



There are approximately 10,000 individuals who met—and lost—in the uneven match of people versus machine every year. How do you avoid that child who darts in front of your vehicle chasing a ball or trying to save a puppy? Or how about the jaywalkers, the day-dreamers and the invisible bike riders—how do you avoid these possible victims of a horrible man-machine contest?

Although pedestrian safety should be a two-way responsibility between driver and pedestrian, the driver is usually responsible for any consequences. Therefore, we as drivers must look at pedestrians as caution signs.

Reducing Pedestrian Accidents

There are some definite precautions that must be taken to reduce the pedestrian accidents. Many of these are required by law.

For example, at an intersection with no traffic controls, we are required by law to yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian in a crosswalk when the pedestrian is on the side of the roadway in which we are traveling. Legislation further states that a crosswalk does not have to be painted or marked to be a crosswalk. The crosswalk is defined as the continuation of the sidewalk across the roadway to the sidewalk on the other side.

The law also states that a driver must be extremely careful to avoid striking a pedestrian on the street regardless of the right-of-way. Remember, we as drivers must avoid striking pedestrians. We must slow down in residential areas, school zones, shopping areas and parking lots. We must constantly be on the alert for these human caution signs.

Extra Caution Required

While traveling, let's look out for situations that require extra caution. In heavily congested areas, we must reduce our speed to give us that added second needed to avoid striking pedestrians if they dart from behind another vehicle.

And in shopping areas, there's the person who parks on the street and opens his or her door into traffic. That open door is a warning light; many times it means that someone is ready to step out in front of you. Slow down and be alert for this warning sign.



Instructive Experiences

On the other side of the fence, many drivers can give excellent instructions to their families and friends. Think about those situations when you just missed a pedestrian accident, and then turn it into a lesson, instructing others not to put themselves in this particular situation. And remember to practice what you preach—we should be model pedestrians.

Let's all tell our families that they should cross only in designated areas or, if this is not possible, to yield to motor vehicles. Or when walking along a road at night, remind them that they should wear reflective clothing and walk along the left shoulder of the road. And when riding bicycles, they should have reflective flags or other devices on them so they can be easily recognized.

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