

Oct. 29, 2012

Time, season change bring renewed emphasis on pedestrian safety

SALEM – "See and be seen" is a piece of advice making its way around the state, as residents prepare for the annual time change this Sunday, Nov. 4 at 2 a.m. That's when we set our clocks back one hour, and it means the morning commute will bring darkness to us one hour earlier. Pedestrians will want to wear bright or reflective clothing and drivers will want to be extra alert.

So far this year, 47 pedestrians have been killed in Oregon in motor vehicle traffic crashes – that's the total pedestrian fatalities for 2011, and there are two months remaining in the year. Many factors contribute to these fatal incidents, including distractions, alcohol use and disregarding rules of the road – on the part of both drivers and pedestrians. That's why it's important that both take responsibility for being safe. ODOT's Transportation Safety Division offers these reminders about driver and pedestrian safety:

Pedestrians

- Enhance visibility when wearing dark clothes, such as bright or reflective clothing or shoes; drivers can't avoid what they can't see.
- Stay sober; walking while impaired increases your chance of being struck.
- Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone while crossing the street.
- Watch out for motorists' blind spots.
- When possible, cross with others; there truly is safety in numbers – drivers are more likely to see a group of people than individuals.
- Remain alert! Don't assume that cars are going to stop. Make eye contact with motorists before crossing paths.
- Use crosswalks and walk on sidewalks whenever possible.
- Look left, right and left again before crossing. Watch for turning cars.

Motorists

- Always have an eye out for pedestrians, especially during dark hours.
- When you are entering a popular pedestrian area, expect that you may encounter them and slow down ahead of time.
- Be prepared to stop when approaching crosswalks.
- Drive at cautious speeds in rainy weather and in low-light areas.
- Eliminate distractions such as cell phones so you can focus on driving.
- Remember, road conditions can impact your stopping ability, so be prepared.

In 2011, 47 pedestrians died in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Safety advocates are encouraging drivers and pedestrians to be vigilant in looking out for one another.

Of the 47 pedestrians who died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2011:

- 34 were illegally in the roadway
- 16 had a positive blood alcohol concentration (BAC)
- 20 wore dark clothes (were not visible)
- 10 were crossing in a crosswalk or at an intersection
- 11 were not in a roadway

Of the drivers involved in the fatal crashes:

- 4 were driving too fast
- 5 made driver errors such as an improper turn

Most of the fatal crashes occurred in dry weather (37) and in low-light or dark conditions (32).

ODOT