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PEDESTRIAN ENFORCEMENT SAVES LIVES

L. E. Chaudoin

Captain L. E. Chaudoin, Superintendent of Traffic, Louisville (Kentucky) Division of Police, was first assigned to traffic safety work in 1930 as a patrolman. Specializing in this branch of traffic duties he has, as a sergeant and lieutenant, headed both the Accident Prevention Section and the Enforcement Section of the Traffic Bureau. Capt. Chaudoin is a graduate of the Traffic Institute of Northwestern University and has taken special courses at the University of Louisville. His professional activities include membership in state and city police and civic organizations as well as in the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Safety Council. It is with pleasure that the JOURNAL presents this concise description of Louisville's highly successful pedestrian control program.—EDITOR.

Pedestrians must be controlled in urban communities if traffic safety is to be achieved. The movements of pedestrian traffic largely control the movements of vehicular traffic and certainly regulate the "death-o-meter pointers" as they record traffic accident deaths. National statistics reveal that in urban localities the automobile-pedestrian accident results in death in a much greater percentage of instances than in any other type accident. Any safety program then should be spearheaded with a definite long range pedestrian control program designed to regulate the pedestrian movement city wide.

This program is not as easy as vehicular control in that the pedestrian desires to evade police regulation. Enforcement of good, sound, reasonable pedestrian laws must be accompanied by a well rounded educational program to "sell" the need for the effort.

It is a natural human feeling in the general pedestrian belief that because he has little or no physical protection against the automobile, he certainly should be entitled to protection by law. This belief is the hardest to overcome, and to sway public opinion away from this erroneous view of the automobile-pedestrian conflict requires hard work plus a great amount of patience on the part of the police officer.

Louisville began working on this problem July 1, 1935, at which time the Accident Prevention Section and the Safety Educational Section were created within the police department.

One of the first steps was assignment of additional officers in the Central Business District to concentrate upon pedestrian errors. These officers did no actual enforcement work at first, but continually halted erring pedestrians and pointed out the violation plus releasing a little safety talk sometimes with individuals, sometimes with groups. In these talks they told the laws governing pedestrian movements and the dangers of violations.

This phase of the program was accompanied by use of a "sound car" equipped with amplifying system which was used extensively in reminding pedestrians of the danger of walking into the street from between parked cars, crossing diagonally, walking against the red light, etc. Each talk was followed by a reminder of the number of persons injured or killed as a result of the particular violation in an effort to better enlighten the citizens to the unsafe walking practices that were causing trouble.

A digest of the official pedestrian laws,¹ and other safety literature was prepared by the Division of Police and printed at the expense of cooperating agencies. Copies of these were distributed to almost every home, office, and public building by various organizations, such as the O. C. D., Boy Scouts, Police Officers, and others. Posters carrying messages were placed inside and outside of street cars, taxicabs, on the sides of trucks, in store windows, and in other prominent places.

The newspapers and radio stations cooperated to their fullest to make the Louisville program a success. Military police aid has been obtained to assist in controlling the service men. Auxiliary police, on their own time, have been placed on the various intersections to see that pedestrians wait on the sidewalk for the light to turn green. Others were placed between intersections to see that pedestrians crossed only at the corner or in properly marked crosswalks. Additional crosswalks have been painted so that the distance a person had to go to cross legally was not unreasonable.

¹ The following simple digest of the Official Pedestrian Code for the City of Louisville has been printed and widely circulated in the city.

ARTICLE 4, SEC. A. PEDESTRIAN USE OF ROADWAY.

1. Cross streets at right angles, not diagonally.
2. Pedestrians have no right-of-way except in crosswalks.
3. Within the Central Traffic District, pedestrians shall not cross the street except at crosswalks.
4. Pedestrians shall not stand in the street except in safety zones.
5. Where there are no sidewalks, pedestrians shall walk on left hand side of the roadway.

ARTICLE 4, SEC. B. PEDESTRIANS TO OBEY SIGNALS.

1. At intersections controlled by electric traffic signals, pedestrians shall not cross the street except with the green light.
2. While waiting for the green light, pedestrians shall stand on the sidewalk.

ARTICLE 4, SEC. C. CONTROL BY POLICE.

At intersections controlled by police officers, the movements of pedestrians shall be governed by the officers.

ARTICLE 4, SEC. E. SOLICITING RIDES.

No person shall stand in the street for the purpose of soliciting a ride from the driver of any vehicle.

PENALTY.

For violation of any of the above rules, the penalty shall be a fine of One Dollar (\$1.00) to Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) for each offense.

The actual enforcement to put teeth into the program was started only after the intensive educational program. At first, only those persons who were warned by an officer and who ignored their warning were given citations or arrested. Enforcement was gradually increased until an average of approximately 500 citations were issued monthly. When a pedestrian receives a citation he has the option of either paying the minimum fine of \$1.00 at the Traffic Bureau or agreeing to attend the Traffic School.

The Traffic School, one of the very first organized in the United States, is considered a very valuable part of the safety program. Many volunteers attend this school in order to become more familiar with the laws and regulations that concern the traffic situation.

Yes, a few complaints have been received stating that officers have given citations to persons who had walked erratically, but at a time when there were no vehicles in sight. These complainants did not feel that citations under those circumstances were justified.

Being anxious to keep public opinion in favor of the program, a system of warning letters was devised. A violator who does not interfere with the moving traffic when committing the violation is stopped by the officer, who obtains the person's name, address, notes the time, date, and violation, but does not give him a citation. A few days later this violator receives a personal letter from the Superintendent of Traffic, explaining the violation, its disastrous results during the past year, asks for his cooperation, and calls attention to the enclosed digest of the pedestrian laws.²

A word of caution is offered here to cities contemplating a pedestrian program, that whenever pedestrian errors are emphasized motorists assume an attitude of "I am driving right—it's you who are walking wrong" and, consequently, become a little more belligerent toward the pedestrian. Steps

²A violation letter is worded in somewhat the following manner.

Mr. John Doe
2400 Ivanhoe Ct.
Louisville, Ky.

Accidents don't just happen. They are caused by violations of traffic laws and by dangerous actions of motorists and pedestrians. 27 persons have been killed in traffic accidents already this year on the streets of Louisville.

It has been reported to this office that you were recently observed committing one of those unsafe acts responsible for these tragedies.

We request that you correct your unsafe habits in traffic and cooperate with us in our endeavor to stop this unnecessary suffering and tragic loss of life on our streets.

Yours for a safer city,

must be taken to correct a situation of this type by insisting that the motorist yield the right of way to pedestrians when they are crossing in a crosswalk with the green light and to drive so they could compensate for innocent mistakes made by pedestrians who have "pre-occupied thoughts".

This writer certainly looks forward to ever increasing pedestrian safety and advocates programs in keeping safety before the citizenry.