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“Crosswalk Safety”

The weather is getting nicer. More people are out and about walking and riding their bikes. It's a good time to remember to be extra cautious. Pedestrians can be injured any time of the day or night even if they are properly crossing the street within a crosswalk.

City of Norfolk Police Chief Bill Mizner said that pedestrians and drivers can never be too careful when it comes to meeting each other on the streets.



“The sun’s glare may prevent a driver from seeing a child on a bike crossing the street or a pedestrian may start walking across the street and not notice a pickup that is turning right into their path. It takes vigilance on the part of both driver and pedestrian to be safe on the streets,” Mizner said.

To stay safe, pedestrians should always cross the street at an intersection crosswalk. According to City of Norfolk ordinances pertaining to crosswalks, pedestrians are to walk on the right half of the crosswalk whenever possible. Those who are on bikes and are travelling on the sidewalk need to dismount from and walk their bike through the crosswalk.

Drivers of vehicles, by law, must stop when a pedestrian is crossing a roadway within any marked or unmarked crosswalk at the end of the block. The only time they would not have to do so is if there is a traffic signal at the intersection that regulates traffic or a police officer who is directing traffic. A fine of \$50 to \$500 can be assessed to the driver of a vehicle who doesn’t stop to let a pedestrian cross at a marked or unmarked crosswalk. Drivers of vehicles who attempt to pass another vehicle that has stopped to let a pedestrian cross the street can also be fined.

“Multiple lane streets are especially dangerous for pedestrians,” Mizner said. “Several pedestrians have been

killed or seriously injured in Norfolk over the years in situations where the vehicle in the outside lane yielded to the pedestrian, but the vehicle in the inside lane failed to stop. Pedestrians need to check each lane of traffic as they cross the street to make sure drivers see them and are stopping.”

If a pedestrian chooses to cross the roadway at a point other than a crosswalk, they need to yield the right of way to all vehicles. According to city ordinance, a pedestrian is not to cross the street between two intersections where there are traffic lights at each intersection.

Drivers of vehicles still need to use diligence to watch for those pedestrians who are attempting to cross streets at a point where there are no crosswalks.

“Drivers not paying attention to their driving is one of the biggest causes of collisions,” said Mizner. “Although a driver’s eyes may be on the road, his or her mind is often focused on something else. “

“If the drivers of vehicles drive the speed limit and watch carefully for pedestrians and bicyclists, it would definitely make it safer for all. At the same time, pedestrians and bicyclists need to be very observant of what is going on around them,” Mizner said.