

## **Pedestrian Safety Month Kickoff Event Remarks**

James Owens, NHTSA Deputy Administrator

**Tuesday, September 29, 2020**

### **AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Thank you for joining us for the early kickoff of the first-ever national Pedestrian Safety Month, which starts October 1. We're making pedestrian safety the focus of next month as part of our continuing efforts to raise public awareness of the urgent need to protect our most vulnerable road users.

It will take all of us – from the public and private sectors and at the local, state, and federal levels – working together to save lives and make our roads safer for everyone.

I want to thank our Secretary of Transportation, Elaine L. Chao, for her commitment to pedestrian safety and her support for a multi-modal approach to solving our nation's highway safety issues. I'm honored to welcome the Secretary for a [video message](#).

Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you as well to Administrator Nicole Nason of the Federal Highway Administration, who's joining us today. NHTSA and Federal Highways partner on solutions to enhance pedestrian safety, and I appreciate our positive working relationship. We are truly One DOT.

We are all concerned about the rising number of pedestrian fatalities over the past few years. For more than a decade, pedestrian fatalities have been increasing.

While early estimates for 2019 show a 2% reduction, we must keep working to drive those numbers down and save lives.

These challenging times pose unique concerns for the safety of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. At some point in the day, all of us are pedestrians – especially right now, when everyone wants to get outside for some fresh air.

We'll soon be conducting our third National Survey on Bicyclist and Pedestrian Attitudes and Behaviors, which will help inform and guide future policy and countermeasure decisions.

Not every community is designed with pedestrians in mind. Many cities are making accommodations to expand pedestrian access and outdoor activities, and everyone needs to be extra vigilant right now. Drivers must be alert to the increase in pedestrian traffic, and everyone, including pedestrians, needs to follow the rules of the road.

Safety, as we all know, is everyone's responsibility.

This month, we will focus on the riskiest behaviors: speeding, distraction, and impairment. We will also remind drivers to stop for school buses, and address how to keep pedestrians safe as the days get shorter and daylight saving time ends.

You can download all of our campaign materials at [trafficsafetymarketing.gov](https://trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

NHTSA is also releasing our new data visualization tool, which will help communities identify pedestrian areas of concern. We'll share more about this new resource shortly.

We're glad you're joining us to kick off October as Pedestrian Safety Month. I also hope you'll join us in promoting pedestrian safety all year long.

We all have a role to play, whether through our work, or our behavior while on the road. But together, I know we can make a difference, and most importantly, save lives.