

VT Agency of Transportation Update: Vulnerable Road User Safety Education & Outreach

House Transportation Committee – January 16, 2026
Presented by: Amanda Holland, Active Transportation Unit

What Makes Active Transportation Safe?



✓ Education of all road users

Strategy → Establish VRU Safety Culture

- Increase the understanding of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on rules of the road and how to properly share the road.
- Educational programs for VRUs regarding proper equipment and safe riding in traffic including commuter programs and Safe Routes to School.

**Strategy supported in Vermont's Strategic Highway Safety Plan & the Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Plan*

Safety of Vulnerable Road Users (VRU)

Vulnerable User is defined as any of the following: [See [23 VSA §4 \(81\)](#)]

- A **pedestrian**;
- An operator of highway building, repair, or maintenance equipment or of agricultural equipment;
- A person **operating a wheelchair or other personal mobility device**, whether motorized or not;
-  • A person operating a **bicycle or other nonmotorized** means of transportation (such as roller skates, rollerblades, or roller skis);
-  • A person operating a **motor-assisted bicycle or an electric bicycle**;
- A person riding, driving, or herding an animal.

Safety of Vulnerable Road Users (VRU)

Laws establish clear rights and responsibilities for each roadway user



Operators of motor vehicles shall:

- Pass VRUs with “due care” (reduce speed, increase clearance distance to 4 feet)
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks

Operators of bicyclists shall:

- Follow the rights and responsibilities of motorists
- Shall signal to indicate change of speed or direction
- Shall ride to the left when overtaking another VRU



Pedestrians shall:

- Yield to vehicles if crossing *outside of a marked crosswalk*
- Before leaving curb *at a marked crosswalk*, check the proximity of vehicles adjacent to the crossing. If vehicle is too close to safely stop, pedestrian to yield.



Strategic Partnerships = Broad Audience



Educate ALL roadway users



VTrans partners with many stakeholders to fund initiatives and coordinate efforts

Law Enforcement (State, County, Local)

Vermont Highway Safety Alliance

State Agencies

VAPDA & Municipalities



Local Motion AARP, Schools

Non-profit Partners



VTrans

Transit & Travel Demand Management Partners

- Dept. of Motor Vehicles
- Dept of Health
- Dept of Public Safety
- Dept. of Education

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

A Multipronged Approach

Print & Digital Guides, Stickers, Checklist, Etc.



Events & Trainings

Local Bike Rodeos & School Presentation



SafeRoutes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



Local Motion Webinars

This winter (and fall and spring), we're holding a series of webinars intended to help advocates and communities make progress on improving infrastructure for walking and biking. Check them out and register here!



Webinar: What You Need to Know About E-bikes in VT



Webinar Series: AARP "Get Back on Your Bike & Biking Basics"

A series of webinars created in partnership with AARP

Social Media Engagement & Instructional Videos

YouTube VTransTV



All Road Users Safety Education

State Highway Safety Office Partnership

VT Agency of Transportation – State Highway Safety Office

“Drive Well Vermont” multiyear media initiative.

- Focus on what Vermonters are doing right and challenging road users to become engaged and make good decisions.
- Approach based on the Positive Culture Framework, a system that promotes health and safety by building on shared values, beliefs, and attitudes.

2025 new campaign launch, “Share the Road”

- Aim to increase awareness of vulnerable road users we encounter on our roadways
- Ask of the public, “...make sure you slow down, move over, and share the road.”

2025 Share the Road Messaging Toolkit

Amplify the Agency of Transportation’s Campaign

Use this Share the Road messaging toolkit to reach out to your unique audience with information on the importance of sharing the road with vulnerable road users. You can use these messages as they are or modify them for your intended purpose.



Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

State Highway Safety Office Partnership

VT Department of Health – Division of Emergency Preparedness, Response & Injury Prevention

The Road User Group (RUG) Safety Program provides safety education to pedestrians, bicyclists and older drivers.

