

Pedestrians and the Roadway

The question has been asked about pedestrians and the use of sidewalks. The City ordinance and the State statute address the topic in various ways. Within our City are many residential and commercial areas that have sidewalks for pedestrians. However in those areas that do not have sidewalks it is important to know and understand the responsibilities of drivers and pedestrians. Tennessee Code Annotated 55-8-138 states, "where sidewalks are provided, it is unlawful for any pedestrian to walk or use a wheelchair along and upon an adjacent roadway." This simply says if there is a sidewalk, you must use it. Also in the statute, where there is no sidewalk, pedestrians and wheelchairs are permitted to walk or travel on the left side (against traffic) of the road, or its shoulder, facing traffic. Pedestrians on the road should walk in single file while facing traffic. A wheelchair may travel on the right side (with traffic) of the road, or its shoulder, if it is more convenient and practical. In all circumstances, the driver of a vehicle must exercise due care to avoid colliding with a pedestrian, TCA 55-8-136. The driver of a vehicle, and a pedestrian lawfully in the street must consider road width, visibility, and speed to ensure the safety of all. Also remember the bicycle rider. Bicycles may be ridden on the road and must follow the rules and regulations as vehicles. Bicycles travel in the same direction as vehicular traffic. Bike riders are permitted to ride two abreast on the road, and, all drivers must provide at least three (3) feet of clearance (TCA 55-8-175) when overtaking a bicycle rider. Should you have any questions about this or other police matters, I can be reached at (931) 455-0530, or pblackwell@tullahomatin.gov .