

September 2010

RM News & Notes

PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

Pedestrians - Myth and Fact



Myth Wearing white or bright colored clothing at night makes you as a pedestrian visible to drivers.



Fact It is difficult for drivers to see a pedestrian dressed in white or bright clothing soon enough to be able to stop for him/her. The best way to be seen at night is by wearing reflective clothing and by carrying a flashlight.



Myth As a pedestrian, if you can see the driver of a motor vehicle, the driver sees you.



Fact Don't assume that a driver sees you, even though it appears that the driver may be looking at you. Make sure the driver sees you by stopping for you before stepping into a vehicle's path.



Myth A "Walk" signal for the pedestrians means that it is safe to cross.



Fact A "Walk" signal means that the pedestrian has the right-of-way, but the pedestrian should still wait and search for vehicles before stepping into the street.



Myth A pedestrian is always safe in a crosswalk.



Fact Many pedestrians are in crosswalks when hit by a motor vehicle. Many motorists do not look for pedestrians when approaching a crosswalk, especially when preparing to make a turn. A motorist may be looking for a gap in traffic or just distracted.

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Web Page

<http://www.columbiacountyga.gov/home/index.asp?page=2440>

	Page
"Personal Safety Tips"	1
"Message from the Risk Manager"	1
"Pedestrian Safety"	2
"Policy Highlight"	3
"Upcoming Events" in September, October, November	4

Message from the Risk Manager

This month's topic came about as I was driving to work the other morning and had to change lanes to avoid the jogger running on Washington Road. I didn't, of course, but I wanted to stop and scream at him, "Have you lost your mind?" It was not fully daylight yet, so visibility was poor and the heavy morning traffic on Washington Road makes driving difficult enough without having to avoid a pedestrian in the roadway. And then there is the couple walking between vehicles across the parking lot so that you don't see them until they step right behind your vehicle as you are backing out of a parking space. Yes, as the driver of the much larger vehicle, we have a greater duty to watch out for a pedestrian but pedestrians need to use some common sense and follow general safety guidelines. Let's face it, regardless of who had "right of way" or who was "at fault": any contact between a vehicle and pedestrian is going to be really bad **for the pedestrian**. So whether you are trying to conserve energy by walking instead of driving, jogging for your health or simply walking across the Wal-Mart parking lot, protect yourself and walk safely.

Darlene

Pedestrian Safety

What are the major types of pedestrian traffic accidents?

- Pedestrians darting out mid-block in front of a vehicle.
- Running from one side of the intersection to the other.
- A vehicle turning from one street onto another.
- Pedestrian crossing a multi-lane street.
- Vehicles backing up.
- Each year thousands of pedestrians are killed while walking, running, and jogging along or across the public streets and highways in the United States. Many of these accidents can be avoided.

What can a pedestrian do to prevent pedestrian crashes?

Walk Defensively - Be prepared for the unexpected. Don't let cars surprise you even if a motorist does something wrong like running a stop sign or red light, or making a sudden turn.

Walk Facing Oncoming Traffic - When there are no sidewalks, walk near the curb or off the road, if necessary. Pedestrians should increase their visibility at night by carrying a flashlight when walking and by wearing retro-reflective clothing.

Cross Streets at Intersections Whenever Possible - Look in all directions before entering the street. Be especially alert to a vehicle that may be turning right on a red signal. If there are marked crosswalks, use them but do not assume that you are completely safe in a marked crosswalk. Don't cross at mid-block locations because "jaywalking" is dangerous and in some cases against the law.

Think About your Route - Try to walk in areas that have sidewalks or at least a good shoulder on the roadway and especially stay off of heavily traveled roads. Look where you are going – scan terrain ahead for any tripping hazards.

At Intersections, Look for the Sign or Signals - They will help you to cross safely. Use pedestrian push buttons for crossing protection at signalized intersections that have pedestrian indications. The lighted "WALK" (or walking person symbol) and "DONT WALK" (or hand symbol) signals are meant for pedestrian. If the "DONT WALK" is blinking while you are crossing the street in that direction, continue to quickly and carefully complete the crossing. If there are no pedestrian indications, watch the traffic signals. When there are only STOP or YIELD signs, or no traffic control signs, then look in all directions and only cross when traffic has cleared.

Be Careful in Parking Lots - Pedestrians are supposed to have the right-of-way in parking lots but many drivers don't wait for pedestrians. Parking lots can be more hazardous than streets. On streets the direction of traffic is usually known but in parking lots vehicles might be moving in all directions, including backwards. Don't assume the driver sees you. Be sure to look for backup lights and listen for engine noise.

