

Over 30,000 people are killed in crashes each year in the United States. In 2005, in addition to the impact on victims' families and friends, crash deaths resulted in \$41 billion annually in medical and work loss costs. The University and the State of Illinois provide policies and laws to enhance motor vehicle safety. However, in the last five years¹, there were over 2200 crashes and four fatalities in the University District. Drivers on campus need to be especially diligent as the campus population converges in the streets and sidewalks. It's important to remember that motor vehicle crashes are preventable. Just follow the rules of the road, be very patient, and be aware of all transportation modes: pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and other vehicles.

University Policies

Driver's License

University vehicles can be used only for official university business, regardless of ownership. Drivers of university vehicles must be able to prove they are licensed to drive in the State of Illinois. Department-owned vehicles may be used only by personnel authorized by the unit head/dean.

Cell Phones

The use of hand-held, hands-free or other mobile electronic devices by university vehicle or equipment operators is prohibited, unless the vehicle is out of the traffic right-of-way, parked and not moving. Employees whose job responsibilities include operating vehicles, whether regularly or occasionally, are expected to refrain from using any electronic device while driving. Safety must come before all other concerns.

Regardless of the circumstances, employees are to pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting calls, checking messages, or any other electronic communication.

Speed Limit

The speed limit in the University District is 25 miles per hour in most places. The exceptions are on larger exterior roads to encourage traffic to use the edge of campus to navigate. The posted speed limit on First Street, Kirby/Florida Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, and Springfield Avenue is 30 miles per hour. This forms a square around the heart of campus that provides a faster path to go from one corner of the University District to another corner.

Illinois Laws

Seat Belts

Seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety device for preventing death and injury, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of crash injuries by 50%.

In Illinois, as of January 1, 2012, all drivers and passengers must be belted in all seating positions. No matter where you sit – front or back – buckle up.

¹ The last five years of crash data received reflects 2006 to 2010 calendar years.

Headlights

With the possible exception of brakes and tires, nothing influences our safety on the road more than how we respond to what we see from behind the wheel. In Illinois, headlights are required from sunset to sunrise² and when rain, snow, fog, or poor weather conditions require the use of windshield wipers. Headlights are also required when objects 1,000 feet away from your vehicle are not visible.

Bicyclists

Illinois law permits bicyclists to ride on the road or sidewalk, except where prohibited by a local agency. Persons operating a bicycle on a roadway are treated as "vehicles," and are required to obey all of the traffic laws pertaining to vehicular traffic. Persons operating a bicycle on the sidewalk are treated as "pedestrians," and are required to obey all the traffic laws pertaining to pedestrians. Because many cyclists on this campus are uninformed about the traffic laws, the UI Police Department is working with F&S to establish a new bike code for educating the campus users.³

Pedestrians

Pedestrians are required to give a vehicle adequate distance to stop before stepping into a crosswalk and expecting the right of way. Pedestrians should NOT leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a moving vehicle which is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard. However, because the pedestrians on this campus are often preoccupied with their academic mission, it is vital that drivers use extra caution when pedestrians are approaching the vehicle's path.

University Drivers

As a driver on campus, you need to be aware that if you are approaching a marked crosswalk, pedestrians DO have the right of way if they have established themselves in that crosswalk. State law requires vehicles to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. For safety purposes, the Division of Public Safety asks you to please be attentive, patient and courteous when driving in the University District. It is an incredibly busy area and pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders and roller-bladers often appear without warning. A moment of patience could save you a lifetime of regret.

Helpful Tips

- The best way to avoid a crash is to be patient and be aware of other vehicles, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians around you. There are a lot of people out there, so watch for everyone.
- It is better to take your time than allow a crash to happen because you were in a hurry.
- When making turns, look for pedestrians first, then cyclists, then vehicles, and remember to check behind you to the right where a bike may be approaching quickly on a sidewalk or bike path.
- State law requires three feet of open space between vehicles and bicycles when passing. If there is not enough space to give them three feet, then wait until the space is available. As one cyclist put it "please don't pass too closely in that scary truck."

² This rule also applies to bicycles, which are required to have a front and rear light when riding in the dark.

³ Look for more information about this in the coming months. It is scheduled to be enforced starting spring break 2014.

