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A weekly Q&A
with local
law enforcement

Submit your question to news@owatonna.com or 444-2379

Q: Are there any laws or safety tips for people walking or jogging?

A: Minnesota State Statute 169.21 addresses pedestrians. It states if there is a traffic control device present, a pedestrian must abide by it. If there is no traffic control device at an intersection, the pedestrian has the right-of-way.

If a pedestrian is crossing at an area other than at an intersection or a marked crosswalk, a vehicle has the right-of-way. Pedestrians are also to use the right side of a sidewalk when there is one and, if there is no sidewalk, walk or move on the far left side of the roadway or its shoulder giving way to oncoming traffic, walking against traffic. Where sidewalks are provided and are accessible and usable it shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to walk or move in a wheelchair along and upon an adjacent roadway.

A good rule of thumb is to see and be seen. If you are jogging or walking past dark, you should dress in light-colored clothes or something reflective. Having a small flashing light on you or carrying a flashlight will definitely alert drivers to your presence. Don't forget the same applies to your pets so they are seen as well. Tell someone the route you are going to take and what time you expect to be back and carry your cell phone with you.

Also, it's a good idea to avoid vehicle traffic and use one of the city's beautiful bicycle and walking trails. The lighted trails are open 24/7 and are regularly patrolled by the Owatonna Police Department.

Patrol Officer Joel Hunt #149
Owatonna Police Department