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## Think About Road Safety

### drivers, cyclists and pedestrians – be mindful of the risks

Road safety is taught from an early age: how to cross the road, being aware of traffic and the possible consequences of not taking care. Unfortunately there are distractions. From a child's point of view it's just another thing to learn; and along with schoolwork is a lesson that often takes second place to more enjoyable pastimes. So, when the ball bounces into the road, the priority is to go get it. The child doesn't consider traffic – that's only an issue if going out with Mum and dad, or to and from school when there are usually crossing guards to remind kids and drivers to do the right thing.

Unfortunately, adults are great at dishing out road-safety advice to the kids; but often they forget it also applies to them. So, at the risk of teaching grandma how to suck eggs, here are some reminders for everyone...

#### **Pedestrians:**

- ✳ Be aware that drivers don't always see you and they may be travelling at speed.
- ✳ Cross roads in designated areas where provided, and avoid jaywalking.
- ✳ Never dash across a busy highway; and obey any crossing signals to the letter.
- ✳ Be extra-cautious when stepping into the road from between parked vehicles.
- ✳ If pushing a baby carriage, be especially mindful that the child is ahead of you and extremely vulnerable.
- ✳ Mobile phone users – NEVER cross roads with your eyes glued to the iPhone!
- ✳ Music via earpieces may prevent hearing warning signals and approaching vehicles.
- ✳ When walking at night, wear light-coloured clothing; carry a flashlight; and, whether day or night, stay on the side facing on-coming traffic.

#### **Cyclists:**

- ✳ Wear a safety helmet.
- ✳ Use cycle paths where provided; and be considerate of pedestrians.
- ✳ Don't weave in and out of traffic to get front spot at traffic lights.
- ✳ Remember that vehicles have blind spots and the driver may not have seen you.
- ✳ Be careful of trucks; especially those turning at intersections.
- ✳ Don't tail-gate vehicles to use the wind factor.
- ✳ When you are riding with other cyclists, stay in single file on busy highways.
- ✳ When you hear an emergency siren, it applies to you as well as motor vehicles.
- ✳ Never ride at night without lights; and wear light-coloured or reflective clothing.

## Drivers:

- ✳ Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy.
- ✳ Road rules are to be obeyed by you, and not just everyone else!
- ✳ Before you head off, buckle up.
- ✳ Always drive within the speed limit; and slower if conditions require.
- ✳ Other road users make mistakes, so anticipate them; and hope they reciprocate.
- ✳ Never tailgate; and remember – only morons hoon!
- ✳ Road rage is for animals who shouldn't be behind the wheel.
- ✳ Even if you think the road is clear, always signal your intentions.
- ✳ When stationary, check behind for approaching vehicles before opening your door and stepping out.
- ✳ Be particularly careful driving residential streets where children may be playing.
- ✳ Observe pedestrian-crossing rules; and be tolerant of people who are a bit slow.
- ✳ Anticipate when approaching traffic lights and allow sufficient time to stop.
- ✳ If allowed, when driving country roads, use low-beam headlights. Even at a distance, you will be more visible to oncoming traffic and less likely to cop an over-taker head-on.
- ✳ If you hit someone or something, it is your legal and moral obligation to stop and render assistance.
- ✳ Don't have the music up so loud that you can't hear what's going on outside your vehicle.

If we all did the right thing on the roads, our emergency services would have more time to attend cases other than those caused by our inattention and occasional stupidity. If I were one of them, I'd be hoping one day to be saying a huge thank you to the general public which, at long last, had come to its senses. With everyone thinking about road safety, **really thinking**, I mean - it could happen.

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