



Canberra Pedestrian Forum media release

Canberra fails Road Rules test

Published: 9-Mar-10

Canberrans don't understand when drivers should give way to pedestrians, according a survey conducted by the Canberra Pedestrian Forum.

"Most people don't know that drivers have to give way to pedestrians at intersections," says Forum convener Leon Arundell.

Last week 100 pedestrians, including 88 drivers, were shown eight situations in which a turning driver and a pedestrian might collide. Almost all correctly identified that a driver must give way to a pedestrian at a zebra crossing. Most were unaware that a driver must give way to pedestrians on a slip lane without a zebra crossing, or that a turning driver must give way to pedestrians who are crossing the road the driver is entering.

Only one person correctly identified, for all eight cases, whether or not the Road Rules required the driver to give way to the pedestrian.

Mr Arundell says that the ACT Road Rules Handbook is part of the problem. *"The handbook has been updated for 2010, but it still has a long way to go. The handbook depicts only two of the five situations in which turning drivers must give way to pedestrians, and has no diagrams to show where pedestrians must give way to drivers."*

Mr Arundell says that the confusion has been made worse by Road Rules changes that halve the number of situations where drivers must give way to pedestrians, yet make driving more complicated. *"Under the new Rules, a driver at risk of colliding with a pedestrian needs to know where the pedestrian is, which direction the pedestrian is travelling, and whether the driver is turning at a normal intersection, a roundabout, or a slip lane."*

To further complicate the issue, the on-line Road Ready test is yet to be updated to reflect the changes.

"The Road Rules should allow us all to use the road legally and safely," said Mr Arundell, *"but the Rules don't work for pedestrians – especially children – because pedestrians don't know them. Even pedestrians who know the rules don't benefit, because they can't rely on drivers to give way when they should."*

"If we educate this generation about the Road Rules, then perhaps the next generation will be able to cross our roads with safety," said Mr Arundell.

Media Contact:

Leon Arundell, Convener

For information about the Canberra Pedestrian Forum, see
<http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/pedestrian.html>.

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Background.

The survey.

Between 1 and 4 March 2010 one hundred Canberra pedestrians, including 88 drivers, were shown eight situations in which a driver and a pedestrian might collide. In four cases the Australian Road Rules require the driver to give way, and in four cases they do not require the driver to give way. Pedestrians were asked in which cases the Road Rules require the driver to give way.

96% correctly identified that a driver must give way to a pedestrian at a zebra crossing.

39% (including 38% of drivers) correctly identified that a driver must give way to a pedestrian on a slip lane.

46% (including 44% of drivers) correctly identified that a turning driver must give way to a pedestrian who is crossing the road the driver is turning into, where the pedestrian is approaching from the driver's left.

38% (including 36% of drivers) correctly identified that a turning driver must give way to a pedestrian who is crossing the road the driver is turning into, where the pedestrian is approaching from the driver's right.

Between 45% and 72% correctly identified that drivers in the other four situations are not required to give way to pedestrians.

Only one respondent was correct in all eight cases.

Some relevant Australian Road Rules: <http://www.ntc.gov.au/> > Safety & Compliance

353 References to pedestrians crossing a road

(1) If a driver who is turning from a road at an intersection is required to give way to a pedestrian who is crossing the road that the driver is entering, the driver is only required to give way to the pedestrian if the pedestrian's line of travel in crossing the road is essentially perpendicular to the edges of the road the driver is entering – the driver is not required to give way to a pedestrian who is crossing the road the driver is leaving. ...

69 Giving way at a give way sign or give way line at an intersection (except a roundabout)

(1) A driver at an intersection (except a roundabout) with a give way sign or give way line must give way in accordance with this rule.

(2A) If the driver is turning left using a slip lane, the driver must give way to ...

(b) any other vehicle or pedestrian on the slip lane.

(3) If the driver is turning left or right or making a U–turn, the driver must also give way to any pedestrian at or near the intersection who is crossing the road, or part of the road, the driver is entering.

What the on-line ACT Road Ready test says: <http://www.roadready.act.gov.au/>

a driver turning right or left must give way to pedestrians, if there is danger of a collision.

[On-line Road Ready, <http://www.roadready.act.gov.au/>, accessed 8 March 2010]

ACT Road Rules Handbook: http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/driver_licence/Road_Rules_Handbook

On-line Road Ready, <http://www.roadready.act.gov.au/>, accessed 8 March 2010