



## VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*

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### Visalia Police Department Launches Safety Initiative to Enhance Road Safety and Reduce Accidents

As we enter the new year, the Visalia Police Department is addressing an increase in accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. With a focus on reducing these incidents, VPD is launching a new safety initiative aimed at promoting safer behavior for both road users and pedestrians alike.

"Pedestrian and cyclist accidents are on the rise, and we need everyone—drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians—to be more aware of their surroundings and make safer choices," said Sergeant Henry Martinez. "With it getting dark as early as 6:00 p.m., it can be difficult for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists, especially in poorly lit areas. It's crucial that everyone takes extra precautions during these darker hours to stay visible and alert."

The VPD's Traffic Unit will be increasing enforcement for both pedestrian and cyclist violations, as well as driver behaviors that can lead to accidents. Key violations include:

- **For pedestrians and cyclists:**
  - Illegal crossing or riding in unsafe areas
  - Walking or cycling against a red light or "Don't Walk" symbol
  - Failure to yield the right-of-way
  - Walking or cycling in the roadway when not allowed
  
- **For drivers:**
  - Failing to yield to pedestrians and cyclists at crosswalks
  - Distracted driving, such as using a cell phone while driving
  - Speeding in areas with high pedestrian or cyclist traffic
  - Not checking blind spots when turning or changing lanes

While the initiative will involve enforcement through citations, the focus is also on education. Officers will engage with both pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, encouraging everyone to stay alert, follow traffic signals, and avoid distractions like wearing headsets or using phones while walking, biking, or driving.

"Safety is a shared responsibility," says Sergeant Martinez of the Visalia Police Department. "Drivers must stay alert for pedestrians and cyclists, and in turn, pedestrians and cyclists must stay visible and make smart choices to prevent accidents."