✓ Safe Streets for All Website

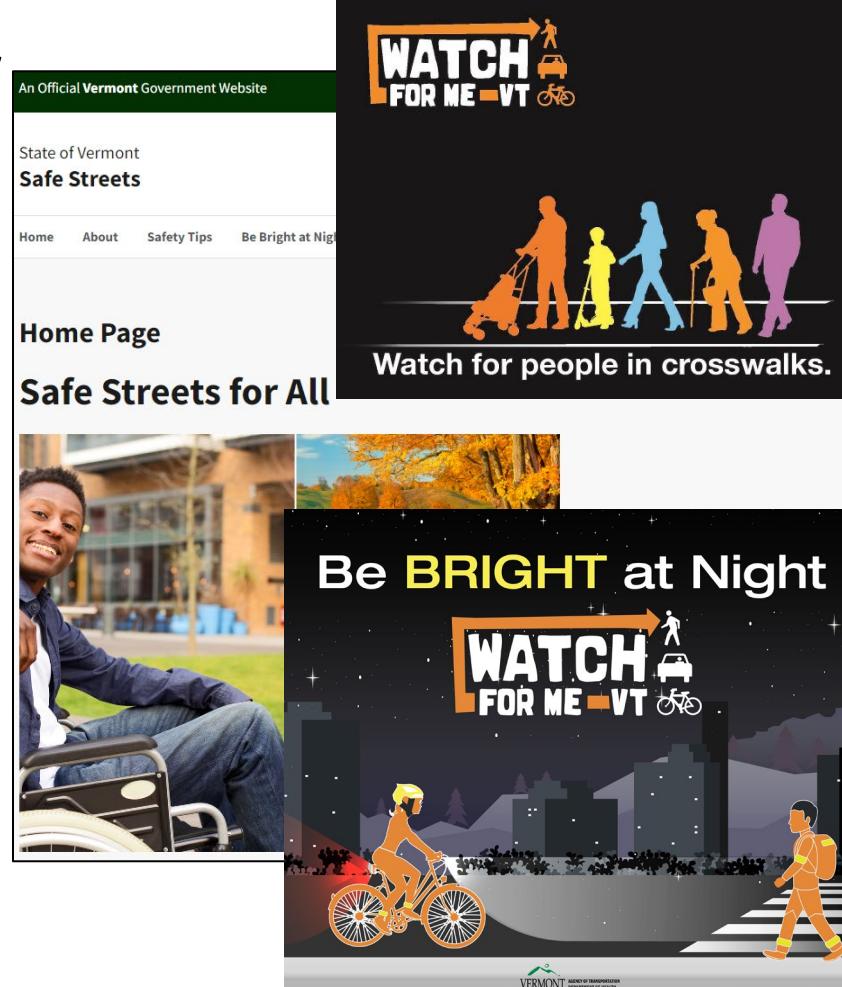
Aggregates statewide resources targeted to communities in support of local safety initiatives.

- Safety tips, campaign graphics, social media calendar, contact for further resources

✓ Safety Education Media Toolkits

Raise awareness of best practices for all road users.

- Ready-made graphics and materials available for partner or community events
- Educational Campaigns:**
 - “Watch For Me VT”
 - “Be Bright at Night” (Partner: Medical Reserve Corps)



Night Safety Tips for Pedestrians, Cyclists, & Drivers

FOR PEDESTRIANS & CYCLISTS:

- Make sure you are visible to drivers by wearing light and bright clothing, or better yet, bring flashlights/bike lights and wear something reflective.
- Cyclists are required by law to use either a flashing or steady red rear light OR a minimum of 20 square inches of reflective material facing to the rear.
- Cross in well-lit areas with the best view of traffic.
- Use sidewalks whenever possible.
- At the bus stop: cross behind the bus or in the crosswalk.
- Watch for cars, bikes and other vehicles – because they might not be watching for you.

WHEN YOU'RE DRIVING:

- Obey all speed limits. A pedestrian hit by a car going 40 mph has an 85% chance of being killed. At 20 mph the risk is reduced to 5%.
- Avoid distracted driving, aggressive driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Come to a complete stop at stop signs and red lights.
- Stay alert, always watch for bikes and pedestrians, and share the road.

More information at: SafeStreets.Vermont.Gov



Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

State Highway Safety Office Partnership

Local Motion

Supports two complimentary programs targeted to school-aged children, targeting grades 3 through 8, with an incentive-based safety education curriculum that promotes safe walking and biking practices.

