

# SAFETY OVERVIEW

OCTOBER 15, 2020 – APRIL 30, 2022



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

## OVERVIEW

The safety of the Ohio State community is the university's highest priority.

Following the tragic death of student Chase Meola, President Kristina M. Johnson in October 2020 announced a task force to review safety issues on campus and in neighborhoods near the university — and to identify, implement and advocate for additional approaches that address violence, crime, and high-risk activities and behaviors. To date, the university has initiated implementation of 13 of the task force's 15 recommendations. In September 2021, Dr. Johnson announced an additional \$2 million a year over the next decade to enhance safety and security on and around campus, bringing the total campus public safety budget to \$35 million annually.

The university remains fully committed to refining and broadening its approach to addressing crime.

## SAFETY MEASURES AND ACTIONS

This document provides an overview of the actions the university has taken between October 15, 2020 and February 28, 2022, to enhance safety as well as how these actions have been – and continue to be – shared with the community.

### OCTOBER 15, 2020

Following the tragic death of student Chase Meola, President Johnson announced the establishment of a task force to review safety issues on campus and in neighborhoods near the university — and to identify, implement and advocate for additional approaches that address violence, crime, and high-risk activities and behaviors.

### OCTOBER 2020

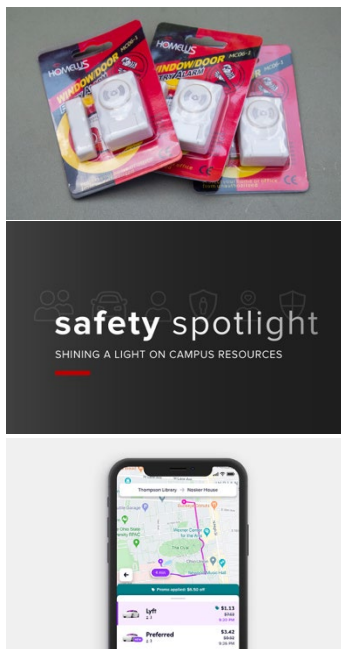
Increased police presence in the off-campus area with a combination of OSUPD and CPD officers through a crime interdiction program that pays officers overtime to add patrols.

### NOVEMBER 6, 2020

The university re-launched the Community Crime Patrol, which is a group of highly trained citizen patrollers working to increase safety in Columbus neighborhoods by being extra eyes and ears for community partners. Office of Student Life staff supplemented these efforts by monitoring University District neighborhoods, reporting necessary incidents to property owners.

### NOVEMBER 17, 2020

The task force presented its [recommendations](#) during the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Student Life and Research Committee meeting. Recommendations focused on improving communication, engagement and support of residents on campus and in the near-campus neighborhoods. To date, the university has initiated implementation of 13 of the task force's 15 [recommendations](#).



### \*NOVEMBER 2020

Improved lighting through immediate repairs of more than 350 lights and a lighting survey for longer-term enhancements, in partnership with the city of Columbus. These efforts are ongoing.

### JANUARY 2021

Office of Student Life provided safety devices (window/door alarms, safety timers and smoke alarm batteries) to students. Five thousand of these devices have been provided through early September.

### \*JANUARY 2021

Launched comprehensive safety communications and community outreach effort, including the [“Safety Spotlight” video series](#), comprehensive safety [webpage](#) and the [OSUPD Instagram](#) account for Ohio State police to meet students where they are. These efforts are ongoing. Additionally, creating online safety class to launch this fall and teach students through interactive scenario-based exercises and videos.

### \*JANUARY 14, 2021

Expanded [discounted ridesharing hours](#), which run 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.

### FEBRUARY 2021

Increased police presence in the off-campus area with a combination of OSUPD and CPD officers through a crime interdiction program that pays officers overtime to add patrols.

### \*FEBRUARY 2021

Enhanced cultural diversity training for OSUPD. This effort is ongoing with training sessions scheduled during the fall as well as in 2022 and 2023.

### \*FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Issued a student safety survey to gauge the overall perception of safety both on and off campus as well as awareness of Ohio State's resources and programs.

### APRIL 14, 2021

Business Advancement leadership first met with Amazon to explore partnership for smart security systems that would be available to student tenants and their landlords. Student Life and Public Safety joined Business Advancement on July 21, 2021, for more follow-up, and discussions are ongoing.

\*Specific action steps related to the Task Force on Community Safety and Well-Being recommendations.

