

Dear Chief: What are the rules of the road concerning Crosswalks?

Dear Concerned Citizen:

Thanks for bringing this topic up; we occasionally get complaints and near-miss accidents involving cars and pedestrians in our downtown area. While there are definitely laws in place to address these conflicts, the root cause is typically an inattentive or impatient driver or pedestrian.

A crosswalk is an extension of the road, sidewalk, curb or edge of the shoulder at an intersection for people on foot. Below are some very basic rules (laws) of the road pertaining to pedestrians.

- Pedestrians must obey the instructions of crossing signals at crosswalks.
- Pedestrians who have **legally** entered a crosswalk have the right-of-way and vehicles must yield to pedestrians.
- When crossing signals are not in place or operable, but there is still a crosswalk, drivers shall yield the right of way to pedestrians by slowing down or stopping when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk.

Safety Tips:

- Obey pedestrian signals.
- Only cross when the "start crossing" symbol is on; you have the right to continue even if the signal begins to flash.
- It is illegal to enter a crosswalk when a steady "don't walk" or flashing red hand symbol is on.
- Maintain awareness of moving traffic.
- Don't get crosswise when there's a crosswalk within 50 feet. If you're that close to an intersection with a traffic signal, you must cross at the crosswalk.
- If you're not within 50 feet of a crosswalk, yield to vehicles and cross using the most direct route possible.
- At intersections, make sure motorists have seen you before you step off the curb. Don't assume they'll stop.
- Make eye contact with drivers when you've entered to cross the road.
- Pedestrians jeopardize their safety when crossing outside of a crosswalk zone.
- Drivers must always be alert to the movements of pedestrians, especially in places that attract them such as downtowns, schools and residential areas.
- Whether on bike, in a car, or walking each mode of travel has responsibilities depending on the circumstances. If pedestrians enter a crosswalk properly, they will have the right of way.

Safe travel (all modes) requires us to be ultra-attentive and the best way to be attentive is to eliminate distractions (radios, phones, texting, email, eating, drinking, smoking) when we travel.

Craig Dodd, Chief of Police