

Tips for Preteens & Teens

Prevent Pedestrian Crashes



Walk Responsibly.

We're all pedestrians; we walk to the mailbox, from the parking lot to the store, to school, to meet up with friends, to walk the dog. During your teen years, you are likely to be walking independently and to be exposed to traffic. Walking around traffic requires the same critical thinking skills as riding your bike and driving a car! Apply the same walking skills you learned as a kid: stop—look left-right-left for traffic and be safe, be seen. Use these skills when you walk, and encourage others to do the same! **Here's what you can do:**

■ Be Prepared Before Walking.

- Be seen—wear clothes or materials to make you more visible to others:
 1. Bright clothing (during the day)
 2. Reflective gear
 3. Use lights at night or when visibility is poor (white in front, red in the rear - just like a car)
- Plan your safest route—safer routes have less traffic, slower speeds, lighting, sidewalks, and, if possible, separate you from traffic (i.e., sidewalks, paths, a barrier).

■ Know the Rules.

- As a pre-driver or new driver, you have an opportunity to learn by watching traffic and how each road user (cars, bicycles and pedestrians) relates to one another. Discuss with an adult what you see.
- Follow the rules and laws put in place to increase your safety:
 1. Walk on sidewalks, if they're there. If not, walk as far to the left, **facing traffic**.
 2. Look left-right-left and behind for traffic before crossing a driveway or road.
 3. Cross in marked crosswalks, at corners, or at intersections.
 4. Obey pedestrian crossing signals.

5. While crossing, look left and right for traffic; be prepared to get out of the way if a driver doesn't seem to see you.

■ Look for Traffic.

- Look for cars backing up; look for white backup lights or signs the motor is running.
- Expect others not to see you. Some drivers may be distracted. Do not step in to the roadway until the driver has stopped for you, or has acknowledged your intent to cross with eye contact, a wave or a nod.

■ Walk Defensively.

- Walk focused and alert. No texting, listening to music or anything that takes your eyes, ears, or your mind, off the road and traffic.
- Anticipate what other road users might do—turns, pulling out of a parking space or driveway, backing up. The sooner you notice a potential conflict, the quicker you can act to avoid it.
- Give drivers extra time to slow or stop, especially in poor weather (ice, snow, rain), and low visibility (dusk, dawn, fog, or night). Just because you can see others, does not mean they can see you.

■ Know the Causes of Pedestrian-Vehicle Crashes.

Become more aware of the causes of some of the common types of crashes between pedestrians and vehicles so you can learn how to avoid them.

- Prevention is the name of the game; there are things you can do to decrease your risk of being in a crash.
- Understanding the causes of crashes helps you adjust your walking and driving behaviors to avoid a crash in the first place.
- **Click here for more information on common types of crashes.**



Common Crash Types Between Pedestrians and Cars:

The following are some common crash types involving cars and youth pedestrians (Cross, Fischer, Hunter, Stutts, 1995).

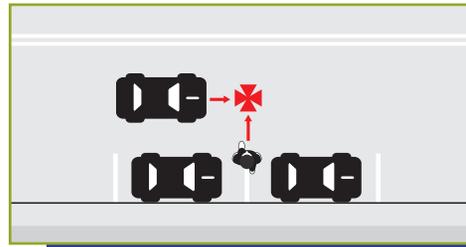
Note: Distraction on the part of all road users (motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians) can be an underlying cause or influencing factor in almost all of the crashes included. Distracted driving, bicycling and walking is an ongoing threat to everyone's safety. The simple solution is to always stay focused and alert to traffic and the roadway.

What Happens

Pedestrian Darts/Steps Out Midblock.

A pedestrian runs or walks out into the roadway in an unmarked area in the middle of the block (not in a crosswalk or at an intersection) and is struck by a vehicle.

Groups of youth are playing sports (football, hockey, etc.) in roadway or run into the street to retrieve a ball.



