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[Home](#) > [The Running Report](#) > [Archives](#) > [2008](#) > [March](#) > [07](#) > Entry

Running on the Wrong Side of the Road

By [Adrienne Murchison](#) | Friday, March 7, 2008, 12:25 AM

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

I'm guilty.

My normal route has no sidewalks and unless it's dark or foggy outside I run with the flow of traffic on the side of the road. In poor visibility, I'll run facing traffic.

Sally Flocks, president of [PEDS](#), a pedestrian advocacy group says, "When you're walking [or running] in the street, you should be facing traffic. The law requires pedestrians to yield to cars, which means it's your responsibility to get out of the way."

Flocks recalls a fatal accident in 1999. A Lawrenceville mom and her three children, walking along the side of the road, were blindsided by a teen driver dialing a cell phone. The mother's two-year-old son was killed.

"That's a really good example of what runners need to be aware of. You have to recognize that drivers are not paying attention, even if you are," Flocks says.

Which side of the road do you run on? Do you think it makes a difference one way or the other? When you're driving, do you care? Had any close calls?

In summer camp, as a kid, I was taught to walk with the flow of traffic. Been doing it ever since but now every once in a while on my running route, a driver or resident becomes annoyed enough to scold me.

Not realizing the error of my ways, I continued on the wrong side of the road for nearly three years.

Last summer a driver made me so angry with his protest that I later went online to confirm to myself that I was right. (I had planned to get a T-shirt with bold print that said, 'I AM running on the correct side of the road!')

I continued to run on the wrong side because I'm used to it.

That is until today.

Flocks made a lot of sense.

Odds of Survival if hit by a vehicle per Sally Flocks:

- If hit at 20 miles per hour, the risk of death is five percent.
- If hit at 30 miles per hour, the risk of death is 45 percent.
- If hit at 40 miles per hour, the risk of death is 85 percent.

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P.S. A lot of you have left great comments about the worst hills in the Atlanta area. Keep them coming. Read the [blog here](#). Or send your hill suggestions to me [here](#).

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Comments

By Randall

March 7, 2008 8:28 AM | [Link to this](#)

My high school cross-country coach, the great Richard Westbrook, taught us to run AGAINST the flow of traffic so that we could be seen by drivers and so that we would see oncoming vehicles.

By Common Sense

March 7, 2008 8:33 AM | [Link to this](#)

I don't know about the law but it seems like common sense to walk/run facing traffic. Why would you NOT want to see a 4000 lb vehicle coming towards you that will only miss you by mere feet?

By Dan

March 7, 2008 8:41 AM | [Link to this](#)

No question, always face traffic. I think you may have had some teenage camp counselor. My high school track coach pointed out the simple logic of that 25 years ago so it is not a new concept it's simply common sense. And it isn't just the cars that are not paying attention. I have seen runners going with traffic veer to their left without looking to avoid a pothole or puddle. Even the simple act of turning to look over your shoulder can pull you a step into the lane.

By Native

March 7, 2008 8:45 AM | [Link to this](#)

I'm pretty sure that the law requires pedestrians to be facing traffic. Like Common Sense, I want to see the cars coming towards me in order to be ready to react to anything. What is really upsetting, is to see people on the wrong side of the road, in the street when there's a sidewalk right there, in the dark, dressed in black, no reflective wear, pushing a stroller and wearing a listening device. This is the ultimate display of stupidity. I don't see how these types have reached adulthood. I can't believe that DFACS is not on the lookout for those that push strollers on the wrong side of the road, this is child endangerment if I ever saw it.

By Jan

March 7, 2008 8:47 AM | [Link to this](#)