



MEDIA ADVISORY

March 5, 2021

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Pedestrian Risks Rising on Central Florida Roads

Seven local law enforcement agencies to conduct three days of crosswalk enforcement operations in Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties to keep crashes down

ORLANDO, Fla. (March 5, 2021) Deputies with Orange, Osceola and Seminole County Sheriff's Offices will join officers from the Orlando, Kissimmee, St. Cloud and Casselberry Police Departments to conduct Operation Best Forward's first crosswalk enforcement of 2021. Officials are stepping up enforcement in March when added risks for pedestrians are on the rise: more drivers on the roads for spring break, darker morning drive times when students are going to school and more drivers commuting to work as COVID-19 vaccinations become more available.

For three days this month, plainclothes deputies and police officers will cross streets at marked crosswalks to remind drivers and pedestrians about Florida's driver yield laws. Enforcements are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, March 9 in Osceola County, Kissimmee, St. Cloud
- Tuesday, March 23 in Seminole County, Casselberry
- Wednesday, March 24 in Orange County, Orlando

The first crosswalk enforcement begins the same week as Florida's spring break. That means more out-of-town drivers on unfamiliar roads. A [study](#) by researchers at the University of Miami and Florida Atlantic University have found the number of traffic fatalities increases during this period in the country's top holiday destinations, such as Florida.

The switch to daylight saving time on March 14th also poses an increased risk on local roads. Several [national studies](#) show the number of deadly traffic crashes spike by six percent the first week after the time change as drivers adjust to darker driving conditions.

In contrast to last March when COVID-19 restrictions began forcing people to stay closer to home, more residents are beginning to commute to work again. And this week, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the state will expand the COVID-19 vaccine eligibility age to people below 65.

Because of the changing conditions, officials worked together to identify some of the region's most dangerous crosswalks to monitor and enforce. Included are:

- [Pine Hills Rd. & El Trio Way](#) in Orange County with only 28% of drivers yielding to pedestrians and where a resident was hit and killed last month,
- [17th St. & Michigan Ave.](#) in St. Cloud between a high school and middle school where a student petitioned for student safety improvements,
- [N. Thacker Ave. & Kissimmee Trail](#) which is a popular route for students going to eight nearby schools, and
- [Michigan Ave. & Cayman Way](#) in Orlando where recent studies indicated only 17% of drivers yield to pedestrians.

Drivers who fail to stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks, as [Florida law requires](#), may be issued a warning or citation of a minimum of \$164 and 3 points on their license.

NOTE TO EDITORS AND PRODUCERS: Media is invited to *Operation Best Foot Forward* and will have the opportunity to speak to drivers, police officers and pedestrians. Contact Amanda Day, 407-716-8221 (cell).

[Interactive Google Map of All BFF Crosswalk Locations](#)

Tuesday, March 9

Osceola County Sheriff's Office	Tuesday, March 9	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
Celebration Ave. & Lake Evalyn Dr.	07:00-08:15 AM	79%	Celebration K-8 School
3233 Polynesian Isle Blvd.	09:00-09:45 AM	71%	Indian Wells Recreation Center
3200 Rolling Oaks Blvd. (Between Target and Ross)	10:30-11:15 AM	35%	Rolling Oks Shopping Center
Kissimmee Police Department	Tuesday, March 9	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
N. Thacker Ave. & Kissimmee Trail	1:00-2:30 PM	36%	Highlands ES, Thacker ES, Kissimmee ES, Flora Ridge ES, Central Ave. ES, Kissimmee MS, Osceola HS, Main St HS
Broadway & W. Dakin	3:00-4:30 PM	51%	Downtown Kissimmee, Beaumont MS, Thacker ES, Osceola HS, Central ES
St. Cloud Police Department	Tuesday, March 9	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
Mississippi Ave. & E. 10th St.	08:00-08:45 AM	44%	Residential Neighborhood
Robinson Ave. & 10th St.	09:00-09:45 AM	NA	Residential Neighborhood
Old Canoe Creek Rd. & 5th St.	10:00-10:45 AM	34%	Shopping center, Plantation Bay nursing center
17th St. & Michigan Ave.	11:00-11:30 AM	NA	St. Cloud High and Middle Schools

Tuesday, March 23

Seminole County Sheriff's Office	Tuesday, March 23	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
Bear Lake Rd. & McNeil Rd.	7:45 AM	32%	Bear Lake ES, Teague MS
International Parkway at the Westin Hotel	12:00 PM	88%	Wilson ES, Bentley ES

