

Columbia County Traffic Safety Team introduces new crosswalk markings, focuses on pedestrian safety

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Squares in the crosswalk mark the safe area for pedestrians and 'shark's teeth' show where vehicles must stop at this new crosswalk on S. Marion Avenue. (FDOT photo)

A new pedestrian crosswalk on South Marion Avenue (U.S. 441) in front of the VA Medical Center will be the focus of the Columbia Traffic Safety Team over the next several months as pedestrians and motorists need to become accustomed to using the newly improved crosswalk.

Motorists are required by law to stop whenever a pedestrian steps into the crosswalk to cross the street. Violations in Columbia County are \$149 and three points assessed against a driving record. (Florida Statutes 316.130 (7) (b))

Pedestrians are also required to use a crosswalk if one is present. Not using the crosswalk can result in a citation totaling \$49 in Columbia County. (Florida

Statutes 316.130 (8))

The main reason for stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks is for safety. Florida has one of the highest rates of pedestrian injuries in the nation. Each year more than 8,000 pedestrians are injured and 500 are killed. Pedestrians age 70 and older account for more injuries than any other age group.

Pedestrians should never step in front of a moving vehicle but should indicate they want to cross the street by placing one foot off the curb in the street and wait for the car(s) to come to a stop. Pedestrians should continue to look for oncoming traffic as they cross each lane.

Motorists should stop at least 30 feet back from the crosswalk so pedestrians can see cars in other lanes (if appropriate). Drivers should also wait until pedestrians have crossed at least one lane before proceeding.

Together, motorists and pedestrians can make safety a priority in Columbia County by following the pedestrian crosswalk law.

The Columbia Traffic Safety Team includes representatives of the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Highway Patrol, Columbia County Sheriff's Department, Lake City Police Department, Columbia County Fire/Emergency Medical Services, Lake City Fire Department, Columbia County School System, Shands and Safe Kids, Columbia County Public Works Department, Lake City Public Works Department, Columbia County Health Department, Columbia County Emergency Management and FDOT Office of Motor Carrier Compliance.

The Columbia Community Traffic Safety Team meets the third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. and their mission is to reduce the number of traffic fatalities in Columbia County through enforcement, emergency services, engineering and education.

For more information on the Traffic Safety Team, contact Gina Busscher with FDOT at 758-3714