

# Police out in force to instruct new pedestrian safety law

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NORTHFIELD — With the remembrance tree honoring Casey Feldman in the background, Northfield police conducted the first of what will be a series of pedestrian safety enforcement programs on Monday, July 19 that put “Cops in Crosswalks” in an effort to raise awareness about safely sharing the roads with pedestrians.

Sgt. Steven Steinecke was dressed in plain clothes posing as a pedestrian in front of the Stillwell Building on Shore Road. He walked into the intersection in an effort to get the drivers’ attention to the pedestrian crosswalk and alert them to stopping for a pedestrian. Those drivers who failed to slow down for the officer were stopped by uniform officers farther down Shore Road to alert them to what they had failed to do.

“This is an educational exercise,” said Northfield Police Chief Robert James. “We are handing out literature to make the drivers

aware of the law and that it is a shared responsibility between the driver and the pedestrian to be safe.”

Since 2004 approximately 150 pedestrians have been killed annually on New Jersey roadways, according to Pam Fischer, the director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety. That is in addition to the more than 30,000 injured in motor vehicle related crashes statewide. “Until we achieve zero fatalities then we must continue to educate both pedestrians and motorists about the importance of remaining alert at all time, taking personal responsibility for their actions and recognizing that ensuring your safety in the transportation system is a shared responsibility,” the director said.

The Northfield Police Department was one of 13 departments statewide to be awarded an \$8,000 grant to fund the Cops in Crosswalks effort this summer. Linwood as well received the grant. The crosswalk initiatives will be from now through mid-September, according to Lt. Arthur Faden.

The educational component of the Cops in Crosswalks program will also served to educate drivers that since April 1, 2010 drivers are now required to stop and stay stopped while a pedestrian is in a marked crosswalk. Prior to that time the drivers were required to yield.

“By changing the language drivers now know when they approach a crosswalk they must stop. It also infers that a motorist is at fault when there is a conflict between a vehicle and a pedestrian in a crosswalk,” said Fischer.

On Monday, it was only pamphlets and information that were being handed out to the drivers who failed to stop for Sgt. Steinecke. That will not always be the case. “I will not take the discretion out of my officers’ hands and if they feel they need to issue a summons to the driver then they will,” said James.

Cops in Crosswalks events are scheduled for July 23, 24, 27 and 31 in Northfield at various locations. Officers may be ticketing motorists.