

Texas Transportation Code

Midblock Crossing: Understanding Pedestrian Right-of-Way

In the state of Texas, the Texas Transportation Code outlines the rules and regulations regarding pedestrian right-of-way at crosswalks and midblock crossings (crossing in the middle of a street instead of at the intersection/corners or a crosswalk). It is important for both drivers and pedestrians to understand these laws to ensure safety on the roads. Let's take a closer look at the key sections of the code.

Pedestrian Right-of-Way at Crosswalks (Sec. 552.003)

According to the Texas Transportation Code, the operator of a vehicle must stop and yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing a roadway in a crosswalk if the following conditions are met:

1. No traffic control signal is in place or in operation.
2. The pedestrian is either:
 - On the half of the roadway in which the vehicle is traveling.
 - Approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.

This means that if a pedestrian is crossing the road within a marked crosswalk and there is no traffic signal, the vehicle operator must stop and allow the pedestrian to cross safely.

However, it is important to note that pedestrians should not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and proceed into a crosswalk in the path of a vehicle that is too close to stop. Pedestrians should always exercise caution and ensure that it is safe to cross before entering the crosswalk.

Crossing at Points Other Than Crosswalks (Sec. 552.005)

When a pedestrian is crossing a roadway at a place other than a marked crosswalk or an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, or where a pedestrian tunnel or overhead pedestrian crossing has been provided, the pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to vehicles on the roadway.

In areas where traffic control signals are in operation between adjacent intersections, pedestrians are only allowed to cross in a marked crosswalk. This ensures that pedestrians cross the road at designated and safe locations.

Additionally, pedestrians are only permitted to cross a roadway intersection diagonally if and when authorized by a traffic control device. This means that pedestrians should follow the instructions provided by traffic signals or signs when crossing diagonally. Authorized diagonal crossings are rare, so usually you'll need to follow the signals/signs and cross one street then the other rather than walking through the middle of the intersection.

By understanding and following these rules, both drivers and pedestrians can contribute to safer roadways and reduce the risk of accidents. Be a safe pedestrian by:

1. looking left, right and left again before crossing the street,
2. making eye contact with drivers of oncoming cars so you know that they see you, and recognize if you or an oncoming vehicle/bicycle have the right of way.

Examples

To better understand these concepts, let's consider a few examples:

1. Example 1: A pedestrian is waiting at a marked crosswalk with no traffic signal. A vehicle approaches the crosswalk. The vehicle operator must stop and yield the right-of-way to the pedestrian, allowing them to cross safely.
2. Example 2: A pedestrian is standing on the sidewalk and suddenly steps into a crosswalk without giving the vehicle enough time to stop. In this case, the pedestrian is not following the rules and should not proceed into the crosswalk until it is safe to do so.
3. Example 3: A pedestrian wants to cross a busy road but there are no marked crosswalks nearby. In this situation, the pedestrian should find a suitable location with a marked crosswalk or an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection to safely cross the road.

Remember, it is important for both drivers and pedestrians to be aware of and follow the rules outlined in the Texas Transportation Code to ensure the safety of everyone on the road.