



Pedestrian Safety Enforcement DVDs



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

Problem

The state needed better pedestrian safety training for police officers and the public that would engage viewers and not inconvenience instructors.

Background

Many traffic officers have never been trained in pedestrian and bicycle issues and could therefore not be prepared to enforce laws and educate the public themselves. Nor did drivers education courses for teenagers include anything on pedestrian and bicycle issues. A new law enacted the year before allowed motorcyclists and cyclists to run a red light if they'd been stopped for 45 seconds or longer, given that they do not have sufficient weight to trigger the light change. It was important to share the finer details of the law with traffic officers and the public alike. However, instructors were often resistant to change a curriculum they'd been using for years.

Solution

Stacy Vilas, a young member on the traffic enforcement safety team at the Madison Police Department, took the initiative to create a pedestrian safety training DVD for the other officers at the Department in 2006. She worked with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Program at the Madison DOT to secure funding through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). A local television station agreed to produce the film for a reasonable price. The DOT and Police Department collaborated to write the script. The Madison Police Chief gave a 20-second intro to the film, lending a sense of authority and importance to the project which caught viewers' attention. Officers' and community members' comments were shown at the end.



A still image from one of the DVDs.

The Madison Department of Transportation then modified the DVD to make it suitable for the public, removing parts specific to officers, and creating a Spanish language track as well. A bicycle-focused training video was obtained from the Illinois DOT, hosted by an American participant in the Tour de France. Working with the local DMV, the two DVDs were distributed to local high schools, drivers education classes, private driver's education instructors, and the American Automobile Association (AAA). Pre-made tests were also sent so that the content could be easily fit into the curriculum without any work on the part of the instructors. The police department also sent members of the enforcement safety team to present the videos to companies like Madison Gas and Electric, where employees spend a lot of time on the road.

Results

The video proved successful everywhere it was shown. Groups initially reluctant to take the time out of their day for pedestrian safety training were engaged and asking questions by the end. It is planned to modify the video to suit each community by having their local police chief give the introduction. A training book is nearing publication, and presentations will then extend to train local community officers to become pedestrian safety trainers themselves.

Pedestrian Safety Enforcement DVDs — Madison, WI

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Images Source

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For more information, please visit the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Web site at www.walkinginfo.org.

