



# 10-4

A weekly Q&A  
with local  
law enforcement

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## Q: What rights and responsibilities does a pedestrian have at intersections?

A: Minnesota State Law is quite clear when it comes to giving pedestrians not only the right-of-way at intersections but in also describing their responsibilities as well.

MSS 169.21 states that pedestrians first of all are to obey all traffic-control signals. In other words, pedestrians still have to obey stop lights and walk signals at controlled intersections where a traffic light is in place. Where there are no traffic-control signals or they are not in working operation, the driver of a vehicle shall stop and yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a marked crosswalk or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk. The driver must remain stopped until the pedestrian has passed the lane in which the vehicle is stopped. Remember, there does not have to be a marked crosswalk as this law states the "crosswalk" exists even if it is not marked at an intersection.

Another important part of this law also addresses the responsibilities of the pedestrian as well. It states: "No pedestrian shall leave a curb and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield." In other words, a pedestrian cannot simply walk down the sidewalk and continue walking into the intersection without hesitating for a moment to make sure that any stopped or turning vehicles see them. A pedestrian cannot just walk out into an intersection without first looking for the presence of vehicles themselves.

The pedestrian also forfeits their right-of-way if they cross the street at any location other than the intersection, as the law also states: "Every pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than at a marked crosswalk or at an intersection shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles."

Penalties for breaking these laws are also covered: "A person who violates this law is guilty of a misdemeanor and is guilty of a gross misdemeanor if they violate this a second time within a one year period from their first conviction.

The important thing to remember is that it is not only the responsibility of vehicles to exercise due caution when approaching intersections, but that pedestrians must also do so. As a pedestrian, always take a quick look before you begin to cross to make sure vehicles see you and acknowledge your presence. Pedestrian safety is the most important point.

**Officer Charlie Eichten #7113**  
*Owatonna Police Department*