

# Chapter 5—Education

## 5.4 Education: Motorist



### Introduction

Throughout the United States, and including central Ohio, the vast majority of trips—whether for work, school, shopping, recreation, or other purposes—are taken via private vehicle. This means that motorists are the most common type of road user. Therefore, education of motorists is a crucial component of any Complete Streets effort. Motorists can be educated through a variety of programs, and examples of these are outlined in this section. Since most trips are taken by private vehicles, encouragement programs for motorists will not be included in this section. As the “default” way to travel for many central Ohio residents, further encouragement is not needed.

The term “motorist” generally refers to drivers of automobiles, but also includes drivers of any motorized vehicle, such as a scooter or motorcycle. Relevant educational messages for these specific types of motorists have been noted throughout this section. Another related term is “vulnerable road user,” which refers to pedestrians, bicyclists, moped users, scooter users, motorcyclists, farm vehicle drivers and Amish carriages. For more information on vulnerable road users, including laws passed to help protect them, refer to Chapter 6 on Enforcement.

### Educational Messages for Motorists

The following topics should be addressed in educational messages for motorists. The type of medium used to portray the message may differ on what is deemed most useful, such as paid media, presentations, or brochures.

#### Motorist Interaction with Pedestrians

Ohio state law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians at all crosswalks, marked and unmarked. Yielding is also required at WALK signals. Motorists should use special caution when driving through residential areas, school zones, or other places where the volume of pedestrians and children playing is high. Initiatives, such as a pedestrian crosswalk sting, can increase awareness and understanding (also see Section 6.4, Motorist Enforcement).



◀ Student crossing legally at a crosswalk, while car does not stop.

(Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

### Motorist Interaction with Bicyclists

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) has the following advice regarding motorist education:

- When educating motorists, one should always emphasize the benefits of sharing the road, such as safer, more inviting streets with reduced crime, increased property value, a better environment, and an overall enhanced quality of life.
- Instructors in motorist education should underscore the notion that a bicycle is not a toy but a viable means of transportation, often the only means of transportation for many people.
- Those educating motorists should stress that they are not trying to force motorists off the roads or take away their rights, but illustrate that cyclists have an equal right to the road. The more motorists know about cycling safety, the safer streets will be for everyone on them ([PBIC Bicycling Info website](#)).



◀ Bicyclist riding legally in traffic.

(Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

### Motorist Interaction with Scooters and Motorcyclists

- Due to their smaller size and less physical protection, scooters and motorcycles are more vulnerable on the roadways than car drivers. They may be hidden in a car's blind spot and it may be more difficult to judge their speed. Scooters and motorcycles are equal roadway users to automobiles, but debris and road conditions may have a more severe effect on them. For more information, see: <http://www.forcardrivers.com/index.html>.



▲ The “Look Twice – Save a Life” message on a billboard.  
(Source: <http://www.looktwicesavealifebumperstickers.com>)

- This is a popular bumper sticker to raise awareness for scooters and motorcycles.

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#### Safe Driving Concerns with Targeted Age Groups

Teenagers (those 15 to 20 years of age) are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as are all other drivers (NHTSA, Teen Drivers). In 2008, older people (those 65 years and older) accounted for 15 percent of all traffic fatalities (NHTSA, Senior Drivers). Both targeted age groups (teens and seniors) may suffer from poor driving skills. Teen drivers have less experience driving and may be overconfident. Senior drivers may have decreased vision, hearing and reaction time. In addition to possibly reduced driving skills, senior drivers can encounter issues with multiple medication use or drug interactions. These issues should be openly discussed and alternatives to driving should be offered as well.



▲ Seniors driving in their cars.  
(Photo: NHTSA, Senior Drivers)

#### Unsafe Driving Behavior Concerns

Several different types of unsafe driving behavior have been identified by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These include distracted driving, impaired driving (alcohol and other drugs), aggressive, and unrestrained driving.

- Distracted driving activities include: using a cell phone, eating and drinking, reading, and watching a video. For more information see: <http://www.distraction.gov>.
- MORPC adopted a resolution in 2010 to support distracted driving legislation and frequently testifies in support of such bills (MORPC, Safety Resources).
- Impaired driving mainly refers to driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. For more information, see: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Impaired>.
- Aggressive driving refers to a person committing a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property. This includes speeding, following too closely, or running red lights. For more information, see: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Aggressive>.
- Unrestrained driving means that the driver or passengers in a car are not belted. Ohio has a secondary seatbelt law, which allows officers to issue a citation only after the officer stops the vehicle or cites the offender for another offense. MORPC and many other central Ohio agencies and individuals are long-time supporters of a primary seatbelt law since it can save lives, reduce injuries, and decrease costs. For more information, see: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Occupant+Protection>.



