

MOUNTAIN HOME POLICE DEPT.

2775 East 8th North ♦ Mountain Home, Idaho 83647

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Media Release

for immediate release:

Crosswalk and Side Walk Safety

Mountain Home, Idaho, Tuesday, February 8, 2011 - Well it is that time of year again when we begin to see more and more people walking and even riding bikes in our community. The traffic in and around Mountain Home continues to increase as well and then we wonder what should we, the motoring public do? While pedestrians can not impeded flowing traffic or dart out in front of a vehicle, the chance that this may happen still exist.

In Idaho the latest statistics show that crashes involving pedestrians decreased by 5% in 2009 and the number of pedestrians killed in motor vehicle crashes decreased by 9%. Of all pedestrians involved in crashes in 2009, 97% received some degree of injury. Of those injured or killed in pedestrian crashes, 21% were between the ages of 4 and 14. Of the pedestrians killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2009, 1 was 1 year of age, 2 were under 25 years of age, and 7 were 44 years of age or older. Impaired pedestrians were involved in 9% of all pedestrian crashes and 33% of fatal pedestrian crashes.

The number of bicycle crashes increased in 2009 by 6%, one of the few areas that crashes have increased the past couple of years. This may be a result of people using alternate forms of transportation due to the high price of fuel and the poor economy. Of the bicyclists involved in crashes in 2009, 99% received some degree of injury. Of all bicyclists involved in crashes in 2009, 19% were between the ages of 4 and 14.

While cross walk safety is both the responsibility of the pedestrian and the motorist there are some things that we need to know and do;

You need to know that according to an article titled "Killing Speed and Saving Lives" a vehicle traveling a 20 MPH requires a minimum of 40 feet to stop. According to their study five percent of the pedestrians were fatally injured. When the speed increased to 30 MPH, the motorist need 75 feet to stop and 45% of pedestrians involved in those crashes were fatally injured. Increasing your speed to 40 MPH the motorist needed 120 feet to stop and 85% of the pedestrians involved in these crashes were fatally injured.

If you travel the speed limit or slow down for conditions and are cautious and courteous, these tragedies can be avoided. Much of the threat to walking safely comes from motorists' speed. The faster a motorist drives, the more likely he or she is to be involved in a crash, and the more likely injuries to a person on foot will be serious, if not fatal.

When a motorist meets a pedestrian in the road at a marked cross walk, who has the Right of Way?

According to Idaho Code 49-702 :

1. When traffic-control signals are not in place or not in operation the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping, if need be, to yield to a pedestrian crossing the highway within a crosswalk.
2. No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard.

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3. Whenever any vehicle is stopped at a marked crosswalk or at an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection to permit a pedestrian to cross the highway, the driver of any other vehicle approaching from the rear shall not overtake and pass the stopped vehicle.

4. Except where otherwise indicated by a crosswalk or other traffic-control devices a pedestrian shall cross the highway at right angles to the curb or by the shortest route to the opposite curb.

When pedestrians are crossing a street or highway at other than crosswalks, who has the Right of Way?

According to Idaho Code 49-704:

1. Every pedestrian crossing a highway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon the highway.

2. Any pedestrian crossing a highway at a point where a pedestrian tunnel or overhead pedestrian crossing has been provided shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon the highway.

3. Between adjacent intersections at which traffic-control signals are in operation, pedestrians shall not cross at any place except in a marked crosswalk.

4. No pedestrian shall cross a highway intersection diagonally unless authorized by traffic-control devices. When authorized to cross diagonally, pedestrians shall cross only in accordance with the traffic-control devices pertaining to crossing movements.

Some things to remember:

Know where the crosswalks are. Crosswalks exist on all four corners of most intersections, whether or not they are marked by painted lines.

Do not stop in the crosswalk. Instead, stop behind the stop bar so that pedestrians can cross the street safely.

When approaching a car in another lane that has stopped at a crosswalk, STOP. A pedestrian is probably crossing the street in front of that car.

Before pulling out of a driveway, parking lot or garage, stop behind the sidewalk and check for pedestrians who might be using the sidewalk.

When stopping, standing or parking a vehicle, stay off of sidewalks and avoid blocking the sidewalk area of driveways.

Things to remember when teaching our children:

Kids see and hear the world differently than adults:

Kids have trouble judging traffic speed, gaps in traffic, or whether a car is coming, going or standing still.

Kids have trouble understanding that a car can't stop as quickly as they can.

Kids often think that if they can see a car, then the driver can see them, even if they are standing behind a shrub or parked car.

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Kids don't realize that drivers are paying attention to many things and aren't focused on just them.

Kids are short, so being able to see in and around cars is more difficult for them.

Kids have limited ability to detect traffic in their side vision.

Kids focus on one thing at a time. When they're concentrating on a ball game in their yard, they're not thinking about nearby traffic.

You're a Pedestrian, Too!

A little courtesy goes a long way. Remember what it's like to be on foot, and how much you appreciate it when a motorist stops for you. You can make a difference and remember to "Click It and Don't Risk It" Buckle Up !!!

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