



News Release  
Ashland Police Department  
[www.ashlandpolice.us](http://www.ashlandpolice.us)  
Douglas A. Goodman, Chief  
Date: September 10, 2011

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 10, 2011**  
**CONTACT: Sergeant Marie Kemp**

**The Ashland Police Department is joining DRIVE SMART Virginia, Bike Walk Virginia and the Virginia Highway Safety Office at DMV to promote Virginia Bicyclists and Pedestrian Awareness Week September 11-17<sup>th</sup>, 2011.**



Last year 88 people died walking or cycling on our Virginia roadways. In addition, 621 cyclists and 1,585 pedestrians were injured. A single death or injury is one too many. Increasing knowledge of roadway regulations and safe behaviors may help reduce those numbers. Lack of knowledge and risky behaviors often leads to crashes between roadway users. Taking time to learn the laws and safety tips can save a life.

“Many people don’t realize that a bicycle is considered a vehicle in Virginia and has the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles on the road” says Chief Doug Goodman. This means bikes and cars have to obey all traffic signs, signals, lights and markings. A bicycle should always travel in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic.

Motorists are required by law to approach and pass bicyclists at a reasonable speed and to allow at least two feet between their vehicle and the cyclist. Motorists are required to use signals to notify other roadway users of intent and bicyclists must do the same using hand signals. “Behaving in a predictable manner while driving, biking, or walking can reduce the risk of crashes”, adds Chief Doug Goodman.

Whether riding in a car or on a bicycle, all safety precautions should be used, including a safety belt in a car, and a helmet on a bicycle. Bicyclists can also protect themselves by wearing bright clothing, using flashing lights during day and night, and by securing loose clothing.

Pedestrians can improve safety by wearing bright colors during the day and reflective material or blinking lights at night. Light colored clothing is slightly helpful in making you visible at night, reflective tape or reflective fabric is much better. ***Virginia state code requires motorists to yield for pedestrians that are in the crosswalks, but pedestrians must yield to motorists until they have a break in the traffic pattern to cross safely.***

Join the Ashland Police Department in supporting Virginia Bicyclists and Pedestrian Awareness Week from September 11-17<sup>th</sup>. Remember – we are all on the road together. For more information, visit [www.drivesmartva.org](http://www.drivesmartva.org)