s essential that you wear bright clothes and reflective gear to stay safe on our roads.”

While pedestrians can help keep themselves safe by always walking on sidewalks and crossing at crosswalks where available, cyclists can also stay safe by riding with the flow of traffic. In Georgia, cyclists also have the added benefit of a relatively new law requiring vehicles to pass cyclists with a minimum of three feet. Both can be helped by wearing bright clothes and making sure reflectors are properly displayed on bicycles. In other words, get glowing!

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Nathan Deal, Governor

Harris Blackwood, Director

“The easiest way for pedestrian, cyclists and motorists to share the road safely is for everyone to be aware of their surroundings” said Director Blackwood. “Wearing reflective clothes, especially now when the days are shorter, is an easy way to keep yourself visible.”

The good news is there are a number of safety tips for both drivers and pedestrians and cyclists to help keep everyone safe:

- Pedestrians: Walk on a sidewalk whenever available; walk facing traffic if no sidewalk is available; cross at crosswalks; cross in a well-lit area if no crosswalk is available; make eye contact with drivers as they approach you; wear reflective materials; and refrain from using cell phones, ear phones or other electronic devices while walking to minimize distractions.
- Cyclists: Ride on the road; obey all traffic laws; use front and rear lights if riding in low-light or at night; flow with traffic and signal your intentions; wear bright, reflective clothing; maintain a consistent line of travel; don't weave in and out of lanes.
- Motorists: Look out for pedestrians everywhere; be prepared to stop when approaching a crosswalk; be on the lookout for pedestrians in hard-to-see conditions; never pass vehicles at a crosswalk; give cyclists three feet of passing space; refrain from tailgating a cyclist.

(END RELEASE)

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