### APRIL 19, 2021

Student Safety Virtual Dialogue hosted by task force. The virtual dialogue was an opportunity to share what safety means to them to a panel of university and external representatives, including OSUPD, CPD, Student Life and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

### JUNE 2021

Event space and support provided by Student Life for 8-week summer “Pathways to Progress” program for 100 youth (16-18 years old). Completed weekly through August 6.

### \*JULY 12, 2021

Announced a partnership with the University District Organization to provide a [full-time, licensed independent social worker](#).

### AUGUST 2021

Expanded Office of Student Life service boundaries and staffing in the University District, as well as hiring additional student community ambassadors for autumn 2021 (ongoing).

### AUGUST 2021

Four new OSUPD officers were sworn in working toward the safety task force goal of increasing joint patrol coverage off campus. The hiring of additional officers will continue.

### AUGUST 10, 2021

[Announced](#) that all Ohio Stadium entry gates will be equipped with new technology — walk-through metal detectors that guests need to pass through for entry. Fans do not need to empty their pockets unless instructed by stadium security.

### AUGUST 17, 2021

With the start of the autumn semester, shared enhanced communications on safety issues by using text and email from [Ohio State News](#) to provide brief, timely updates to the university community. These news and updates are designed to provide safety tips, health resources, timely traffic information and more.

### AUGUST 17, 2021

Launched student-focused effort to coincide with the start of the autumn semester for a concerted safety messaging push. The goal is to raise awareness and drive use of university safety resources.

### AUGUST 20, 2021

The Office of Student Life hosted a “TacoBout It” event in the off-campus neighborhoods to connect with students and police and to encourage open dialogue about safety resources. On the right is a photo from the event.



### AUGUST 20, 2021

Ohio State app push to students: “Stay Safe, Buckeyes. Enhance your safety with tips and resources from Ohio State. Learn more and locate safety info in the app.”

### AUGUST 24, 2021

President Johnson met with new City of Columbus Chief of Police Elaine Bryant to discuss mitigation strategies and to reinforce the university and the City’s partnership focused on enhancing safety and support of all students and community members, including critical efforts in addition to policing that will advance a safer community for everyone.



### AUGUST 23-27, 2021

Hosted [Coffee with a Cop](#) in the Ohio Union, handing out free coffee to students and offering a chance to ask questions and speak with Ohio State police officers.

### AUGUST 27, 2021

Increased police presence in the off-campus area through redeployment of additional CPD officers. Also added a combination of OSUPD and CPD officers through crime interdiction paying officers overtime to add more patrols in the off-campus area.

### AUGUST 27, 2021



Placed 10 additional light towers and four additional mobile surveillance cameras (for a total of 13 additional cameras added over the last year) along pedestrian pathways in the off-campus area. Added security officers via Ohio State security personnel, or private security. Also continued to deploy Community Crime Patrol security and the CPD and crime interdiction officers to increase safety personnel Thursday through Saturday evenings.

\*Specific action steps related to the Task Force on Community Safety and Well-Being recommendations.

## SEPTEMBER 2021

Department of Public Safety augmented Community Crime Patrol with additional security officers for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

## SEPTEMBER 2021

Securing partnership with Block by Block to increase our presence in the University District along with a continued partnership with Community Crime Patrol. Similar to Community Crime Patrol, Block by Block provides trained ambassadors who will provide a consistent, recognizable, community presence.



### SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

Ohio State Administration and Planning leadership [joined members of CPD](#) at a joint press conference to address crime trends in the campus area and agree to take a comprehensive approach to make the campus area safer.

### SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

CPD and OSUPD partnered on a social media video sharing the top three tips to prevent crime in the University District. It was shared on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

## SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

Personal safety alarms begin distribution from the Willie Young, Sr. Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services.

## SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Launched a series of 10 revamped Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP) workshops, based on feedback from parents and families, for students living in residence halls while also working to offer live and recorded parents/family workshops on transition to off-campus housing.

## SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Launched an online safety class to help students enhance their own safety on and off-campus. The one-hour, video-based module is available to students in BuckeyeLearn and covers topics such as crime prevention, crime reporting, when and why the university issues safety notices, responding to people on the street who aggressively ask for money and more. Parents can also access the 10 video modules via YouTube.

## SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

President Johnson held a news conference with Mayor Ginther to address off-campus crime and [announced](#) an additional \$2 million a year – a total of at least \$20 million over the next decade, bringing the university's total public safety budget to \$35 million annually. Enhancements from this additional funding include:

- Immediately expanding off-campus security, including by using additional private security, as well as continuing to support the Community Crime Patrol. This increased security will include additional campus service officers, who will immediately expand their patrols into the University District.
- Adding additional mobile lighting and at least another 10 mobile camera systems to saturate the pedestrian pathways where our students live.
- This is in addition to the 10 new light stations and 13 mobile surveillance cameras announced previously.
- Extending the Lyft Ride Smart program on High Street to include getting students to and from the Short North area, which began that same day.
- Engaging an external safety expert to examine the effectiveness of the university's expanded approach to off-campus safety in partnership with the city of Columbus.

## SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

Expanded access to parents, families and the community to receive Ohio State News text alerts when there is a timely update for students, faculty and staff about health and safety on and around campus such as safety tips, health resources, timely traffic information and more. Parents, families and others can provide their cell phone number to receive the news alerts via text message by texting 'NEWS' to 644678.

## OCTOBER 2021

CPD partnered with OSUPD and the Office of Student Life to walk around off-campus neighborhoods in advance of planned weekend block party activities to discuss safety with students, as well as provided a significant, visible presence of law enforcement officers throughout the weekend. Collectively, these efforts in addition to outreach to landlords and other safety messaging from the university contributed to a safe and successful block party weekend.

## OCTOBER 13, 2021

Increased access to the Lyft Ride Smart discount ride program to 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. instead of starting at 9 p.m. This change was made via feedback from students and came after the Sept. 24 announcement from President Johnson to expand Lyft Ride Smart's boundaries to the Short North area.

## NOVEMBER 5, 2021



Announced the launch of Buckeye Block Watch, in which civilian safety partners patrol the off-campus area and offer resources and information while reporting suspicious activity. Buckeye Block Watch is trained in how to deal with difficult situations and engage with the public. Training is also tailored to University District-specific information including working in popular and well-trafficked areas, and members are tasked with quality-of-life improvements such as recording streetlight outages. Buckeye Block Watch utilizes our existing partner, Community Crime Patrol, and adds a partnership with the Block by Block organization.

## DECEMBER 10, 2021

Added an [Off-Campus Community Crime Map](#) to the Department of Public Safety website, which consists of statistics from Columbus police and shows crime reports near the campus area. Ohio State pre-programmed the Lexis Nexis map to a one-mile radius to include the three major crime categories of aggravated assault, residential burglary and robbery of an individual from the most recent 30-day period.

## 2021

In calendar year 2021, OSUPD recruited, trained and swore in nine new law enforcement officers.

## JANUARY 20, 2022

[Announced](#) the addition of permanent lighting in the University District areas frequented by students and the campus community to replace mobile lighting added by the university in the autumn semester.

## FEBRUARY 24, 2022

[Announced](#) the results of an external review of the university's expanded approach to off-campus safety by Security Risk Management Consultants. Items that are in place or in progress so far include:

- Installing permanent, fixed lights and surveillance cameras to replace mobile units.
- Exploring License Plate Reader cameras and other technology as an additional tool to assist law enforcement in reducing crime.
- Reviewing and evaluating off-campus transportation options, including Lyft Ride Smart.
- Expanding patrol, dispatch center and data personnel to support the adoption of additional technology and to further refine a data-driven, analytical approach to address crime problems.
- Testing, evaluating and validating security resources and consider expanding non-sworn security staffing to cover the university's expansion at University Square located at 15+HIGH.
- Organizationally aligning various security patrol functions under the Department of Public Safety, including oversight of all third-party patrols.
- Strengthening partnerships with the city of Columbus, Columbus Division of Police, local property owners and others to work on long-term neighborhood improvements, which may include enhanced site and building standards.
- Continuing to educate students on resources and behaviors and increasing awareness of programs.
- Reevaluating off-campus safety notices and the sharing of crime information.

## MARCH 10, 2022

[Announced](#) the Community Crime Map, a new crime map tool that consists of statistics from the Columbus Division of Police and shows off-campus crime reports. It replaces individual Neighborhood Safety Notice emails and offers users access to more crime information, presented in a visual map-based format that students have requested.



## APRIL 14, 2022

[Announced](#) the upcoming launch of the revamped Off-Campus Housing Network, which establishes recommended criteria in areas such as safety and security for off-campus residences and aims to strengthen the university's collaboration with property owners.

