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NEWS RELEASE

Look Alive Campaign Has Braking News for Drivers, Pedestrians, and Bicyclists

New Pedestrian Safety Month emphasizes visibility and other safety measures to prevent deadly crashes

BALTIMORE (October 1, 2020) – The fall and winter months are a high-risk time of the year for pedestrians, and local officials are reminding residents to make safety a top priority.

For the first time, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has declared October national Pedestrian Safety Month to call attention to the growing number of motor vehicle/pedestrian crashes and fatalities that occur when there is less daylight.

“Fall and winter months are traditionally when we see a spike in pedestrian-involved crashes,” said Chrissy Nizer, Administrator of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration, and Governor Larry Hogan’s Highway Safety Representative. “When there are fewer daylight hours, visibility becomes a major safety issue. Since nearly three out of every four pedestrian fatalities in Maryland occur when it’s dark, it’s particularly important now for people driving, walking, and biking to be on the lookout for each other, especially when visibility is difficult.”

Last year, sixty-one people were killed while walking in the Baltimore region, and September, October and November are the months when most pedestrian crashes occur.

Look Alive safety campaign officials are using an unconventional approach and unusual spokesperson to assist with delivering critical safety messages to people walking, biking, and driving during these still uncertain and stressful pandemic times. It’s Signal Woman, the pedestrian figure in the “walk/don’t walk” signal light box brought to life and now dishing out practical safety advice on Instagram (@SignalWoman) and Twitter (@Signal_Woman) on how to stay safe on area roadways.

"Look Alive’s "Signal Woman" brings a comedic flair to a critical topic." said Mike Kelly, Executive Director of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. “We hope that this twist on traffic safety messaging resonates and saves lives. As the daylight hours get shorter, we must be especially vigilant in our travels. Signal Woman is encouraging the Baltimore region to follow all the rules of the road, and reminding pedestrians to wear bright clothing or something reflective to be easily seen in low-light or on dark roads and streets.”

In keeping with the *Look Alive* campaign’s attention-grabbing approach to deliver serious life-saving reminders, Signal Woman’s team of socially distancing, spandex-wearing Signal People will hit the streets in high-priority

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areas, beginning October 1. They'll be wearing LED-lit backpack billboards with messages for drivers to always stop for pedestrians, for pedestrians to wait for the signal and cross in crosswalks, and for everyone to stay alert and aware of their surroundings.

In case drivers and pedestrians need extra incentive to take safety seriously, regional law enforcement will be out educating the public on the area traffic laws that protect people who are walking and biking. Violations can be up to \$500.

Look Alive is a regional pedestrian and bicycle safety program that combines education and enforcement across the Baltimore metropolitan region. Visit LookAliveMD.org for more safety tips and information about the program.

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) works collaboratively with the chief elected officials in the region to create initiatives to improve our quality of life and economic vitality. BMC, as the Baltimore region's council of governments, hosts the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), the federal metropolitan planning organization (MPO), and supports local government by coordinating efforts in a range of policy areas including emergency preparedness, housing, cooperative purchasing, environmental planning and workforce development.

BMC's Board of Directors includes the executives of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford and Howard counties, the mayor of the City of Baltimore, a member of the Carroll County and Queen Anne's County boards of commissioners, a member of the Maryland State Senate, a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, and a gubernatorial appointee from the private sector.