What It Looks Like

What Pedestrians Should Do

What Motorists Should Do

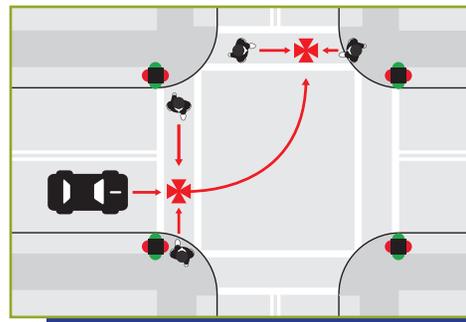
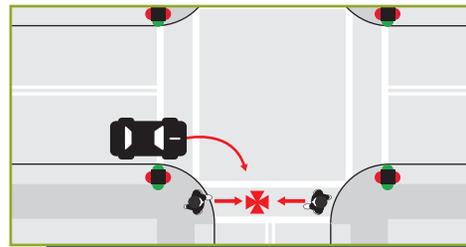
- Cross at a crosswalk using pedestrian crossing signals, when available.
- If crossing midblock, wait at each edge for traffic to clear from both directions.
- Play sports in areas away from traffic. If your ball goes into the roadway, stop and look for traffic before entering.

- Slow down.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially in residential areas, school zones or shopping centers. Watch for pedestrians (especially children) on the side of the road; be prepared for unpredictable behavior.

Vehicle Makes a Turn (Right or Left) at an Intersection.

A vehicle turns or merges into the path of a pedestrian without yielding.

This includes a vehicle turning into or out of a driveway or alley, or a right turn on red.



- Be alert for turning vehicles and those who may not stop at red lights or stop signs.
- Stay in crosswalks and obey traffic signals. If possible, communicate (e.g., eye contact, hand gesture) with drivers before crossing the roadway.

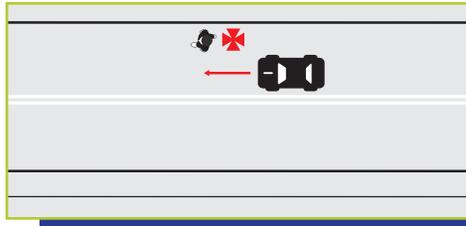
- Before turning, look for other vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists and yield to them.
- Yield to pedestrians with the "Walk" signal and those already in a crosswalk, as required by law. This includes continuing to yield if the pedestrian is crossing and the "Walk" signal has expired.
- When turning right on red, come to a complete stop and scan for all traffic, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Proceed only when clear.

What Happens

Pedestrian Walking or Jogging Along the Road.

A pedestrian walking or jogging in roadway in same direction as motorized traffic fails to recognize a vehicle approaching behind them. A crash could occur if the driver is not paying attention or does not see the pedestrian and the pedestrian fails to recognize the threat and try to quickly get out of the way.

What It Looks Like



What Pedestrians Should Do

- Walk or run facing traffic.
- Use sidewalks or paths to separate you from moving traffic. If no sidewalk is present, stay on the shoulder and/or as far away from traffic as possible.
- Wear bright, contrasting colors during the day and use reflective wear and lights if walking at night.

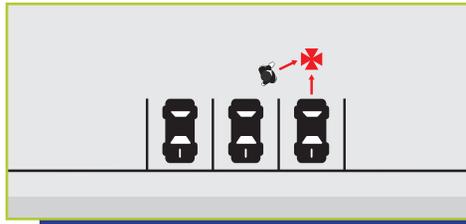
What Motorists Should Do

- Slow down.
- Watch for persons walking or running along the road, especially in the absence of sidewalks.
- Drive alert and focused.
- Use extra caution driving at night, remaining alert for all traffic, including pedestrians.

Backing Vehicle.

A driver fails to look for or see traffic when backing from driveway, private road, or parking lot.

A pedestrian walks behind a moving vehicle or fails to stay alert and recognize a vehicle preparing to back up.



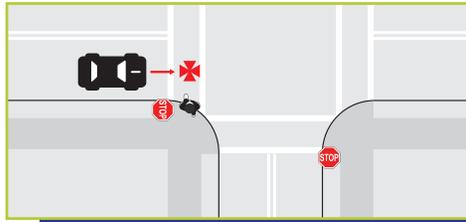
- Be alert for drivers who are parking, idling in a parking space, or backing out of a parking space.
- Make your presence known to drivers. If you are unsure, do not walk near the vehicle.
- In parking lots, pedestrians should walk as far away from rows of parked cars as safely possible. This provides both the driver and pedestrian better visibility and reaction time to stop.

- Look behind, to the left and right for traffic (including pedestrians) **before** backing up. If possible, ask passengers to also check for pedestrians or other hazards.
- Walk behind parked car before getting in to make sure no children are playing there. **Note:** Large vehicles have especially large blind spots.

Distracted Motorist and/or Pedestrian.

A motorist or pedestrian is distracted by electronic devices or talking to others and is hit.

Motorist or Bicyclist Rides Through Stop Signal or Red Light.

