

Drive Safely!: Tips for Sharing Rockville's Roads



Rockville is a great place to get around by all modes of transportation. People may drive to a park, bike to work, or walk or roll to a store.

Traffic safety is a shared responsibility. Just like drivers, people walking, rolling, and bicycling don't always follow the rules, which is why everyone in Rockville needs to do their part to keep themselves and everyone else on the road safe.

Drivers who are aware of people walking, rolling, and bicycling can make traveling safer for everyone.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind for safe driving around people bicycling and walking:

- People bicycling move faster than you may think. Instead of speeding past them, it's safer to be patient and let them go ahead, or to wait until there is space to pass.
- When passing, move to the left as soon as possible and remember to give at least 3 feet of space between the automobile and person bicycling. Passing too closely can scare or surprise a person into losing control or a gust of wind from passing too closely can knock them over.
- Make complete stops at stop signs.
- Remember that people bicycling are allowed to use the full travel lane, and while many choose to ride on the right side, there are many reasons why a person would ride in the middle of the lane. This includes avoiding debris and stormwater drainage grates, the potential for opening car doors, and oncoming traffic from the right.
- Before entering the right-turn lane, check for and yield to bicyclists in the bike lane. Be sure not to block the bike lane.

- When making a right turn, always check the blind spots for people bicycling through the intersection. This can help prevent “right hook” crashes.
- Always stop *before* the crosswalk. Never inch forward if people are in the crosswalk; they don’t know if you’re going to stop.
- Not everyone can just “walk around.” When parking, be sure that the vehicle’s front end, trunk, or bumper does not block the sidewalk, crosswalk or a curb ramp.
- As easy way to check for people bicycling when parking on-street is to open your vehicle door with your right hand. This makes it easy to confirm it’s clear.
- People may be traveling when it is dark or raining. Be sure to pay extra attention, especially when streetlights are out or absent.
- Drivers of large vehicles need to be extra cautious at intersections. Vehicles with higher front ends have larger blind spots and drivers may not be able to see people crossing directly in front of them.
- Avoid using a horn near people walking, rolling, or bicycling. Horns are substantially louder for people outside of a car and may scare or surprise them into falling to reacting unpredictably. It can also seem like aggressive driving behavior.
- Always try to make eye contact with people, but keep in mind that people may not be able to make eye contact if it is dark, if there is glare on the window or if the window is tinted, so never assume they see you.
- Always signal when turning, especially for right turns.
- Motorists can learn more tips and safe driving behaviors online. The [Maryland Department of Transportation](#) and [AARP](#) offer additional resources.