◀ Teenager texting while driving.  
(Photo: <http://www.distraction.gov>)

### Use and Benefits of New Road Designs, such as Roundabouts

When a new roadway design, such as a roundabout, is introduced to a community, it is important to provide educational outreach on use and benefits. For example, a regional outreach effort was conducted in 2007 to better explain the use of roundabouts to drivers since many were still unfamiliar with them. Brochures and a video were produced, based on existing federal roundabout education information. For more information, see: [http://www.morpc.org/transportation/Rules\\_Of\\_The\\_Road/roundabouts.asp](http://www.morpc.org/transportation/Rules_Of_The_Road/roundabouts.asp).



◀ Roundabout Columbus, Ohio  
(Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

- Multi-lane roundabout.
- The roundabout provides pedestrian crossings.
- Improves access from all legs.
- Calms traffic.

### Motorist Educational Programs

The following are some examples of educational programs that have been used to educate motorists about safe, responsible, and considerate driving.

#### Driver Education through Licensing

Driver licensing agencies can require motorists to demonstrate knowledge of how to drive safely and courteously in the presence of bicyclists, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users. The following are some examples.

- Ohio's Graduated Driver Licensing law was made stricter for teen drivers in 2007 by limiting the number of non-related occupants that can be in a car and increasing night driving rules. More information can be found here: ODPS, [Graduated Driver Licensing](#).
- The Ohio driver's manual is very limited in its coverage of laws with regard to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable roadway users (ODPS, 2009, pp. 67-69). Some states, such as Oregon and Tennessee, have bicycle- and pedestrian-related questions in the driving exam:
  - As part of Tennessee's strategic highway safety planning efforts, a section on non-motorized travel will be added to the 2010 Tennessee Driver's License Manual, and test questions will be added to the driver's license exam addressing bicycle and pedestrian laws (Meehan, 2010).
  - The Oregon driver's manual has sections on pedestrians and bicyclists, and is a good example (Oregon DOT, 2010, pp. 77-83).

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#### Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements (through radio, television, and other venues) can be an effective way to reach a large and widespread audience.

- A good example is the Tennessee Department of Motor Vehicles, which runs public service announcements about the state's 3-foot Passing Law (requiring motorists to allow at least 3 feet of lateral distance when passing bicyclists) at all testing centers, and also showcases the 3-foot law on wall posters (Meehan, 2010).



◀ 2011 proposed license plate for Tennessee  
(Source: <http://jeffrothcyclingfoundation.org>)

#### Driver Diversion Programs

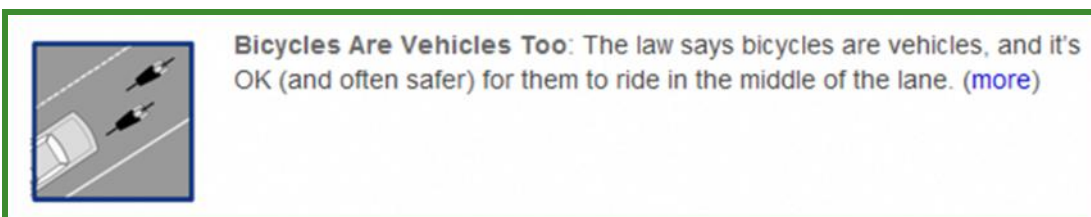
A driver diversion program is an educational program intended for drivers who have violated road laws (usually first-time offenders). Completion of the program can allow an offender to avoid penalties such as paying a fine or losing driving privileges.

- For example, Multnomah County, Oregon offers a “[Share the Road Safety Class](#)” for all road users. The class covers state laws that apply to motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. Eligible first-time offenders can take the class as an alternative to a conviction or a fine (NCHSP, 2008).

#### Educational Websites

Websites providing easy accessible educational information on Rules of the Road, including videos, can be very useful in increasing awareness and understanding.