## 2022

So far in calendar year 2022:

- OSUPD has recruited, trained and swore in five new law enforcement officers.
- Parking garage cameras have been added at the Ohio Union North and South parking garages and the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and West garages. Installation at the Safe Auto garage began in April and is ongoing.

- More than 60 license plate readers have been installed in the University District as part of a pilot program with the City of Columbus. These devices assist law enforcement with investigations.
- Ten of the 20 mobile lighting locations that dot the off-campus area have been replaced and upgraded with permanent LED fixtures, with more to come.
- [Tree trimming in the University District](#) has supported safety enhancements in the off-campus area.

## SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

Safety is a top priority for Ohio State, and that is reflected in the university’s communications. Below is a summary of how Ohio State has communicated about existing safety offerings and enhancements since the start of 2021 (unless otherwise noted).

### “STAY SAFE, BUCKEYES”

Launched in August 2021 to coincide with the start of the autumn semester, this framework supports the recommendations of the task force and works to raise awareness of university safety resources.

Since the start of the 2021-22 academic year, the university introduced Ohio State News Alerts to supplement safety communications, including text messages that were targeted directly to students to get them important safety information about enhanced programs that would benefit them right away. In addition to Ohio State News Alerts, the university has two types of safety notifications: Buckeye Alerts and Public Safety Notices. The campus community can also sign up for the Community Crime Map for a comprehensive look at off-campus crime. To date:

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

President Johnson and campus leaders regularly send email messages to an audience of 117,900 faculty, staff and students – inclusive of safety updates and resources. Safety items are also regularly published in university e-newsletters to students, faculty and staff, as well as to an audience of 53,000 parents and families.

### DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

#### PRESIDENTIAL SAFETY VIDEO MESSAGES

To enhance the reach of safety messaging, in September 2021, President Johnson began a series of regular updates about safety in video format. These video message have been included in campus-wide communications, shared on social media and posted on the President’s website both as features as well as in the comprehensive archive of her messages. Between the start of the safety campaign and December 31, 2021, 18 video messages about safety were shared with the campus community and collectively have nearly 113,000 views across these channels. Between April 1 and April 30 – the period since the last safety overview – President Johnson’s social media account posts featuring safety content created 64,223 impressions and 1,718 engagements.

#### UNIVERSITY-WIDE SOCIAL MEDIA

The impact of safety communications across the university since the launch of sustained safety communications through 2021 includes 6,976,311 impressions and 459,147 engagements. Top-level university social media accounts that have regularly shared safety information include President Johnson’s Twitter and Instagram, Ohio State enterprise account channels, Office of Student Life and OSUPD social media accounts.

From April 1 to April 30 – the period since the last safety overview – safety communications shared via social media recorded:

**122,337**  
IMPRESSIONS

**4,331**  
ENGAGEMENTS

### MEDIA

#### OHIO STATE NEWS

Forty-six Ohio State News stories focused on safety measures at the university, which help to spur coverage in the news media. Examples include: the [February 4, 2021](#) story on rolling out recommendations from the safety task force; a [July 12](#) story on adding a full-time social worker to the off-campus area; a [September 1](#) story on our partnership with CPD; a [November 8](#) story highlighting the launch of Buckeye Block Watch; a [December 20](#) story on students analyzing campus-area crime; a [January 20, 2022](#) story on the addition of permanent lighting in the University District areas frequented by students and the campus community; a [March 10](#) story introducing the Community Crime Map and an [April 14](#) story sharing early details on Ohio State’s Off-Campus Housing Network.

**46**  
OHIO STATE NEWS STORIES FOCUSED ON SAFETY MEASURES  
**40,900**  
VISITS TO STORIES

**SAFETY STORY OF NOTE**

[Spring semester breakdown: President Johnson speaks on student wages, safety, previews university address](#)

The Lantern, April 15

With a prevailing concern over safety in the campus area, Buckeyes continue to track Ohio State's progress in combating crime. University President Kristina M. Johnson said university safety initiatives — including the installation of permanent lighting, cameras and license plate readers — have proven effective. Also, with [the new crime map](#), the Ohio State community is able to track up-to-date, accurate data from the Columbus Division of Police on crime.

"Safety has been a big deal this year, but it's always been my No. 1 priority," Johnson said.