

# MUST STOP FOR PEDESTRIANS

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the purpose of this law?**

The law requires motorists (and bicyclists) to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. This will ensure safety for all road users and encourage healthy, environmentally-friendly modes of active transportation, like walking and biking.

### **What was wrong with the previous law?**

The previous law was unclear and difficult to enforce. This law clarifies driver responsibility from “yield and stop when necessary” to “must stop for pedestrians.” The law is now easy to understand and easier to enforce.

Pedestrian safety is a serious issue in Illinois. More than 6,000 pedestrians are hit each year by cars. Out of that 6,000, 172 people are killed and 1,000 are seriously injured.

### **What is the new fine for hitting a pedestrian?**

Fines will not change under this law. Fines are established on a county-by-county basis, and can vary based on several factors including court costs and whether the crash involved a hit-and-run scenario.

### **Aren't most pedestrian fatalities the result of pedestrians behaving irresponsibly?**

No. Most pedestrian fatalities occur in crosswalks, where pedestrians already have a right to walk. This law applies to those spaces.

### **Can't we accomplish the same goals with an education campaign?**

The previous law was unclear and very difficult to enforce, which made it difficult to stage a public education campaign. Education must be part of the strategy to implement this new law. It is clear: Stop for pedestrians.

### **Don't people have to take responsibility for themselves?**

Yes. More than 30 percent of pedestrian fatalities are children. About 20 percent of all pedestrian crashes occur within 800 feet of a school. This law is designed to save the lives of the more than 50 children killed each year by drivers in Illinois. The law creates a simple, clear statewide standard for both drivers and pedestrians. This merely clarifies responsibilities.

### **But my community doesn't have any pedestrian crashes.**

We are delighted that you can easily walk in your community. Unfortunately, most communities in Illinois are not safe for pedestrians. In 2007, 62 pedestrians were killed in downstate Illinois, 61 were killed in the City of Chicago and 49 were killed in the surrounding suburbs. Pedestrian crashes occur in all communities, on all types of roads, at all times. This law is part of a statewide solution.



Although the specifics around pedestrian crashes might vary by community, it is clear that safety needs to be addressed. In the urban areas, there are more crashes but they are less severe. (In Cook County, 17 percent of pedestrian crashes result in serious injuries or death – 840 of 4,871 crashes). When pedestrian crashes occur in collar counties, higher rates of speed result in greater severity. (In collar counties, 27.9 percent of pedestrian crashes result in serious injuries or death – 178 of 637 crashes). In the rural areas, crashes are most severe. (Downstate, 29.1 percent of pedestrian crashes result in serious injuries or death – 248 of 852 crashes). This law addresses all of those variables.

### **Will this law require bicyclists to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks?**

Yes. Bicyclists are required by state law to follow the same rules of the road as motorists.

### **Will this law put additional burdens on our police departments?**

Police chiefs across Illinois support this law because it makes enforcement easier and less subjective. The Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and Illinois State Police supported the legislation (HB 43).

### **Can home rule entities enact their own laws?**

No. Illinois law requires uniform adoption of traffic safety laws in order to ensure consistency and safety. Different laws in different parts of the state would require multiple trainings for police, different signs and different court procedures. That would be costly and ineffective. Pedestrian safety laws must be simple and easy to understand if they are going to be effective.

### **Won't this law contribute to the unfair practice of the racial profiling of drivers?**

Racial profiling should not be tolerated. Nor should the preventable deaths of more than 50 children in Illinois each year. This law is clearly focused on protecting children, families and residents that already have a right to be in the crosswalk. Furthermore, minorities are being disproportionately hurt by bad drivers. A Centers for Disease Control analysis of pedestrian crash data found that the Hispanic population suffers a pedestrian death rate of 2.88 per 100,000 people, a rate 62 percent higher than the 1.78 rate for non-Hispanic whites. The same report found death rates for African Americans were even higher, at 3.01 per 100,000 people, a rate almost 70 percent higher than the rate for non-Hispanic whites.

### **What should I do if I see a violation of the law?**

Call 911 or your local police department.

### **Have more questions?**

Email [info@activetrans.org](mailto:info@activetrans.org) or call 312.427.3325

