

Rules and pointers for pedestrians and drivers



Pay attention to reduce your chances of being in an accident

The most important safety tip to reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities is to pay attention. You can significantly reduce your chances of being in a collision with a motor vehicle by obeying traffic rules and being aware of dangers posed by cars in your vicinity. Make eye contact with drivers if possible and make sure that they can see you.

Both drivers and pedestrians have certain safety responsibilities that depend on both circumstances and common sense.

Drivers must:

- Yield to pedestrians when crossing a sidewalk or entering an alley or driveway
- Yield to pedestrians who have started crossing at an intersection or crosswalk on a "walk" signal or a green light, if there is no walk signal
- Yield to pedestrians who are crossing the highway within a marked or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection where there are no traffic lights or control signals
- Not overtake and pass any vehicle that stops at an intersection or crosswalk to permit a pedestrian or bicyclist to cross the roadway safely

Pedestrians must:

- Yield to drivers when crossing a road where there is no intersection or crosswalk or where the pedestrian does not have a green or "walk" signal and where vehicles have a green signal
- Not suddenly move into the path of a closely approaching vehicle that does not have sufficient time to yield for a pedestrian

- Walk on and along the left side of a highway when not walking on a sidewalk. Note: This law does not apply to bicycles. Bicycles operate under the same laws as other legal vehicles on the road and should always stay on the right side of the road.

Pedestrian pointers to keep in mind:

Pay attention

A recent report from the Federal Bureau of Transportation Safety concluded that the pedestrian was solely at fault in 43% of car-pedestrian collisions and that both were at fault in 13% of collisions. You can significantly reduce your chances of death or injury by obeying traffic rules and being aware of dangers posed by cars in your vicinity. For example: 58% of pedestrian-car crashes occur while the pedestrian was crossing the street. Pay close attention to cars in your vicinity. Make eye contact with drivers if possible.

Don't "Drink and Walk"

Unlike driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, walking will probably not result in the death or injury of someone else - but it could very well result in yours. As an inebriated pedestrian your chances of suffering an accident increase significantly. If you've been drinking, take a cab or a bus, or let someone sober drive you home.

Take extra care at night and at dusk

Walking at night increases your chances of death or injury. Drivers cannot avoid what they can't see. When walking at night, wear retro-reflective outdoor clothing or shoes or lights to make yourself more visible. Avoid wearing dark clothing. Most importantly, don't assume that drivers can see you. Always walk on the left hand side of the road or on the sidewalk. This way, motorists can see you and will not be approaching you from behind.

Provide proper supervision and training for children

Young children up to age 9 often lack the judgment and experience to make good choices when dealing with traffic. Their smaller stature also makes them harder for motorists to see. Adults need to take special care to teach children to behave safely when they are around automobile traffic. Supervision is crucial through about age 9. Motorists are also responsible for child pedestrian safety. Slow down in school zones, near parks and pools and in neighborhoods. Parents dropping off children at school are a major threat to walking children and to those leaving motor vehicles. Stay cautious after dropping off your own child.