

## New Laws for Drivers Help Keep Pedestrians Safe


Pedestrian deaths in Oregon rose in 2005. Through December 26, 2005, there were 48 pedestrian deaths versus 42 in 2004 according to ODOT. This is a 13% increase in pedestrian fatalities over the past year.

Some attribute the rise in crashes involving pedestrians to budget cuts. Fewer financial resources available to police means fewer officers on the streets, which translates into more crashes. The increases have also been fueled by a jump in alcohol-related fatalities. Portland Police Traffic Division statistics show that alcohol related traffic deaths doubled from 9 in 1999 to 18 in 2003. In addition, traffic congestion has gotten worse due to steadily increasing population bases in many of Oregon's urban centers.

Oregon DMV points out that up to half of pedestrian-vehicle crashes are the pedestrian's fault. Pedestrians often don't use crosswalks, they may jaywalk or cross against signals and they may not realize the importance of being able to see traffic and be seen by traffic. Pedestrians may also be hampered by the presence of personal electronic devices, such as cell phones and iPods, which distract attention and impair the ability to hear traffic signals or approaching vehicles.

This flier available from TSD

**Oregon's Crosswalk Laws Have Changed**



← Before turning at a crosswalk with a signal, it's 1 + 6. Your lane plus six feet. Stop for the pedestrian, who must clear the lane into which the vehicle is turning PLUS 6 feet beyond that lane, before you proceed.

At any other crosswalk, it's 1 + 1. Your lane plus the next lane. Stop for the pedestrian, who must clear the lane in which the vehicle is travelling or turning PLUS the next lane, before you proceed. →

Fine = \$242; \$355 in School Zones

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Senate Bill 591, which took effect January 1 2006, makes turning at intersections with traffic signals and pedestrian crossings easier for drivers. The Bill allows motorists to make a turn at a signaled intersection once a pedestrian is six feet across the lane next to the one a motorist wishes to turn into. That's slightly more than the width of a typical car. This bill created an exception to the 2004 law that required motorists to stop and wait until a pedestrian crossed both the driver's lane and the next lane before turning.

“Lawmakers heard feedback from motorists that the full-lane requirement sometimes prevented drivers from making turns at busy signalized intersections,” said Julie Yip, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, ODOT Transportation Safety Division. “The six-foot buffer is intended to give pedestrians space for a safe crossing without forcing a motorist to wait unnecessarily before making a turn.”

Under Oregon law, a crosswalk exists at any public street intersection, whether marked or unmarked. Crosswalks also exist between intersections (mid-block) where indicated.

At a traffic signal, drivers must:

- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane in which the driver is traveling and the adjacent lane.
- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane into which the driver's vehicle is turning and at least 6 feet of the adjacent lane.

At any other crosswalk – those without a signal – drivers must:

- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane in which the driver is traveling, or turning into, and the adjacent lane.
- Always obey directions of crossing guards.

Several intersections have multiple lanes. “A stopped car may be a clue that a pedestrian is crossing,” Yip said. “Don't pass until you know what is going on. It is illegal in Oregon to pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk for a pedestrian.”

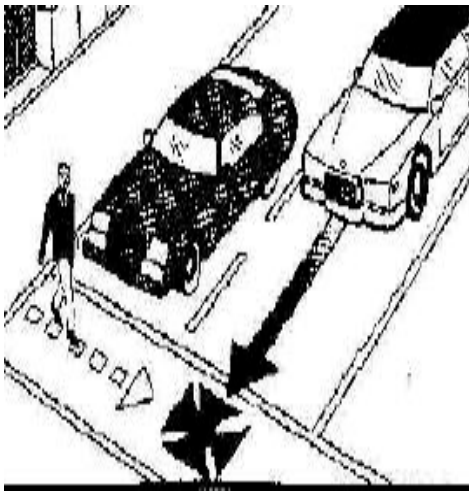


Illustration of multiple-threat pedestrian crash.