Troopers Offer Parking Lot Safety Tips

Presented by Public Information Officer Master Corporal Jeffrey R. Hale

Parking lots are a common sight in the US and so are the accidents that take place in them. A staggering one of every five motor vehicle accidents take place in a parking lot. One of the major reasons behind collisions, injuries, and fatalities that happen in parking lots is the false sense of security motorists and pedestrians feel. Pedestrians and drivers expect traffic to move more slowly, which means that caution takes a back seat.

While crashes between two vehicles account for some of these numbers, pedestrians are also often struck by vehicles moving in and out from parking spaces. Tragically, an average of 206 people (drivers and pedestrians) are killed each year in parking lot related accidents. Both pedestrians and drivers should view parking lots as if they were streets and intersections. After all, they do have set speed limits and have the same traffic markings to indicate traffic patterns. The Delaware State Police would like to offer the following safety tips for both pedestrians and drivers to follow when using parking lots.

Pedestrian Tips

- Be cautious and aware of your surroundings when walking in a parking lot.
- Do not assume that drivers can see you when you can see them. In many cases, the pedestrian sees and hears a

vehicle before a driver can see the pedestrian due to blind spots in vehicles.

- Treat the parking lot like a street. Look both ways before crossing, use crosswalks, and always use sidewalks whenever possible.
- Walk down the parking lots aisles and not in-between vehicles when walking to and from your vehicle.
- Try to avoid areas where it would be hard for a driver to see you, for instance in loading dock areas. Try to walk in groups when in a parking lot. It makes it easier for a driver to see.
- In bad weather like snow, wear proper footwear to provide adequate traction to avoid slipping and falling.

Driving Tips

- When looking for a place to park, park further away where there is less pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- Whenever possible, avoid being in reverse. More incidents happen in reverse due to not knowing your surroundings.
- Pull all the way through the parking space to avoid having to reverse when leaving. If you cannot, now is the time to back into the space, since you have had the time to check the surroundings.
- Drivers of motorcycles and bicycles are to follow the same traffic rules as drivers of vehicle.
- Slow Down! The speed limit is 10 mph in most parking lots. Any faster speeds may result in a fatal injury to a pedestrian.
- Reduce speeds in bad weather. In wet weather, vehicles have a higher chance of skidding.
- Be cautious in parking garages. They have tight spaces and low clearance. Older parking garage may not be able to handle today’s large vehicle so drive cautiously. Also, it is harder to spot pedestrians in parking garage.