✓ Bike Smart

On-bike skill training

Hands-on training teaches bike safety skills and an opportunity to distribute free helmets to encourage youth helmet use.

✓ Walk Smart

Guided walk to learn how to move around community safely.

Promoting program to educators and provides resources such as reflective safety gear for instructors to distribute to students.



All Road Users Safety Education

State Highway Safety Office Partnership

Rutland City School District

- Received driver simulators for use by students and instructors to learn about the dangers of distracted driving in the high school and technical center.



Randolph Police Department

- Educes young motorists on the rules and consequences of violating Vermont traffic laws
- Educes young cyclist in safe bicycle operation (bicycle rodeos) and the use of safety gear while operating a bicycle on Vermont roadways.



Vermont Principles Association

- Educes young drivers in the areas of distracted and impaired driving, speeding, and occupant protection.
- Theme for 2025 was "Safe Drivers Win Every Time" in partnership with Alliance Highway Safety to perform outreach at schools and student sports events.

Town of Milton

- Continuing public education on proper bike operation, helmet use, and roadway safety during the annual all-ages May bike rodeo event.
- Raising awareness of school zone safety and the dangers of passing school buses loading and unloading children at the annual "Red light flashing no passing" barbecue event.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

Safe Routes to School

Goal is to make walking, biking, and rolling to school safer, easier and more appealing.

Aim is to instill knowledge of traffic laws and skills that encourage behaviors to share the road safely.

Historical Program Influence (September 2020 - August 2023)

- 74 Schools, enrolled (officially signed up)
- 84 Schools, engaged (report activity)

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School



Next Steps:

- Reorganization of statewide service delivery system
- Develop a management framework to create efficiencies and optimize resources
 - Stakeholder contacts, participation reporting, etc.
- Facilitate coordination among other educational efforts at schools which directly support the Safe Routes to School program.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

Safe Passing Law

As of July 1st, 2024, motorists shall increase clearance to at least 4 ft when passing vulnerable users.



[HOME](#) / [ABOUT](#) / [NEWS](#) / [SAFE PASSING IS NOW VERNON LAW](#)

Safe passing is now Vermont law

POSTED ON JULY 02, 2024

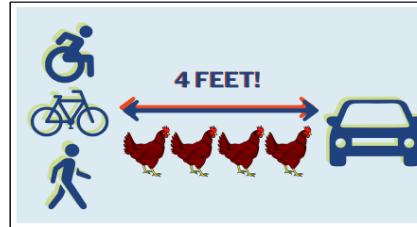
As of July 1, drivers are required to provide 4' of clearance when passing a vulnerable user.

Vulnerable users are just about everyone not operating a motor vehicle: people walking, biking, and rolling; road workers, and equestrians. Local Motion advocated for this protection during the past legislative session, and it was passed in [S.309](#).

This law is intended to ensure that all Vermonters are safe on our streets and roads. The passage of this law enables the use of 4' passing distance signs (MUTCD sign R4-19), and it presents an excellent opportunity to educate the public about safe driving around vulnerable users.

If you want your town to install these signs, we recommend that you reach out to your town manager, selectboard/city council, and highway or public works department.

We are now working to educate the public on Vermont's safe passing requirement, and we're asking for your help!



Vermont Department of Health •
July 16 at 12:00 PM •

Share the road!

In the summer, there are more pedestrians and bikers out and about, so make sure to give them space. The new pedestrian safety law mandates that cars give at least four feet when passing bikers. #SafeStreets

For more info, visit <http://SafeStreets.vermont.gov/vermont-walk-and-bike...>

GIVE BIKES 4 FEET!

Pass bicyclists only when it is safe to do so and be sure to give them 4 feet of room.

Be aware that bicyclists may move left to avoid debris or to prepare to make a left turn.

WATCH FOR ME - VT
SafeStreets.vermont.gov/WatchForMe

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Vermont Agency of Transportation's Post

Vermont Agency of Transportation
October 9, 2024 •

MOTORISTS: GIVE 4 FEET TO PASS - IT'S THE LAW NOW

On July 1, 2024, a new law went into effect in Vermont to protect vulnerable users on our roads. The law requires motorists to pass a vulnerable user at a distance of at least 4 feet.

