

Gilford Police Department

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RULES OF THE ROAD: SAFETY LAWS FOR BICYCLISTS & PEDESTRIANS

Preparedness is essential in keeping citizens safe during outdoor recreational activities.

During a recent July "Coffee with the Chief" event several Gilford residents expressed their concerns to Chief Anthony Bean Burpee regarding the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians who take to the Town's roadways for exercise and/or recreation purposes. Several stories were shared with the Chief about vehicles encountering individuals on bikes or walking along streets in which there had been "close calls" or "near misses" due to limited visibility on the part of some bikers and walkers, as well as some not necessarily following established rules of the road. In such situations, the safety of all individuals upon roadways is of the utmost importance.

Upon hearing from the residents regarding their concerns, Chief Bean Burpee realized an opportunity had been presented to him to assist in educating bicyclists and pedestrians as to New Hampshire laws pertaining to them. While all NH laws can be obtained online (www.gencourt.state.nh.us), the following are a few reminders pertaining to pedestrians' rights and duties and special rules for bicycles.

Pedestrians:

- Unless otherwise directed by a police officer, pedestrians shall obey all traffic sign instructions or regulations.
- Pedestrians crossing roadways at any point other than within marked crosswalks shall yield the right of way to all vehicles.
- Between intersections where designated crosswalks are present, pedestrians shall not cross at any place except in such marked crosswalks.
- On roadways where sidewalks are provided pedestrians are required to use them as it is unlawful to walk along and upon adjacent roadways.
- On roadways where sidewalks are not provided, pedestrians shall walk against traffic only on the roadway shoulder or as near as practicable to the outside edge, and shall yield the right of way to all vehicles upon the roadway.

- In crosswalks where pedestrian-control signals (i.e., “Walk” or “Don’t Walk”) are present, pedestrians shall only cross when the steady or flashing “Walk” signal is illuminated. Should they be partially completed crossing on a “Walk” signal when a “Don’t Walk” signal illuminates, pedestrians should immediately continue to the sidewalk or safety island.

Bicyclists:

- Every person operating a bicycle is subject to all of the same duties applicable to motor vehicle operators under the rules of the road (e.g., signaling turns, stopping at stop signs and red lights, yielding to oncoming traffic, etc.).
- Bicycles shall not carry more persons at one time than the number for which they are designed and equipped.
- Bicyclists shall not carry packages, bundles and/or articles that prevent them from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars.
- Persons riding bicycles two or more abreast shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic and, on laned roadways, shall ride within a single lane.
- Bicyclists less than 16 years of age are required to wear protective headgear while riding upon public ways.
- Bicyclists shall wear at least one item of reflective outerwear apparel (e.g., vest, jacket, helmet strip, etc.) during the period of ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise.
- No bicycles shall be operated unless the steering, brakes, tires and other required equipment are in safe condition. During darkness, bicycles shall be equipped with a white headlamp and a red, rear-facing reflector, both visible for at a minimum distance of 300 feet.
- Any bicyclists shall stop upon demand of a peace officer in order to permit their bicycle to be inspected.

Chief Bean Burpee wants to remind Gilford residents that reflective safety vests, available in various sizes and limited to two per household, can be purchased for a \$5.00 donation each (payable to the Gilford Police Relief Association) directly from the Gilford Police Department. Gilford Police partnered with the IRONMAN® Foundation in order to make safety vests available to local residents. “This proactive and progressive police approach at keeping community members safe is at the forefront of everything we do,” says Chief Bean Burpee.

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