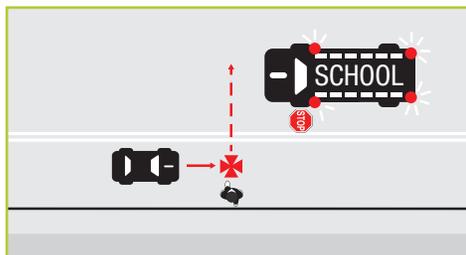


- Avoid distractions; be alert to vehicles and your surroundings at all times.

- Avoid distractions; direct your full attention to the road and all road users.
- Obey all signs and signals.
- Come to a complete stop at signs and look for all traffic before going. Come to a complete stop at red lights. Only turn right on red when traffic is clear.

School Bus-Related. A motorist fails to obey school bus stop arm and flashers as required by law.

A pedestrian fails to look for traffic when crossing to get to school bus or after getting off the bus.

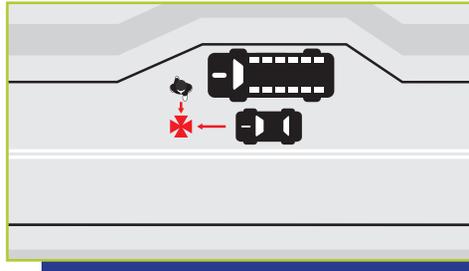


- Cross in front of the school bus, never behind.
- Make eye contact with the school bus driver. They will indicate when to cross in front of the bus.
- Stop at the edge of the school bus and look to make sure traffic behind the bus has stopped as they are required to do by law.
- Arrive at bus stop early to minimize the need to rush to catch the bus.
- Stop and look for traffic before you cross the street to catch the bus; watch for traffic as you are crossing. While you have the right-of-way, take extra care by walking defensively.

- Obey speed limits, especially on school days when children are getting picked up or dropped off by school buses.
 - Know the specific laws for your State and jurisdiction.
- Note:** It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop-arm extended.

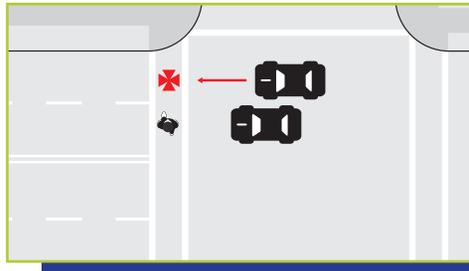
What Happens

Commercial Bus Related. A pedestrian is crossing after exiting a commercial bus that is stopped at a marked bus stop and is hit by an oncoming motorist.



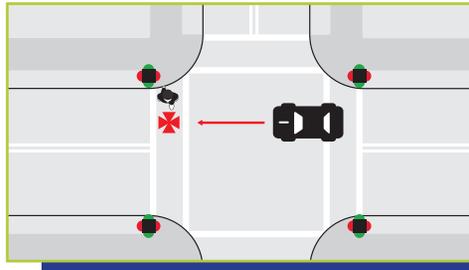
What It Looks Like

Multiple Threat. The first car stops for the pedestrian in the crosswalk. The second car approaches, and its driver's view of the pedestrian is obstructed by another vehicle to the side. The driver doesn't stop and hits the pedestrian.



Pedestrian Crossing Against Signal.

A pedestrian fails to obey the "Don't Walk" signal or look for traffic before stepping off the curb, even if the WALK signal is present.



Pedestrian Trapped. A pedestrian is in the crosswalk when the traffic signals change and the car fails to yield to the pedestrian already in the crosswalk.

What Pedestrians Should Do

- Cross at corners or marked/unmarked crosswalks with the pedestrian signal.
- Wait for the bus to leave before attempting to cross.
- Stop and look at each edge when crossing multiple lanes to make sure drivers see you.
- Walk focused and alert to all traffic, even when you have the right-of-way.

- Yield to each lane of traffic to make sure each motorist sees you.

- Cross with the pedestrian "Walk" signal.
- If you are already in the crosswalk when the orange "Don't Walk" signal is flashing, complete crossing as quickly and safely as possible.
- If there is a (pedestrian) refuge island, wait there until the next "Walk" signal.
- If you have not begun crossing and you have a steady orange "Don't Walk" signal, stop and wait for the next "Walk" signal.

What Motorists Should Do

- Obey all signs and signals and remain alert for pedestrians at all times, especially around commercial bus stops.

- Slow and prepare to stop when motorist in the next lane has stopped; the motorist may be stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross.

- Yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.
- Proceed only when it is clear to do so.