Avoid Dangerous Moves - Any movement a pedestrian makes that drivers are not expecting could be dangerous. Don't step into traffic from between parked cars since this is a sure way of surprising drivers.

Keep Your View of Traffic Clear at All Times - A pedestrian needs to be able to see vehicles around him. Don't block your view with packages, umbrellas, or other objects.

Stay Alert – Keep headset volume low enough or use only one earpiece so you will still be able to hear necessary traffic or emergency vehicle noise.

Walk with a friend. Walking with a friend will add to the pleasure of your walk and increase your safety as well, as long as you are watching out for each other. But there are also some additional precautions:

- Enjoy your conversation, but don't let it distract you from watching out for road and traffic hazards as you walk.
- Move into single file and to edge or off the road as vehicles approach, especially on hills and curves so that the vehicle does not have to move into an oncoming lane.
- No "horseplay", playful pushing, tripping or "surprises" can cause a misstep that could be deadly.
- Keep hands/arms close to the body, some of us cannot carry on a conversation without using our hands for expression. That vehicle passing you may be less than an "arms length" away.

Policy Highlight

Combined Policy Handbook / Health and Safety Section

Policy Number 508.1 / *Vehicle Safety / Health and Safety*, Page 7 of 13

VII. REPORTING DRIVING CITATIONS/VIOLATIONS:

- 1) All employees whose job requires they drive Columbia County vehicles are required to report any and all traffic/moving vehicle violations to their supervisor, regardless of whether the citation was issued in the course of employment or not. Employees whose licenses are suspended will not be allowed to drive Columbia County vehicles while their licenses are suspended. **Employees hired as drivers (primary job duty) and whose license has been suspended may be subject to termination for loss of job qualifications.** (See Policy 203.1, Employee Separation and Termination, paragraph 13, Loss of Job Requirements.)

Discussion points regarding this Policy:

Just a little reminder; that driving habits off the job can impact your ability to perform your job duties, if those duties include driving a county vehicle. The policy outlined above requires county drivers to notify their supervisor if they receive any type of traffic citation or violation. Too many violations or any suspension may result in a loss of driving privileges for county vehicles and for some employees, if you can't drive the county vehicle; you can't perform your job duties and may be terminated. And for those of you who decide to not report the violation thinking no one will ever know; we do obtain a motor vehicle record, at least once per year, for every approved county driver. Penalties may be worse if the violation shows up on your record and your department/manager was not informed. Most importantly, please drive safely and legally, both on and off the job.

Georgia Code § 40-6-96. Pedestrians on or along roadway

- (a) As used in this Code section, the term "pedestrian" means any person afoot and shall include, without limitation, persons standing, walking, jogging, running, or otherwise on foot.**
- (b) Where a sidewalk is provided, it shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to stand or stride along and upon an adjacent roadway unless there is no motor vehicle traveling within 1,000 feet of such pedestrian on such roadway or the available sidewalk presents an imminent threat of bodily injury to such pedestrian.**
- (c) Where a sidewalk is not provided but a shoulder is available, any pedestrian standing or striding along and upon a highway shall stand or stride only on the shoulder, as far as practicable from the edge of the roadway.**
- (d) Where neither a sidewalk nor a shoulder is available, any pedestrian standing or striding along and upon a highway shall stand or stride as near as practicable to an outside edge of the roadway, and, if on a two-lane roadway, shall stand or stride only on the left side of the roadway.**
- (e) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, any pedestrian upon a roadway shall yield the right of way to all vehicles upon the roadway.**
- (f) No pedestrian shall enter or remain upon any bridge or approach thereto beyond the bridge signal, gate, or barrier after a bridge operation signal indication has been given.**
- (g) No pedestrian shall pass through, around, over, or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad grade crossing or bridge while such gate or barrier is closed or is being opened or closed.**

Up Coming Events

Each program is advertised by Risk Management and is available to employees of Columbia County Board of Commissioners and the city employees of Grovetown and Harlem. Additionally, the Defensive Driving Courses may be attended by immediate family members of employees, on a space available basis, for a nominal fee.

Pre-registration is required.

For additional information or to register contact Risk Management. 706-312-7475

Safety Review Board **October 14, 2010**
Safety Officer Meeting **September 15, 2010**
 October 20, 2010
 November 17, 2010

Defensive Driving **September 16, 2010**
Course – 8 hour **October 12, 2010**
 November 18, 2010

Defensive Driving
Course – 4 hour

CPR/AED/First Aid **October 28, 2010**

County Office Closed: **September 6, 2010**
 November 11, 2010
 November 25, 2010
 November 26, 2010

SEPTEMBER 2010

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Happy Labor Day