Per statute, vulnerable users are defined as any of the following

- A pedestrian;
- An operator of highway building, repair, or maintenance equipment or of agricultural equipment;
- A person operating a wheelchair or other personal mobility device, whether motorized or not;
- A person operating a bicycle or other nonmotorized means of transportation (such as roller skates, rollerblades, or roller skis);
- A person operating a motor-assisted bicycle or an electric bicycle; or
- A person riding, driving, or herding an animal.

For more information about the new law, please visit the Vermont State Statutes site: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/stat.../section/23/001/00004>. For more information about general Vulnerable Road User safety, please visit Safe Streets for All at <https://safestreets.vermont.gov/>.

Drive Well, Vermont.

VERMONT DRIVER ALERT: NEW SAFE PASSING LAW

VERMONT
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Education

Safe Passing Law

As of July 1st, 2024, motorists shall increase clearance to at least 4 ft when passing vulnerable users.

Agency Completed Efforts:

Effective as of June 2025, VTrans updated the Traffic Engineering Instructions (TEI 25-200) that gives guidance on standard signage practices to include the MUTCD Bicycle Passing Clearance sign as part of the state border crossing sign progression.

“Welcome to Vermont” – Border Crossing Signs

At the entrances to the State, it is desirable to inform drivers of laws that may be different than those of our neighboring States, and call to drivers' attention certain laws promoting safety on our highways.

Typical signage on non-limited access State Highways includes:

- Speed Limit 50 mph unless otherwise posted
- Safety Belts Required
- No Drinking/Driving
- No Hand Held Electronic Devices
- 4 ft Bicycle Passing Clearance Sign

Next steps:

- Install 4 ft Bicycle Passing Clearance Sign as part of “Welcome to Vermont” Border Crossing Sign sequence, when those sign assemblies are replaced due to asset condition or maintenance.
- Develop consistent criteria for the consideration of 4 ft Bicycle Passing Clearance Sign placement on high bicycle use State Highways

Road Ahead: Broaden Reach of Safety Education



The needs of people walking and bicycling of **all ages and abilities will be considered in all VTrans activities.**

VTrans staff will continue to work collaboratively internally and with external partners to improve safety, connectivity, and access to promote walking and bicycling.

2021 Bicycle & Pedestrian Strategic Plan - Objective 5

Use a wide variety of methods to educate the public on the safety and needs of people walking and bicycling

Strategy 5.1 - Develop a plan for safety education related to VRU that identifies education efforts and prioritizes their implementation.

Example Action Items:

- *Revise Driver's Education curriculum to instill principles for all modes sharing the road safely.*
- *Collaborate with AARP to educate their constituents on safe walking, bicycling and driving.*

Strategy 5.4 - Monitor changes in use of micromobility (e.g., electric devices, scooters, bikeshare, automated vehicles) and incorporate safety education to address known issues.

Road Ahead: Broaden Reach of Safety Education



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2021 Bicycle & Pedestrian Strategic Plan - Objective 5

Use a wide variety of methods to educate the public on the safety and needs of people walking and bicycling

Strategy 5.2 - Leverage new technology platforms (e.g., YouTube ads, podcasts, etc.) and collaborations with partners (i.e., Vermont Highway Safety Alliance stakeholders) to distribute safety messaging and leverage earned media.

Strategy 5.3 – Maintain a Safe Routes to School Program, including collaboration with school districts to educate and engage school-age children and parents in safe practices.

Strategy 5.5 - Coordinate with VT Dept. of Health to promote walking and bicycling to meet physical activity and mental health goals (improving quality of life for Vermonters).

Example Action:

- Increase coordination on safety messaging

Road Ahead: Broaden Reach of Safety Education

Establish a VRU Safety Culture through Education & Partnership

- Strengthen communication and collaboration with Partners
- Develop a coordinated plan for safety education related to VRU
 - Identify & prioritize education efforts
 - Coordinate public messaging campaigns across Partner programs
 - Assess target audiences to inform campaigns
- Adapt resources to reflect current practices & address accessibility
- Deliver new trainings to practitioners
 - 2023 VTrans Complete Streets Guidance - Context informed design – No one size fits all
 - ❖ Train the Trainers – In 2025, conducted 7 trainings for municipalities.