

Child Injury Laws *Blog*

New Illinois Law Hopes To Reduce Injuries In Child & Adult Pedestrains

Posted by [Jonathan Rosenfeld](#) on December 20, 2010

[Illinois](#) is taking steps to protect pedestrians with a new bill ([House Bill 43](#)) that would require cars to come to a complete stop when a pedestrian is in a crosswalk, regardless of whether or not there is a traffic signal or stop sign. Governor Quinn now has 60 days to sign the bill in order to make it law.

Lawmakers hope that the legislation will help reduce the number of pedestrians hit by cars each year in Illinois. This law is an attempt to make drivers more responsible, especially in relation to more vulnerable pedestrians. A first violation of the law would earn a \$150 minimum fine, and the fine doubles with a second offense.

Pedestrian Injuries Are A Tremendous Problem

Last year, about [6,000](#) pedestrians were hit by vehicles, 1,000 of those people were seriously injured, and 171 people died (Illinois Department of Transportation). About 30% of these accidents involve children. And, the majority of pedestrian deaths occur in crosswalks.

Child pedestrians are at a high risk for injury. The number one killer of children aged 1-14 in the United States is accidental injury, and children age four and under are at an increased risk of accidental injury related death. In [2008](#), one in every five children between ages 5-9, who was killed in a traffic crash, was a pedestrian. The leading causes of injury death to children include:

- Pedestrian related incidents
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Drowning
- Suffocation

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- Fires / burns

All pedestrians, including children, should follow pedestrian laws. If a road has a sidewalk, pedestrians are required to walk on it. If there is no sidewalk, pedestrians are supposed to walk on the right hand side shoulder of the road. And, if there is no shoulder, pedestrians are supposed to walk on the left side of the street.

Common sense rules are also important: look both ways before crossing the road; if walking on the road, wear clothing that makes you easy to see; and wear a light or reflective clothing if walking at night.

It is important that children are taught the rules of the roadway at a young age. In addition, children, especially young children, should be supervised outdoors to ensure safe behavior.

Safe pedestrian behavior is especially important for children living in cities or more urban areas, where their exposure to vehicles is greatly increased. Drivers should be on the lookout for pedestrians, but drivers are not always as attentive as they should be. Children, because of their small size, are even more difficult for drivers to spot, before it is too late.

Improving the safety of children's surrounding environment can help reduce the number of accidental injury related deaths. It is important to educate both drivers and pedestrians about safe behavior and practices. Illinois' new pro-pedestrian bill will help encourage drivers to be more aware of pedestrians, which will reduce injuries.

Sources:

[The Expired Meter: Pro-Pedestrian Law Passes Illinois Senate, Heads to Quinn's Desk](#)

[AARP: New Law Will Mean Safer Streets for Illinois Pedestrians](#)

[ILGA: HB0043](#)

[Illinois Legal Aid: Travel Rules for Pedestrians and Bicyclists](#)

[CDC: Pedestrian Safety](#)

[Pub Med: Child Pedestrian Injury Prevention Project: Student results](#)

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