

## CHAPTER 7

**PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, AND ANIMALS**

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and animals pose special problems for drivers. It is often difficult to see pedestrians, bicyclists, and animals on the road. You must be alert to avoid collisions with them.

**PEDESTRIANS**

Pedestrians are a poor match for the automobile. In the United States, about 10,000 of them are killed in traffic accidents each year. When pedestrians are involved in collisions, speeds of no greater than 15 or 20 MPH often prove fatal.

It is true that pedestrians often violate laws passed for their protection. They may walk along highways with their backs to oncoming traffic. They often ignore crosswalks and cross in the middle of a block. Children dart out into the street without looking for traffic. Nevertheless, after one has killed a child, it is not much comfort to know that the child was at least partly to blame. Pedestrians will be safe on streets and highways only when drivers are willing to be their brothers' keepers.

You should let the pedestrian know your intentions. Whenever a pedestrian may be affected by you turning, stopping, or starting, the law requires you to blow your horn regardless of which of you has the right-of-way. Be careful how you blow your horn. A long, loud blast can frighten and confuse a pedestrian, increasing instead of minimizing the danger. Use your horn as a warning signal, not as a command to get out of your way. Whenever you blow your horn to warn a pedestrian, your foot should be off the accelerator and ready to depress the brake pedal.

Anticipate the pedestrian's intentions. If you see a person in the street, slowdown and get ready to stop. He may be able to take care of himself, but do not depend on it. He may get confused and walk right in front of you. Never pass another vehicle that has stopped to permit a pedestrian to cross.

Watch people on the sidewalks and at the side of the road. They may not stay there. Leave room between your vehicle and a row of parked vehicles. Someone may step out from between them at any moment. When near pedestrians, drive slowly.

If you should come upon a pedestrian walking with his back to you on your side of the highway, blow your horn well before you get to him. If he is warned of your approach, he is unlikely to step out in front of you. When you pass a pedestrian walking along a highway, allow plenty of room between him and your vehicle.

In school zones, slowdown to the posted speed limit and watch for children. Obey the directions given by members of the school safety patrol or by school Crossing guards.

When stopped by the stop signal of a school bus, do not move until the bus is placed in motion and the highway is clear of students.

Observe these rules at intersections:

- At intersections with no traffic lights, pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- A blind pedestrian is entitled by law to special consideration at intersections with no traffic lights. If a blind pedestrian holds out a white cane or a white cane tipped with red or if he is accompanied by a guide dog, all vehicles approaching the intersection must stop. They must remain stopped until the blind pedestrian has completed his crossing.
- At intersections controlled by ordinary traffic lights, pedestrians obey the same signals as drivers. When crossing on a green light, they have the right-of-way. If a light changes to yellow or red while a pedestrian is still in the street, drivers must allow him to complete his crossing safely.

- At some intersections, special lights instruct pedestrians either to walk or to wait. Where these lights are in operation, pedestrians must obey them instead of the regular traffic lights. Pedestrians crossing on a special pedestrian signal have the right-of-way just as they do when crossing on a green light.
- If you are going through an intersection on a green light and a pedestrian starts to cross in front of you against a red light, warn him with your horn. If he does not stop, then you must stop. If you save a life, losing your right-of-way will be worthwhile. The safe driver yields the right-of-way to a pedestrian when the pedestrian is entitled to it and even when he is not.

Obey traffic rules when you are a pedestrian. As a military vehicle driver, you will frequently find yourself in this role. When you walk, be as careful as you want pedestrians to be when you are driving.

When you cross a street, cross at an intersection or crosswalk if one is available. Before you cross, stop and look in both directions. Be sure that you can get all the way across or to a safety island before the light changes.

Remember, pedestrians as well as drivers must obey traffic lights. Never start to cross on a red or yellow light. Do not start to cross on a green light if you know it is just about to change.

When walking or jogging along a road without sidewalks, use the left shoulder and face oncoming traffic. When a vehicle approaches, get off as far as necessary for safety. At night, carry a flashlight or a

light-reflecting object that will enable drivers to see you better. The lights of an oncoming vehicle may be bright enough to blind you, but its driver may not see you.

## BICYCLISTS

The number of bicycles being used on streets and highways is growing daily, both for exercise purposes and for transportation in city areas. Bicyclists are expected to obey the same traffic rules and regulations as vehicle drivers, but many are children who may not obey or even know the rules.

A major problem for drivers is their inability to see bicyclists, especially at night. Sometimes they may be in the blind spot of your vehicle. Keep on the lookout and slow down when you approach bicyclists. Tap your horn lightly if necessary to let them know where you are. Give them plenty of room when passing and be prepared to stop suddenly.

## ANIMALS

Stock laws vary from state to state and in some instances are not properly enforced. Therefore, a vehicle operator should always be alert to the possibility of a collision with an animal. Collision with even a small animal can cause serious vehicle damage and endanger human life. As a vehicle operator, you must be thoroughly familiar with and obey all local laws. You must also exercise your best judgment and drive defensively at all times to avoid endangering animals, human life, and property.