

A Message from Davidson Police Chief Penny Dunn



When things get tough, we benefit by reminding ourselves of the simple things. People live in Davidson to stay connected to the simple things of a small town - knowing your neighbors, walking or riding your bike to school/work, concerts on the green, the farmer's market, and enjoying a slower pace. The peace that comes from being a small, college town includes harmony with our friends, neighbors, and other residents who enjoy moving around town on bicycles and on foot. You see the signs each time you enter the town limits reminding everyone of the pride taken in being – ***A bicycle and pedestrian friendly community.***

But occasionally, a reminder is helpful on the basics of safe movement in a vehicle, on a bicycle, or on foot. **Awareness of these basics is a lifesaving mindset.**

Basics for drivers of vehicles:

- Drivers may cross the double-yellow lines to safely pass a cyclist when the on-coming lane is clear. This provides greater space to allow for a cyclist to avoid road debris and give room for error should the cyclist fall.
- Exercise heightened awareness where there is a bike lane or crosswalk, and make sure it is clear before turning right. Also, make sure the bike lane is clear when turning left. Approaching vehicles often block your view of a cyclist in the oncoming bike lane.
- Cyclists are encouraged to use the bike lanes but may use the full lane, even where a bike lane is present. Cyclists may use the full lane for greater visibility, to avoid vehicles blocking the bike lane, to avoid a driver/backseat passenger opening a vehicle door into the bike lane, and/or to avoid debris in the bike lane
- Give cyclists clearance space. State law requires a minimum of three feet, but five is best, to allow space for a cyclist to avoid debris and give space for error should the cyclist fall.
- Cyclists may ride two-abreast. Cyclists will double up to improve visibility and to reduce the length of a cycling group.
- Do not drive distracted. Put down the phone and give full attention to the road.
- SLOW DOWN – speed limits are purposely set low due to the large number of pedestrians and cyclists using connecting roadways for commuting and exercise.

Basics for cyclists:

- Obey traffic laws on the roadways. Cyclists are considered vehicles in North Carolina and must heed all traffic laws when on the public roads.
- Cyclists must walk their bicycles through a crosswalk. Cyclists can approach an area as a vehicle and proceed while obeying traffic laws requiring stops for pedestrians, stop signs, and traffic lights.
- Pedestrians have the right-of-way on the sidewalks, crosswalks, and on the greenway. Stop for crossing pedestrians and give way to pedestrians walking and running on sidewalks and greenways.
- Some inexperienced riders and children will ride on their bicycles on sidewalks and greenways for separation from vehicular traffic. This is reasonable except in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic, such as downtown. The cyclist on a sidewalk or greenway must give way to pedestrians by stopping or walking with their bike.
- Cyclists are encouraged to use provided bike lanes, exercising caution where on-street parking is adjacent to the bike lane.
- Cyclists should use hand signals to alert anyone of their intentions (left turn, right turn, stopping). Most of those signals are universal and easily understood by all.
- Do not ride distracted. Put down the phone/lower the volume and give full attention to the road.
- Cyclists must also have a headlight and tail-light when operating during night-time hours. Wearing light, bright colors and reflective material also improves visibility.
- Helmets are required by law in the State of North Carolina for anyone 16 years and under. This includes cyclist and passengers on a bike. Children under 16 riding/cycling without a helmet can result in a fine for the parents. Since helmets can help reduce some serious injuries, Adults are encouraged to always wear a helmet too.

Basics for pedestrians:

- Use crosswalks where provided and cross at the direction of pedestrian crossing lights. Do not "jay-walk" between crosswalks.
- When entering a crosswalk –
 - Make sure approaching vehicles are slowing down to a stop before going further into the roadway, including those behind the first vehicle in line;
 - Make eye contact with driver(s) to ensure they see you;
 - Use crosswalk lights or bright orange hand-flags to alert drivers of your presence in the crosswalk (vehicles are not required to stop until you enter the crosswalk);
 - Cross as quickly as you are able
- Do not walk/run while distracted. Put away the phone and give full attention to your surroundings. Make sure headphone volume is low enough to hear someone (cyclist or another pedestrian) give you a warning about passing you on the sidewalk/greenway or to hear a vehicle approaching.
- Wear light, bright colors and reflective material to improve visibility, carry and/or wear a light when walking/running during times of low light.

We all want to be healthy and safe. Adhering to these basics each time you are moving around town could save a life, including your own.