

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Council
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police
Date: March 17, 2025
Subject: Crosswalk Safety – Communications and Enforcement – Strategic Initiative

The Amherst Police Department is dedicated to community safety. One of the initiatives we regularly are involved in includes communicating information to the public that enhances and promotes pedestrian and driver safety. One of the issues we regularly cover is that of crosswalk safety, whether via social media, in-person presentations or through focused enforcement.

Social media has been a useful medium to communicate information to our community. The Amherst Police Department Facebook page has over 7600 followers with our posts often being shared and reaching tens of thousands of people. It is not uncommon for some of our posts to have 50-60 thousand views, making such posts a very valuable tool to share information and educate people. On August 8, 2024, we shared a post concerning crosswalk safety (See Appendix A), which covered pedestrian safety as it relates to crosswalks and intersections, explaining such concepts as 'right of way' and the definition of a crosswalk. Such safety also requires that both motorists and pedestrians understand how crosswalks function, and the post information provides tips and education for both to enhance safety. A link to 'rules of the road' was also supplied (<https://novascotia.ca/sns/rmv/handbook/dh-chapter2.pdf>). This information was re-posted again on Monday, March 10, 2025.

Our members and staff often provide safety presentations on issues relating to public safety. Our plan is to continue to do this for our school, seniors and other target groups to ensure that we reach and educate those we come in contact with. Providing in-person instruction is an excellent way to educate people and have a two-way conversation that includes listening to the concerns of the public and determining how best to address concerns and designate priorities. Our School Resource Officer, Cst Michelle Harrison and our Crime Prevention Coordinator spend a significant amount of their time preparing such presentations and engaging with the community on these issues. It is also not uncommon for Cpl Tom Wood to also be involved as well.

Focused crosswalk enforcement is a third means of addressing safety concerns relating to crosswalks. Each month our members are provided with a subject for focused enforcement for the month, ranging from seatbelts, to speeding to all types of safety issues, and during warmer weather, often focusing on crosswalks, especially in school zones. This includes police visibility in the area to issuing tickets for infractions. Our plan is to also include our results from such enforcement, providing information on the number of tickets and warnings issues to motorists for crosswalk infractions.

Community safety is a shared responsibility, but we have an important role that includes providing education and enforcement to enhance understanding and promote deterrence.

APPENDIX A



Amherst Police Department *Crosswalk Safety*

Pedestrian Safety is a priority. It is important that people understand how Crosswalks are defined in Nova Scotia and how they work. Every intersection of 2 or more roads has a crosswalk, many of which are unmarked, meaning that they may not have signage or painted lines.

Some crosswalks have varying levels of traffic control and may have painted lines, crosswalk signs, lit signs or signals or may be a part of a 4-way stop or a fully controlled traffic intersection.

Unless intersections are controlled by traffic signals/lights, pedestrians are deemed to have the '*right of way*'. In these cases, drivers are responsible to yield to pedestrians who are waiting at, or are in Crosswalks regardless if they are marked or unmarked. This includes vehicles that are turning at an intersection.

Drivers are encouraged to slow down and scan the street and sidewalks when approaching intersections or crosswalks.



When the intersection is controlled by traffic signals, pedestrians are required to obey the signals.

Fines for failing to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk or stopped facing a crosswalk starts at \$697.50

Pedestrians should always check to make sure an intersection is safe before crossing and are encouraged to wait for an adequate gap in traffic or until vehicles have come to a complete stop.



For more information, check out "Rules of the Road" from the Nova Scotia Driver's handbook that can be found at <https://novascotia.ca/sns/rmv/handbook/dh-chapter2.pdf>