

The Newberg-Dundee Police Department Traffic Safety Team along with the Newberg Graphic Newspaper has decided to devote a column to traffic safety every quarter in an attempt to minimize common violations committed by drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

This quarters Traffic Safety Tip focuses on pedestrian safety. It is our department's goal to increase traffic safety, which is accomplished through enforcement and education. One of our police department's number one complaints is pedestrian safety in neighborhoods, the highway and in our downtown business core. Pedestrians are always encouraged to utilize marked crosswalks, cross only with applicable signals, and be extremely vigilant of the traffic around them.

Each year, Pedestrians account for 10-15% of traffic fatalities and 550 of injuries in Oregon. Drivers and pedestrians alike must share roads. Statistics show 75% of driver errors in motor vehicle-pedestrian crashes are a failure of drivers to yield to the pedestrian. Half of the pedestrians who are struck by vehicles are hit while they are in a crosswalk.

To combat this issue specifically the Newberg-Dundee Police Department conducts crosswalk enforcement operations several times throughout the calendar year.

Funds provided by crosswalk grants enable the N.D.P.D. to stage these crosswalk enforcement operations against motorists who fail to yield to pedestrians. In these operations, a decoy police officer attempts to cross a street at an intersection or marked crosswalk. If passing motorists fail to stop and yield for the pedestrian they are issued either a warning or a citation.

The primary focus of this program is to raise awareness of the pedestrian safety issues and to reduce the number of auto/pedestrian crashes within the cities of Newberg and Dundee. Since the inception of this program, we have received a significant and positive response from citizens.

As a review, Oregon law requires that drivers stop and remain stopped for pedestrians when pedestrians are:

- In the lane in which the driver's vehicle is traveling;
- In a lane adjacent to the lane in which the driver's vehicle is traveling;
- In the lane into which the driver's vehicle is turning;
- In a lane adjacent to the lane in which the driver's vehicle is turning;
- Less than six feet from the lane into which the driver's vehicle is turning.

Remember that everyone is a pedestrian at some point during the day. Some of the most common Pedestrian errors are crossing between intersections, failure to yield the right of way to a vehicle and crossing in a crosswalk against a signal.

Drivers should always be watching for pedestrians, especially children when approaching driveways. Pedestrians move at different speeds, be alert for children who may suddenly dart out into the street, or older adults who take extra time to cross the street.

Drew Boggs is a senior motor officer with the Newberg-Dundee Police Department's traffic safety team.