

Drivers; Look out for the little pedestrians too!

With school back in session, drivers need to be more attentive than ever. This time of year it is very important that we all work together to ensure safety for all. Many people drive back and forth daily and become jaded to the minimally used crosswalks during the summer time. With classes starting last month, the City has had an influx of near misses reported from parent of children throughout the district. Although we are constantly looking to improve safety through the entire city, we need help from the citizens as well. College students are not the only ones walking in Rexburg; our little students need to be given extra consideration from drivers also. There are crosswalks near all of the elementary, Jr. High and High Schools. Not only are these students smaller in size and harder to see, they are generally seen running for their lives through crosswalks from the fear of being hit. Pedestrians should be able to cross at a normal speed and not fleeing for their precious lives. As drivers in this town we have a responsibility to protect our youth. Please look out for the little ones and familiarize yourselves with the crosswalks in town, and obey the law. Idaho State Law requires all vehicles to stop when pedestrians are in a crosswalk.

Pedestrian traffic is at an all-time high this time of year and we need everyone, pedestrians and drivers to be on high alert. Although the crosswalks usually are also indicated by a sign or lighted beacon, you as a pedestrian, cannot assume that the driver will see you or that they are going to stop for you. On the same note, drivers cannot assume that the pedestrian is going to wait for the beacon to light or even activate the flashing light. As a pedestrian please remember that it is your life and you need to be responsible for it. Although facilities have been installed to improve your safety, there is always a chance that the driver does not see you or will be able to stop, and you may be hit.

According to Police Captain Randy Lewis, the Idaho State law says "Once a pedestrian steps off the curb the vehicles are required to stop, both directions. Once the pedestrian passes the stopped vehicle and is walking away they are allow to proceed. Pedestrian are not allow to enter the cross walk when a vehicle is so close to create hazard."

Please be on the defensive side and protect yourself by taking the following measures:

- Stop, Look and Listen applies to crosswalks as well as rail road crossings.
- Follow Ordinance 1062 which states; no use of cellular or wireless devices for texting while driving or in a crosswalk or public right-of-way. Fines for violations.
- Activate crosswalk electronic devices
- Attempt to make eye contact with the drivers.
- Verify the device has started and is indicating to drivers you are there.
- Use hand held flags, if available, to increase your visibility to drivers.
- Wait for oncoming traffic to stop before stepping off curb.
- Cross the street with a **fast pace** looking at each driver as you pass.
- Enjoy the rest of your day.

As part of the "Share the Road" program we would like to encourage a safe and courteous interaction with pedestrians and drivers. We want everyone to return home safely and minimize pedestrian/vehicle encounters. As we all know, the end result of a pedestrian/vehicle encounter is often deadly. Remember that accidents happen, so when in doubt, remember it is your, life protect it!

I would like to thank the Traffic and Safety Committee not only for their suggestions on this article but their continued dedication to the safety of the pedestrians and drivers in Rexburg.

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