

Safety Practices for Pedestrians

Be Visible



Make sure you're visible to drivers at all times and make eye contact with them whenever possible. This is especially important at night, in low-light conditions such as dusk or dawn or in inclement weather. According to NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 32 percent of all pedestrian fatalities occur between 8 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

- Wear lightly colored or reflective clothing at night and brightly colored clothing during the day.
- Stay in well-lit areas, especially when crossing the street.
- If possible, make eye contact with drivers in stopped vehicles to ensure they see you before you cross in front of them.

Stay Alert – Avoid Distractions

Distractions are everywhere today and becoming more and more difficult to avoid. Remember that, as a pedestrian, your eyes and ears are your best tools for keeping safe. Stay alert and watch out.

- Put down your phone. Smartphones and handheld electronic devices are a daily part of life, but they take your eyes off of the road and distract your attention.
- Don't wear headphones. Your ears will tell you a lot about what is happening around you – be sure to use them.

Follow the Rules

- Know and follow all traffic rules, signs and signals. You need to be aware of the rules vehicles around you must follow to properly anticipate what drivers will do. This will help increase your safety.
- Never assume a driver will give you the right of way. Make every effort to make eye contact with the driver of a stopped or approaching vehicle before entering the roadway.

Walk in Safe Places

- Use crosswalks when crossing the street. If a crosswalk is unavailable, be sure to find the most well-lit spot on the road to cross and wait for a long enough gap in traffic to make it safely across the street.
- Stay on sidewalks whenever possible. If a sidewalk is not available, be sure to walk on the far side of the road facing traffic. This will help increase your visibility to drivers.
- Avoid walking along highways or other roadways where pedestrians are prohibited.

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As a reminder...

You have no doubt read or heard these tips many times before, but it never hurts to be reminded.

Please ask yourself, as both a driver and a pedestrian whether you are doing everything you can to maximize your safety, and the safety of others.



As a pedestrian ...

- although a crosswalk exists at every intersection, whether marked or not, it is still your responsibility to **make sure all vehicles have yielded** before stepping into the crosswalk and crossing the roadway
- whenever approaching a crosswalk you should remove your earphones, turn off your music, and stop texting or talking on the phone. Be attentive when crossing. Distractions can lead to accidents



- make your intention to cross the road known by
 - **extending your arm,**
 - **illuminating an overhead light,**
 - **or extending and waving a crosswalk flag**
- make **eye contact** with the driver. Never assume a driver sees you.
- be especially alert for turning vehicles – many vehicle-pedestrian incidents occur with a right-turning vehicle
- wear **bright coloured** and ideally, reflective clothing during low-light or night conditions.
- if you are crossing at a crosswalk with overhead lights, you must push the button – it is the law (in Nova Scotia, Canada and likely elsewhere)
- **understand** the laws with respect to signal lights:
 - you may step off the road or curb to cross if the steady white signal is illuminated. However be particularly cautious of right-turning vehicles.
 - when the flashing 'don't walk' signal is illuminated it is illegal to enter the crosswalk.
 - at those crosswalks with countdown timers it is illegal to enter a crosswalk if the countdown has started, regardless of how many seconds are showing or whether or not you believe you can safely cross => if the timer has started it is illegal to step off the curb!
 - 'Steady Don't Walk' illuminated lights – by the time the light is a steady don't walk you should already be through the intersection, and **do not enter a crosswalk when the red 'Don't Walk' hand is illuminated – it is illegal to do so**
- if you are not at a crosswalk as a pedestrian you must yield to all vehicles. If a vehicle has to slow down or brake to avoid you, you have broken the law.
- remember it does not matter at all who is right or wrong if an incident occurs. While the driver will no doubt be traumatized it is the pedestrian who will suffer physical harm, and in some cases death. There is no value in being 'dead right'.



As a driver ...

- drivers must **yield the right of way to pedestrians lawfully in, or stopped facing a crosswalk**
- it does not matter whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked – remember every intersection is a crosswalk, even if not marked
- as for pedestrians, drivers need to avoid distractions – using a cell phone; a hand-held device, reaching for something on the floor etc. distractions can lead to accidents
- drive within the speed limit. Remember the posted speed limit it is a (maximum) limit, **not a speed 'target'.**



- **proactively check for pedestrians.** In the same way you use your mirrors to be aware of traffic, check sidewalks and side streets for pedestrians who may be crossing at an upcoming crosswalk
- due to the obstruction of visibility of pedestrians to other vehicles you cannot stop or park within five (5) metres (approx. 15 feet) of a crosswalk, again whether marked or unmarked
- it is illegal to pass a vehicle that has stopped at a crosswalk to allow a pedestrian to cross



... be Cautious ... be Seen ... be Safe

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