

Would You Like to Be a Traffic Cop?

Busy Street Corner Directors at Downtown Intersections Have Plenty to Do

Omaha Traffic Donts

- Don't fail to follow the instructions of the traffic policeman.
- Don't get excited and lose your nerve if driving a car and get caught in a crowd.
- Don't exceed the speed limit when driving in the city.
- Don't try to run past every auto you see in front of you.
- Don't get out of gasoline and expect your car to keep running.
- Don't fail to sound an alarm when nearing a crossing street.
- Don't neglect your lights when evening approaches.
- Don't forget to signal at intersections, or when making a turn, even though traffic officer may not be on duty.
- Don't pass street cars while passengers are boarding or leaving them.
- Don't stop on the crosswalk so as to interfere with the passage of pedestrians.
- Don't forget to keep as close as possible to the curb on the right, allowing more swiftly moving vehicles free passage to their left.
- Don't forget to pass to the right when meeting another vehicle.
- Don't forget when you overtake another vehicle to pass on the left side of the overtaken vehicle, and not pull over to the right until entirely clear of it.
- Don't forget when turning into another street to the right to turn the corner as near to the right hand curb as possible.
- Don't stand or travel with two or more vehicles abreast in any street.
- Don't use cut-outs on automobiles and motorcycles except within one-half block of the place said automobile or motorcycle is housed.
- Don't forget that pedestrians must not cross diagonally, but must use the crossings at intersections only.
- Don't forget that the right-of-way belongs to the vehicle farthest to the right when two vehicles are approaching at right angles toward each other.
- Don't forget to report any infraction of the traffic rules.

'Tis the Traffic Cop

Who is it stands upon the street
And guards the autos, lest they meet,
And is a guide to busy feet?
The traffic cop.

Who waves his hand with lordly mien
And stops the biggest buzz-machine
And watches all with eyesight keen?
The traffic cop.

Who braves the chilly winter breeze
Until his "12's" begin to freeze?
Who stands summer's intensities?
The traffic cop.

A H, the traffic cop, folks! Did you ever envy him his lot? Probably not. There are nine of "him" in Omaha, commanded by a traffic sergeant.

There they stand all day long, in winter's hyperborean frigidty and summer's equatorial torridity, in the midst of the maelstrom of intersecting vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

And around them the grind of the busy life of a big city rumbles and roars and flizzes and spurts and clangs and bangs and dings and dongs and buzzes and hisses and bellows and wails and pants and rants and yowls and howls and grates and grinds and puffs and bumps and clicks and clangs and chugs and moans and hoots and toots and crashes and grunts and gasps and groans and whistles and wheezes and squawks and blows and jars and jerks and rasps and jingles and twangs and clacks and jangles and rings and clatters and yelps and croaks and howls and hums and booms and clashes and jolts and jostles and slams and scrapes and throbs and crinks and jingles and quivers and roars and shrieks.

But Sergeant Sigwart and his merry men fear it not. A fire-breathing juggernaut, 1916 model, comes roaring down Farnam street. Three tons of purging machinery and polished body, driven by the power of sixty horses. Women and little children are crossing the street. Traffic Officer Schwager raises his hand and the luxurious thing of speed and comfort comes to a dead stop. Nor does it start its throbbing engines again until it gets the imperial command from the blue uniformed man in the middle of the intersection.

Why the Traffic Officer

Traffic officers are necessary at busy crossings because of the old physical law that "two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time." If they try to do it, there is sure to be a collision with probably property and physical damage.

Hence, traffic officers.

But the duties of Omaha's traffic men are much more extensive than the mere management of passing vehicles.

They must see that pedestrians don't cut cat-a-corner, but keep within the white marks in crossing the streets at corners. If a runaway comes tearing down the street the traffic officer doesn't hesitate to do his utmost even at risk of life and limb to stop it. And they must direct people and answer 2,653,284 questions, at least.

No matter what the weather, the men must be at their stations every week-day from 8:30 a. m. to 6:30 p. m. with an hour and a half for lunch. In zero weather they stand in the chilly blast with about two inches thickness of clothes and overshoes and ear muffs and gloves; and in summer's heat they shed as much as possible of their garb and even provide themselves with a little square platform to keep their pedal extremities from sticking fast when the well known sun brings the black sap oozing from the paving blocks.

It is generally admitted that there are easier occupations known to men than that of traffic policeman.

Hardly the Easy Snap Imagined

But the traffic cops of Omaha are not men looking for easy snaps. They are virile, sturdy, muscular men of action. And they are devoted to their work. This statement is not a mere euphemism. It's the solid truth.

Take William Hudson, as a typical example of devotion to his duty. You've seen him, a distinguished-looking, white-moustached man. He looks like General Miles, only better looking. His station is at the intersection of Fifteenth and Farnam streets.

William took a ten days' vacation last year. When he got up the first morning of his vacation he hardly knew what to do. So he took a walk. His steps led him to Fifteenth and Farnam streets where his substitute was on duty. There he remained. He watched his substitute's work with a critical eye and gave him a few hints on how to do the job with the greatest neatness and dispatch. Finally he wended his way homeward and managed somehow to pass the first day of his vacation.

The next morning of his holiday he went for another walk and if he didn't land at Fifteenth and



Farnam streets again! He spent quite some time there. Then he went home. This same thing happened for eight days straight. Then he could stand it no longer and he went on the ninth day and reported for duty and was assigned to his old stand and was content. He is an expert at stopping runaways and claims to have a method that always works. He waves his arms and "hollers" and somehow or other induces horses to stop.

Samples of Those on the Job

Up at Sixteenth and Farnam streets is John H. Schwager, monarch of traffic. John is a walking, living, breathing encyclopedia of things in Omaha. If a stranger comes up to him and inquires when the train leaves for Podunk, Mo., the chances are that John can tell the hour, how long it takes to get to Podunk and the fare. Yes, "Deena," that's his nickname, surely is a compendium of information.

Down at Sixteenth and Harney is Vaclav James Vaboril in charge of the two streams of vehicles and a block to the south is "Komical Keystone" Carney, whose real name is William D. "Komical Keystone," when off duty, is always playing pranks and telling jokes. The boys say he is the perfect picture of Roscoe Arbuckle, the fat man in the movies, and they insist that if "Komical Keystone" ever takes a notion to become a screen artist, Arbuckle will have to take a back seat.

Is it a Hoodoo Corner?

Fourteenth and Farnam is the hoodoo corner. Dennis Steadman is stationed there. His two predecessors both died. They were Horace Corneau, who died January 21, 1914, and Bert Rogers, whose death occurred August 24, 1915. Both had been army sergeants in the Philippines.

"The Viking" is stationed at Fourteenth and Douglas streets. He is Maurice E. Anderson and takes his sobriquet from his tall stature, his blond complexion and his Scandinavian ancestry.

"Sam" Reigelman at Fifteenth and Douglas streets is one of the old guard and is said to hate

such innovations as automobiles and to rue their passing with a stern hand.

Philip Wents, at Sixteenth and Douglas streets, keeps a weather eye "peeled" up the Douglas street hill, since an electric got away from its moorings and crashed down the hill and "sideswiped" him on the port bow.

Julius Mansfield completes the list of our traffic officers and can be found, in office hours, directing the traffic at Sixteenth and Dodge streets.

The traffic service in Omaha was inaugurated in December, 1909, when William Good was stationed at Sixteenth and Harney streets and W. R. Wilson at Sixteenth and Farnam streets. Since then the service has grown to its present proportions and importance.