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**VISION ZERO: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES MAJOR TRAFFIC SAFETY
CAMPAIGNS FOR RETURN OF "DUSK AND DARKNESS" AND NEW BACK-SEAT
SEATBELT LAW**

With the end of daylight saving time on Sunday, the fifth annual Dusk and Darkness campaign focuses on fall and winter evening hours when pedestrian crashes have historically increased; new statewide law also takes effect Sunday, requiring seatbelts for all vehicle occupants, including for first time adults in the back seat

Multi-agency efforts will combine education and awareness with enforcement

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the launch of the City’s fifth annual fall Dusk and Darkness campaign, reminding motorists how dangerous fall and winter evenings are for pedestrians and cyclists, especially after clocks “fall back” for the end of Daylight Saving Time this Sunday. Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg was joined by NYPD and TLC officials to also announce similar education and enforcement efforts will take place around new state laws that also take effect on Sunday. The new laws require all motor vehicle passengers to wear seat belts, including for the first time adults riding in the back seat, including inside cabs and for-hire vehicles.

Both campaigns are part of the Vision Zero initiative, aimed to shift driver behavior and decrease traffic deaths and injuries in the time of year when they have historically increased.

“Buckle up, look out for pedestrians and cyclists, and drive carefully,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Motorists have a responsibility to keep their fellow New Yorkers safe, and we’re going to continue building on Vision Zero to finish this year strong.”

“Dusk and Darkness has illustrated the very best of what New York City has done around Vision Zero, as it has fundamentally changed the way we approach education and enforcement during a season that is traditionally the most dangerous on our streets for pedestrians,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Today, we are not only getting out the word to drivers about the dangers of earlier sunsets, we are joining our agency partners at NYPD and TLC to remind them about the new life-saving seat-belt law that takes effect this coming weekend.”

“The New York City Police Department remains committed to the mission of ensuring the safety and security of everyone who travels throughout our city. As we enter the fall and winter months, our officers in every neighborhood are continuing to focus on protecting safe passage for all of our pedestrians, bicyclists, seniors and children, for they are truly our most vulnerable road users,” said **NYPD Deputy Chief Michael Pilecki**.

“Driving carefully can save a life,” said **TLC Commissioner and Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk**. “As darkness falls earlier this time of year, we ask our professionally licensed

Drivers to please continue to be the best – do not speed, make slow turns and always stay alert for pedestrians and cyclists.”

Today’s announcement included the following elements:

Dusk and Darkness: Before the first Dusk and Darkness campaign launched in October 2016, DOT had conducted close analyses of year-over-year crash trends. Statistics from 2010-2014 showed that serious collisions involving pedestrians increase by approximately 40 percent in darker early evenings in late fall and winter. Additionally, lower visibility during the dark hours of the colder months leads to twice as many crashes involving turns.

The Dusk and Darkness campaign is also designed to protect the increasing number of cyclists on New York City’s streets. In 2020, cycling has grown more popular for both transportation and recreation. (Ridership between May and September 2020 has increased 27 percent compared to the same time period last year, with over one million more bike trips taken so far this year.) With more cyclists on the roads and visibility decreasing during the fall and winter months, the City urges drivers to look carefully for pedestrians and cyclists.

“Dusk and Darkness” also includes:

- **Increased Evening/Nighttime Enforcement:** Speeding and failure to yield are key behaviors that contribute to roadway fatalities and this week, NYPD will begin focusing enforcement resources on these hazardous violations. Precincts will be increasing their on-street presence around sunset hours on high-crash corridors for both cyclists and pedestrians.
- **Daylight Saving Awareness:** Daylight savings time will end **at 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 1** when clocks “fall back.” As with previous years, DOT will run radio ads during the evening commute, alerting drivers to the dangers of lower visibility and encouraging them to follow the 25 MPH citywide speed limit and to yield to pedestrians and cyclists. Ads are running through November 15, on 12 stations. DOT has also invested in outdoor advertising and will feature the driver targeted “*Was it Worth It*” awareness campaign on digital/static billboards, gas toppers, bus tails and shelters as well as the Staten Island Ferry, and Link NYC kiosks. The campaign uses realistic and emotionally driven post-crash imagery to warn motorists of the deadly results of reckless driving. This year’s campaign focuses on speeding, which has been a major factor in many of this year’s deadliest crashes.
- **Motorcycle Education and Enforcement:** While this year has seen fatalities decline for pedestrians and cyclists, motorcyclist fatalities have increased, exceeding all previous years of the Vision Zero era (since 2014). To help combat this trend, DOT today also announced the “*Legit & Alive*” digital media campaign which includes helpful tips for operating a motorcycle safely, and testimonies from riders on the importance of legal riding and training.
- **Universal Seatbelt Laws:** Earlier this year, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law amendments to the state’s Vehicle and Traffic Law, which as of November 1st, will require that **all** vehicle passengers be buckled up, including inside cabs and for-hire vehicles. (The previous law only required front-seat passengers and children under 16 in rear seats to wear a seat belt.) As part of the fall campaign, New York City’s Vision Zero agencies will support and spread awareness of the state’s expanded seatbelt law: DOT’s new “*Everybody. Every Seat,*” messaging aims to encourage seatbelt use in private as well as taxi and for-hire vehicles. The messaging will be incorporated on all DOT social media platforms to remind motorists about this important new law – as well the safety benefits of all passengers buckling up.

