



MEDIA ADVISORY
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FURTHER INFORMATION:
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MEDIA TIP

Attention Drivers: That Pedestrian You Just Cut-Off Might be a Cop.

Operation Best Foot Forward draws attention to Crossing Guard Awareness Month by cracking down on crosswalk violators near schools

What: February is Crossing Guard Awareness Month and throughout Orange County Public Schools there are more than 450 school crossing guards. These men and women are seen as the first line of defense helping students safely cross the street to and from school. That is why the Orlando Police Department (OPD) and Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSO) will be conducting *Operation Best Foot Forward*, the two-day crosswalk crackdown to remind motorists to yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks, as Florida law requires.

As part of *Operation Best Foot Forward*, undercover officers wear plain clothes and cross the street at a marked crosswalk, giving motorists enough time to yield. Motorists who fail to yield will be issued a warning or a ticket - costing them \$164 and three (3) points on their license. A driver's *failure to yield* is responsible for 20 % of all pedestrian deaths and injuries in Metro Orlando and 35% of all pedestrian incidents occur in a marked crosswalk.

Studies show that enforcement is critical in boosting yield rates because vehicles-versus-pedestrian culture seems to flourish when unchecked. Orange County and the City of Orlando use high visibility enforcement, along with education and outreach near schools, low-income neighborhoods, and at high-crash areas along with engineering improvements, such as street lighting, paving markings and signals, to make roads safer for everyone.

Best Foot Forward's progress is tracked by the percentage of drivers yielding to pedestrians in marked crosswalks. To date, more than 40 crosswalks have been enforced. In Orange County, driver yield rates have increased from 12 % to 48 % on roads posted 35mph and lower and 1 % to 23 % on roads posted 40 mph and higher.

Media is invited to *Operation Best Foot Forward* and will have the opportunity to speak to drivers, officers and pedestrians. Times and locations below:

Crosswalk Enforcement Schedule for Wed., Feb. 18:

Crosswalk	Time	Nearby Schools	Jurisdiction
Edgewater Drive & Shady Lane Drive	7:30 to 8:30 a.m.	Lake Silver ES, Edgewater HS, Lee MS	OPD
Orange Blossom Trail & West Colonial Drive	8:45 to 9:45 a.m.	Lake Silver ES, Edgewater HS, Lee MS, Princeton ES, Jones HS	OPD
Mercy Drive & Kalwit Lane	10 to 11 a.m.	Evans HS, Middlebrook MS, Rock Lake MS	OPD

Crosswalk Enforcement Schedule for Thurs., Feb. 19:

Crosswalk	Time	Nearby Schools	Jurisdiction
Lee Vista Blvd. & Odyssey Middle School	7:30 to 8:30 a.m.	Colonial HS, Odyssey Hidden Oaks MS	OPD
Conway Road & Hargill Drive	9 to 11 a.m.	Boone HS, Howard MS, Dover Shores ES	OPD
Pine Hills Road & El Trio Way	10 to 11 a.m.	Rollings Hills ES, Meadow Brook MS, Evans HS	OCSO
Waterford Lakes Pkwy. & Coquina Rock	10 to 11 a.m.	Discovery MS	OCSO
Clarcona Ocoee Road & Clarke Road	10 to 11 a.m.	Spring Lake ES	OCSO
Landstar Blvd. & Mисley Drive	10 to 11 a.m.	Wyndham Lake ES, Oaskshire ES, Meadow Woods ES	OCSO
International Drive & Austrian Court	1 to 2 p.m.	Dr. Phillips HS, Southwest MS, Dr. Phillips ES	OSCO

Operation *Best Foot Forward* Background

This is the ninth high visibility pedestrian enforcement action since the launch of *Best Foot Forward* in May 2012. Since then, OPD and OCSO have issued more than 1,829 tickets and given more than 3,605 warnings to drivers for failing to yield to pedestrians in 43 crosswalks.

About Best Foot Forward & Pedestrian Safety in Metro Orlando

Transportation For America ranked Metro Orlando as the “Most Dangerous” pedestrian metro of the past decade, where on average two pedestrians are injured every day and one is killed each week. The *Best Foot Forward* pedestrian safety initiative was launched in June 2012 to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries in Metro Orlando by getting drivers to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and getting pedestrians to be more careful crossing the street. More than a campaign, this “Triple-E” behavioral change process seeks to create lasting social good through the consistent and persistent application of low-cost engineering, community education, and high-visibility enforcement.

Initiated by Bike/Walk Central Florida under the leadership of former Orange County Mayor Linda Chapin, spearheaded by Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer and Mayor Teresa Jacobs, the Best Foot Forward coalition includes Orange County Government, Orange County Public Schools, Orlando Health, Lynx, Winter Park Health Foundation, MetroPlan Orlando, the City of Orlando, Winter Park, Maitland, Winter Garden, Apopka, and towns of Eatonville and Windermere as well as police chiefs throughout Orange County led by Orlando Police Chief John Mina and Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings.

The long term goal is to cut pedestrian injuries in half in ten years. The short term goals are to increase driver yield rates by 60% on roads posted 35 mph and higher, and a 10% increase on driver yield rates year over year on roads posted 40 mph and higher. To learn more, go to www.iyield4peds.org.

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