Tuesday, March 23

Orlando Police Department	Tuesday, March 23	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
Edgewater Drive & Shady Lane (West Orlando)	7:00 - 11:00 AM	67%	Princeton ES, Lake Silver ES, College Park MS, Lee MS, Edgewater HS
Metrocenter Blvd. & Metrowest Blvd. (West Orlando)	1:00 - 3:00 PM	54%	Westpointe ES, MetroWest ES, Oakhill ES, Eagle's Nest ES, MetroWest MS, Sunshine HS
Michigan Avenue & Cayman Way (East Orlando)	7:00 - 11:00 AM	17%	Dover Shores ES, Acceleration East HS, Conway ES, Conway MS, Lake George ES
Virginia Drive & Ferris Avenue (East Orlando)	1:00 - 3:00 PM	N/A	Lake Highland Prep, Audubon K8

Wednesday, March 24

Orlando Police Department	Tuesday, March 24	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
Metrocenter Blvd. & Metrowest Blvd. (West Orlando)	7:00 - 11:00 AM	54%	Westpointe ES, MetroWest ES, Oakhill ES, Eagle's Nest ES, MetroWest MS, Sunshine HS
Edgewater Drive & Shady Lane (West Orlando)	1:00 - 3:00 PM	67%	Princeton ES, Lake Silver ES, College Park MS, Lee MS, Edgewater HS
N. Bumby & Virginia Avenue (East Orlando)	7:00 - 9:00 AM	52%	Audubon K8, Baldwin Oaks Academy
West Miller St. & Lucerne Terrace (East Orlando)	9:00 - 11:00 AM	NA	Blankner K8, Delaney ES, Grande Ave ES, Kaley ES, Boone HS, West Lincoln HS
Virginia Drive & Ferris Avenue (East Orlando)	1:00 - 3:00 PM	NA	Lake Highland Prep, Audubon K8

Casselberry Police Department	Tuesday, March 24	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
S. Winter Park Dr. & Quintuplet Dr.	8:00 AM	NA	South Seminole Academy, Casselberry ES

Orange County Sheriff's Office	Wednesday, March 24	Drivers compliance with law (avg)	Schools & Neighborhoods
<i>Locations, times will be released closer to enforcement date</i>			

About [Best Foot Forward](#) for Pedestrian Safety Program

The Best Foot Forward for pedestrian safety program is administered by the local non-profit Bike/Walk Central Florida and first launched in Orange County and the City of Orlando in 2012. It expanded to Osceola County, Kissimmee and St. Cloud in 2017 and Seminole County in October 2019. Best Foot Forward is now made up of some 38 coalition partners across Central Florida.

Best Foot Forward was created to reverse the conflict between pedestrians and drivers by focusing on one specific behavior change - getting more drivers to yield for pedestrians at marked crosswalks as [Florida law](#) requires. More than a campaign, Best Foot Forward is a behavior change-based program designed to improve road safety through consistent and persistent education, high-visibility crosswalk enforcement and low-cost engineering at marked crosswalks near elementary schools and LYNX bus stops, in urban areas and cross-sections of low and high-speed roads.

Best Foot Forward program progress: 2012-2020

- Operating in three counties, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties
- More than 10,047 citations and warnings issued since 2012
- 181 crosswalks enforced by law enforcement
- 44 percent increase - average yielding behavior change at those crosswalks being tracked by Best Foot Forward

Covering Orange, Osceola and now Seminole Counties, Best Foot Forward is the largest grassroots coalition focused on pedestrian safety in the nation. Since 2012, when Best Foot Forward was launched, the percentage of drivers yielding to people in marked crosswalks has increased from 17% to more than 60% on roads with a speed limit of 35 mph and lower and 2% to 43% on roads 40 mph and higher.

About Bike/Walk Central Florida, Administers the Best Foot Forward Program

Bike/Walk Central Florida (BWCF) is a 501(c)(3) that promotes walkable and bikeable communities through raising public awareness and advocating for safe, active transportation and recreation. BWCF manages the [Best Foot Forward](#) for pedestrian safety program for its partners in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. Best Foot Forward is a behavior change-based program designed to improve road safety through consistent and persistent education, high-visibility enforcement and low-cost engineering at marked crosswalks. Best Foot Forward was launched in Orange County in June 2012. It more recently expanded into Osceola County in 2017 and Seminole County in 2019. Best Foot Forward is one of the largest grassroots programs of its kind in the nation.

BWCF coordinates the Bike5Cities program and its annual bike ride to promote safe bicycling routes and enhanced multi-use trails throughout Central Florida. The organization supports building, expanding and linking regional trails and completing Coast-to-Coast Connector trail. BWCF encourages transportation corridor planning and design by using Complete Streets principles for the benefit of all transportation users. To learn more, go to <http://bikewalkcentralflorida.org/>.

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