



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Crosswalk Crackdown Planned in Kissimmee and Osceola County on Wed. Aug. 15 **Operation Best Foot Forward part of back-to-school safety reminder for drivers to be vigilant as over** **72,000 Osceola County students return to school**

KISSIMMEE, Fla – Drivers be on notice. Stop for people at crosswalks or risk a \$166 fine and 3 points on your license. The **Osceola County Sheriff's Office (OCSO)** and **Kissimmee Police Department (KPD)** will be conducting its second crosswalk crackdown on Wednesday, August 15 just as over 72,000 Osceola County students are returning to school.

Dubbed **Operation Best Foot Forward**, crosswalk enforcement is part of a more comprehensive effort to educate drivers about Florida's crosswalk laws that require drivers to yield and stop for pedestrians crossing the roadway in a crosswalk. The penalties for failing to yield include a \$166 fine and up to three (3) points on the motorist's license.

Officers from OCSO and KPD will be cracking down at six crosswalk locations (see below) at nearby schools. During *Operation Best Foot Forward*, undercover, plain-clothed officers cross the street at marked crosswalks, giving motorists enough time to yield. Motorists who fail to yield will be issued a warning or citation.

Operation Best Foot Forward launched in Osceola County October 2017 after public officials noted a 30% increase in injuries and deaths due to driver versus pedestrian incidents from 2014 – 2016. In 2017, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles reported 122 injuries and 13 deaths in Osceola County. Smart Growth America's *Dangerous by Design Report* continues to rank Metro Orlando in the top five "most dangerous" U.S. metropolitan areas for pedestrians, where on average two pedestrians are injured daily and one killed weekly. Studies show that crosswalk enforcement is critical in boosting the number of drivers who yield to pedestrians because a driver-versus-pedestrian culture flourishes when unchecked.

The timing for the Osceola County Operation Best Foot Forward also coincides with the opening of four SunRail stations that are drawing over 3,000 commuters a day to high traffic areas. Additionally, over 1,700 new residents move to the region weekly and are new to area roadways and intersections.

Best Foot Forward is supported in Osceola County by: Osceola County, City of Kissimmee, Osceola County Sheriff's Office, Kissimmee Police Department, Osceola County Public Schools, Osceola County Health Department, MetroPlan and Lynx.

Osceola County Aug. 15 Crosswalk Enforcement Schedule

Crosswalk Location	Time	Enforcement Agency	Nearby Schools
Church St & Sproule Ave	9:00 - 10:00 am	KPD	Central Avenue ES, Denn John MS, Osceola HS
Simpson Rd & Fortune Rd	9:00 - 10:00 am	OCSO	Cypress ES, Gateway HS
S. Thacker Ave & W Ernest St	10:15 - 11:15 am	KPD	Thacker Ave. ES, Pleasant Hill ES, Osceola HS
W. Donegan Ave & Coral Ave	10:15 - 11:15 am	OCSO	Highlands ES, N. Kissimmee Christian School
898 N Hoagland Blvd - at Shingle Creek Trail crossing near Kissimmee Gateway Airport	11:30 - 12:30 pm	KPD	Highlands ES, Kissimmee MS, Osceola MS
Central Ave & Hilda St	11:30 - 12:30 pm	OCSO	Highlands ES, N. Kissimmee Christian School

About Best Foot Forward

The Best Foot Forward pedestrian safety initiative was initiated by Bike/Walk Central Florida and first launched in Orange County in 2012. The program expanded to Osceola County in 2017 and will be launching in Seminole County in late 2018.

Best Foot Forward's purpose is to change driver and pedestrian behaviors in marked crosswalks as Florida law requires. More than a campaign, Best Foot Forward is a behavior change-based program designed to reduce injuries and fatalities through consistent and persistent education, high-visibility enforcement and low-cost engineering changes around the region's most dangerous crosswalks.

Fast Facts about Operation Best Foot Forward 2014 – 2017 in Orange County & City of Orlando:

- More than 4 times more drivers yielding in Best Foot Forward-monitored crosswalks on roads posted 35 mph and lower
- More than 21 times more drivers yielding in Best Foot Forward-monitored crosswalks on roads posted 40 mph and higher
- Over 3,200 citations and 4,200 warnings given
- 63: number of marked crosswalks enforced by law enforcement

Initiated and administered by Bike/Walk Central Florida, the Best Foot Forward coalition includes: City of Orlando and Orlando Police Department; City of Kissimmee and Kissimmee Police Department; City of St. Cloud and St. Cloud Police Department; Orange County Government, Sheriff's Office and Orange County Public Schools; Osceola County Government, Sheriff's Office and Orange County Public Schools; MetroPlan Orlando; the Florida Department of Transportation; Lynx; Orlando Health; the University of Miami's WalkSafe program; Winter Park Health Foundation; and, Orange Cycle. To learn more, visit www.iyield4peds.org.