To illustrate the importance of rear seat belts, Commissioner Trottenberg [cited a deadly crash earlier this month in Queens](#). In that October 6th incident, three victims, all between the ages of 19-21 and none wearing seat belts, were killed when the driver of a Nissan Altima in which they were passengers lost control when traveling at a high speed in the early morning along Conduit Boulevard.

“Passengers often have a false sense of security in taxis, but even minor fender-benders can cause serious injury because passengers are thrown headfirst into the plastic partition meant to protect drivers,” said **State Senator Brad Holyman**. “Studies show that wearing a seatbelt in the back seat of a car can reduce crash fatalities by as much as 60 percent. Seatbelts save lives, but so do seatbelt laws. I was honored to pass legislation this year requiring passengers in the back seats of taxis and livery vehicles to wear seatbelts, and I’m grateful that New York City’s Vision Zero agencies will be embarking on a public campaign to ensure that all passengers know their legal responsibility to buckle up. Thanks to Commissioner Trottenberg, the TLC, and the NYPD for their work on this and the Dusk to Darkness campaign.”

“Since—to the dismay of many—we’re not extending Daylight Saving, it is critical that we prepare for one of the most dangerous times of the year on our streets,” said **City Council Member Keith Powers**. “With more cars occupying our streets, 2020 has seen an uptick in crashes and tragic fatalities. I am glad that DOT’s Dusk and Darkness Campaign is working to address the dangers that come with the season and keep New Yorkers safe on our streets.”

“Traffic fatalities have risen dramatically in recent months, and we know that the end of Daylight Saving Time typically brings an increase in crashes. We thank the Department of Transportation for making safety for pedestrians and cyclists a priority, and reminding drivers of their responsibility to those with whom they share the road,” said **Transportation Alternatives Executive Director Danny Harris**.

"As the evenings get darker earlier, it's important for cyclists to make sure they use flashing front and rear lights, wear brightly colored reflective clothing and use reflective tape on their bikes and helmets," said **Ken Podziba, President and CEO of Bike New York**. "On behalf of Bike New York, I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Trottenberg for once again launching the citywide Dusk and Darkness campaign that heightens awareness of the increased risks to pedestrians and cyclists during the fall and winter months."

“This new law is a welcome change, as unbelted rear seat belt passengers in a vehicle crash are two times more likely to be killed, eight times more likely to be seriously injured, and two times more likely to kill a front seat occupant by becoming a projectile,” said **John Corlett, Legislative Committee Chairperson for AAA New York State**. “Tragically, in New York State, over the last decade, 289 people have been killed and 25,596 people have been injured, while unrestrained in the back seat of a vehicle. It is a common misconception by many adults that they do not have to wear their seat belt in the backseat because it is safer.”

"When streets are safer, families feel more comfortable walking and biking. The Dusk and Darkness campaign will help increase street safety and calm traffic. Initiatives like these help slash emissions from cars and improve air quality by giving people safe alternatives to driving. Thank you to DOT Commissioner Trottenberg for her leadership," said **Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters**.

"The City must do everything in its power to end traffic violence, so we thank the Department of Transportation for their emphasis on preventing crashes and saving lives during this especially dangerous time of year," said **Debbie Kahn, founding member of Families for Safe Streets**. "Our streets provide little room for error, so we have to continue to remind drivers of the enormous responsibility they have."

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About Vision Zero: In 2014, New York City became the first City in the United States to implement Vision Zero. Through a combination of enforcement, education and engineering, New York City made dramatic changes that helped drive down fatalities for five consecutive years, bucking national trends. Earlier this year, New York City released its [Vision Zero Year Six Report](#).

For more information about the de Blasio Administration's Vision Zero initiative, please see www.nyc.gov/visionzero.