

PEDESTRIAN LAWS from the Ohio Revised Code

Pedestrians need to exercise a degree of caution whenever motor vehicles are nearby, and should be on the watch-out for drivers whose inattentiveness or actions present a clear and present danger. Wear reflective clothing to help drivers see you at night. Chapter 4511 of the Ohio Revised Code, regarding motor vehicle laws, explains that pedestrians have definite rights as well as certain duties and responsibilities in traffic. These are spelled out below.



4511.01 Definitions

(W) “Person” means every natural person, firm, co-partnership, association, or corporation.

(X) “Pedestrian” means any natural person afoot.

(BB) “Street” or “Highway” means the entire width of public right of way within which a roadway, sidewalks, etc. are located.

(EE) “Roadway” means the improved surface ordinarily used for vehicular travel. Excludes the shoulder.

(FF) “Sidewalk” means the portion of a street between the curb lines or edge of the roadway, and the adjacent property lines, intended for pedestrian travel.

(KK) “Intersection” means the location where two roadways join one another at, or approximately at, right angles. Includes junctions of alleys with a street, highway, or another alley.

(LL) “Crosswalk” means that part of a roadway at intersections ordinarily included within the public property lines, and any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere, distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other pavement markings. Regardless, there shall not be a crosswalk where local authorities have placed signs indicating no crossing.

(MM) “Safety Zone” means the area or space officially set apart within a roadway for the exclusive use of pedestrians and protected or marked by adequate signs as to be plainly visible at all times.

(TT) “Traffic” means pedestrians, ridden or herded animals, vehicles, streetcars, etc. while using any highway for purposes of travel.

(UU) “Right-of-way” means either the right of a vehicle or a pedestrian to proceed uninterruptedly in the direction moving, in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian. Right of way is also a general term for land somehow acquired for transportation purposes.

(EEE) “Motorized Wheelchair” means any self-propelled vehicle designed for and used by a handicapped person and that is incapable of a speed in excess of eight miles per hour.

4511.051 Pedestrians Prohibited on Freeways
No pedestrian is permitted within the limits of the

right of way of a freeway, except: within a rest area, in the performance of public works, or as a result of an emergency or a breakdown of a motor vehicle.

4511.12 Obeying Traffic Control Devices

No pedestrian shall disobey the instructions of any traffic control device (e.g. signs and signals) placed along a roadway. (Some signs specific to pedestrians include WALK ON LEFT FACING TRAFFIC; CROSS ONLY AT CROSSWALKS; NO PEDESTRIAN CROSSING; PUSH BUTTON FOR WALK SIGNAL; NO HITCH HIKING, various yellow CROSSWALK signs, and various PEDESTRIANS PROHIBITED signs.) Also, when a traffic light is green in the direction they are facing, pedestrians may step off the curb to cross the roadway on which traffic is stopped.

4511.14 Pedestrian-Control Signals

Where special pedestrian-control signals exist, pedestrians should be guided as follows:

WALK (or a symbol of a walking person) - Pedestrians facing this signal may proceed across the roadway and shall be given the right of way by the drivers of all other vehicles.



DON'T WALK or **WAIT** (or a symbol of an upturned palm) - No pedestrian may start to cross the roadway when facing in the direction of this signal.

4511.431 Stop at Sidewalk Area

Drivers must stop their vehicle immediately prior to driving onto a sidewalk or the sidewalk area that extends across the road or alley upon which they are driving.

4511.44 Right-of-way on Public Highway

The operator of a vehicle about to enter or cross a highway from any place other than another roadway shall yield the right of way to all traffic approaching on the roadway to be entered or crossed.

4511.441 Pedestrian on Sidewalk has Right of Way

The driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian on a sidewalk.

4511.451 Funeral Processions *

Pedestrians shall yield the right-of-way to each vehicle that is part of a funeral procession.

4511.452 Public Safety Vehicles *

People afoot must yield the right of way to public safety vehicles (ambulances, police, fire vehicles, etc.) approaching with siren sounding and lights flashing.

4511.46 Pedestrian on Crosswalk has Right of Way

When traffic controls are not in place or not in operation, a driver shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway in a crosswalk when the pedestrian is upon the same half of the roadway as the driver, or so close as to be in danger. No pedestrian shall step off the curb and walk or run into the path of vehicles so close as to be an immediate hazard.

4511.47 The Pedestrian Who Is Blind

No one other than a blind person is authorized by law to carry white canes (or white canes with red tips) while on any public highway or thoroughfare. The law provides that the blind carrying such canes as well as those with guide dogs are to be given the right of way by every driver.

4511.48 Right-of-Way Yielded by Pedestrians Where there is No Crosswalk *

When not crossing at a crosswalk, the pedestrian must yield the right of way to all traffic upon the roadway. When between intersections where traffic signals are in operation, pedestrians shall cross only in marked crosswalks.

4511.481 Alcohol & Drugs

Persons under the influence of alcohol, drugs or both, to a degree which renders them a hazard shall not walk or be upon a highway.

4511.49 Pedestrians

Pedestrians shall move, whenever practicable, upon the right half of crosswalks when crossing a street.

4511.491 Motorized Wheelchair Operators

Operators of motorized wheelchairs shall have all the rights and duties applicable to pedestrians.

4511.50 Walking Along Roadway

Where a sidewalk is provided and its use is practicable, pedestrians shall not walk along or upon the adjacent roadway. Where a sidewalk is not available, pedestrians walking along and upon a highway shall walk only on a shoulder, as far as practicable from the edge of the roadway. Where neither sidewalk nor shoulder is available, pedestrians shall walk as near to the outside edge of the roadway and only on the left side of the roadway, facing traffic. Any pedestrian upon a roadway shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon the roadway.

4511.51 Hitching of Rides

Soliciting a ride from the driver of any vehicle while on a roadway outside a safety zone is forbidden. Standing on a highway to solicit business or contributions is also forbidden. A person shall not hang onto or ride on the outside or the rear end of any motor vehicle moving on a roadway. Drivers of trucks, trailers, or semi trailers shall not permit persons under age 16 to ride in an open cargo area that travels more than 25 miles per hour. Drivers shall not permit any person, other than workers performing maintenance or construction duties, to ride in the cargo storage area or on a tailgate while the tailgate is unlatched.

4511.511 Drawbridges & Railroads

Pedestrians shall not enter or remain on any drawbridge or drawbridge approach after the bridge operation signal has been given. Similarly, people afoot shall not pass through, around, over, or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad grade crossing or bridge when a barrier is down, being opened or closed, and/or lights are flashing.

4511.711 Driving upon Sidewalk Area

No person shall drive any vehicle, other than a bicycle, upon a sidewalk or sidewalk area except as needed to enter or leave a driveway.

4511.712 Obstructing Passage

No driver shall enter an intersection or marked crosswalk when doing so will obstruct passage of other vehicles or pedestrians.

4511.74 Prohibition Against Placing Injurious Materials on Highways

No person shall place or knowingly drop upon any highway, lane, road, street, or alley any tacks, bottles, wire, glass, nails, or other articles which may damage or injure others. Any person who accidentally does so shall immediately remove the same.

No person shall place or knowingly drop upon any highway, lane, road, street, or alley any articles that may damage or injure others.

* These laws do not relieve the operator of a vehicle from exercising due care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian upon any roadway.

