

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Drivers: Slow down, pay attention for pedestrians

People of all ages are vulnerable while walking. Unfortunately, a total of 179 pedestrians across Kansas, ranging in ages from 4 to 93, have been hit and killed by vehicles in the five-year span from 2019-2023. October is National Pedestrian Safety Month: a time to remind people of the many factors involved in vehicle/pedestrian crashes and to focus on improving safety for everyone.

As the oldest form of transportation, walking should always be an easy and safe option. That's why the Kansas Department of Transportation and other transportation organizations are working to raise awareness and improve safety for all pedestrians.

"Walking has many personal, physical, economic and environmental health benefits, and people should be able to walk without fear or stress," said Jenny Kramer, KDOT Active Transportation Manager. "Building walkable communities can also improve the local economy and enhance social and community engagement."

KDOT is supporting International Walk and Roll to School Day on Oct. 9, as part of its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Schools and communities are encouraged to register and download free event planning toolkits, which includes flyers, banners, signs, pedestrian safety fact sheets and more. To register a school, access materials or learn more about SRTS, visit: <https://saferoutes.ksdot.gov/iwrsd>.

"KDOT works for all Kansans, no matter how they choose to travel," said Matt Messina, KDOT Chief of Multimodal Transportation. "Pedestrian Safety Month is a great time to promote safer behaviors and share the resources we have to help make our roadways safer, especially for children and around schools."

A few safety tips to keep in mind:

- All: Follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
- Drivers: Slow down and watch for pedestrians, yield to pedestrians in or at crosswalks, never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk and avoid blocking crosswalks or sidewalks. Always use caution when backing up or driving in hard-to-see conditions and invest in a camera or collision detection systems.

- Pedestrians: Stay focused, cross streets carefully at marked crosswalks when available; make eye contact with drivers at stop signs, traffic signals or slowing/stopped at crosswalks; and walk on sidewalks (if not available, walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible).

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