- MORPC has created a “[Rules of the Road](#)” webpage that currently focuses on roundabout, pedestrian, and bicycle safety. The pages can be expanded if new educational needs arise.
- MassBike (one of the main bicycle advocacy organizations in Massachusetts) provides the “[Same Roads Same Rules](#)” educational website, with tips for motorists and bicyclists.



▲ Excerpt tip for motorists from the MassBike “Same Roads Same Rules” website.

**Motorist Education Through High Schools**

Schools can be an excellent venue for educating motorists about safe driving around vulnerable road users. Both teen drivers and parents can be educated through school programs.

- Many schools encourage student drivers and parents to take such pledges via school websites and other venues. A local example is the Olentangy Local School District, which has offered various incentives for parents and students to take a safety pledge (OLSD website, "[Safe Driving Pledge](#)").
- Another example is the Rye, NY Safe Routes to School program, which developed separate pledges for both parents and students. The Parents' Safe Driving Pledge includes points about safe driving around pedestrians and bicyclists.

<b>Parents' Safe Driving Pledge</b>	<b>Students' Safety Pledge</b>
<p>I promise to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never speed through residential streets and school zones</li> <li>• Never talk or text on a hand-held phone while driving</li> <li>• Always wear a seat belt and make sure passengers also buckle up</li> <li>• Stop for pedestrians and bikers in crosswalks</li> <li>• Never pass a vehicle stopped for a crossing pedestrian</li> <li>• Never run stop signs or red lights</li> <li>• Never pass a stopped school bus with flashing red lights</li> <li>• Never park in or block a crosswalk</li> <li>• Always drop children at curbside, never from a double-parked car</li> <li>• Never leave the car idling for more than 3 minutes (state law)</li> </ul>	<p>I promise to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always follow traffic signals or the directions of a crossing guard</li> <li>• Always cross the street in a crosswalk; make sure the driver can see you, has time to stop</li> <li>• Always look left, right, and left again before crossing the street</li> <li>• Never dart out between parked cars</li> <li>• Always wear my seat belt when riding in a car</li> <li>• Always exit the car from the curb side</li> <li>• Always wear a bike helmet when riding my bike</li> <li>• Always ride my bike in the same direction as the car traffic</li> <li>• Always use hand signals when turning on my bike</li> <li>• Never cross a street while on the phone, texting, or wearing headphones</li> </ul>

- ▲ Safety pledges for parents and (non-motorist) students in Rye, NY. Source: [Rye YMCA](#).
- Another example for teen safety pledges is the [TeenSafe Driver Program pledge](#).

**Senior Driver Education Programs**

Promoted as a “brush up” course, education programs for senior drivers can help people better understand their limitations and current vehicle technology. There may also be lower insurance rates as an encouragement for having taken the course.

- AARP has a Driver Safety Program that includes courses, checklists, and various publications on related topics: [http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver\\_safety/?cmp=RDRCT-DRIVE](http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety/?cmp=RDRCT-DRIVE).
- AAA has a website for senior drivers, including general information and various online tools and programs: <http://www.seniordrivers.org/home>.
- CarFit is a program designed to help older drivers find out how well they currently fit their personal vehicles, to highlight actions they can take to improve their fit, and to promote conversations about driver safety and community mobility: <http://www.car-fit.org>.

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#### League of American Bicyclist Motorist Education Classes

The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) offers a Motorist Education class that can be added to driver's education programs:

"A 3-hour classroom session, this course can be easily added to a driver's education curriculum, such as diversion training for reckless drivers or a course designed for local bus drivers. Directed toward motorists in general, topics covered include roadway positioning of cyclists, traffic and hand signals, principles of right-of-way and left-and right-turn problems. Materials include Share the Road literature for bicyclists and motorists as well as other fact sheets" (LAB, "Course Descriptions").

#### Scooter and Motorcycle Education Programs

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is a national non-profit that provides programs in rider training, operator licensing, and public information. They offer a variety of rider courses, including the Basic Rider Course (BRC), Experienced Rider Course, and Scooter Basic Rider Course. Some benefits of taking such courses include greater confidence, improved skills, licensing-test waivers, and insurance discounts.

- In Ohio you will need at least a temporary motorcycle learner's permit to take the BRC. Passing the BRC means you receive your motorcycle endorsement.
- For more information refer to the following website: Motorcycle Ohio page: <http://www.motorcycle.ohio.gov/>

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