

Pedestrian Safety Tips



Traffic Engineering
Department

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Pedestrian Signals

Where buttons are available to pedestrians, it's because the traffic signal is timed for cars, not for people on foot. If you don't activate the pedestrian signal by pushing the button, the traffic light may not give you enough time to safely cross the street. You only need to push the button once for it to be activated.

Transportation engineers world wide are moving toward the use of symbol signs in place of word signs because they are easier for people to comprehend in a shorter amount of time. Easily recognized symbols also accommodate people who don't read English.

In the case of pedestrian symbols, both "word" and "symbol" signs are currently in use. Here's what they mean:



(Steady)
**START
CROSSING**
Watch for
turning cars.



(Flashing)
**DON'T START
Finish crossing
if you are in the
crosswalk. Opposing traffic
still has a red light.**



(Steady)
Means **DON'T
CROSS.**
**Pedestrians
should not be in the
crosswalk.**



**Some signals are also
equipped with count down
timers that let pedestrians
already crossing know how
much time remains until the
traffic signal begins to cycle.**

How Can I Be a Safe Pedestrian?

Though pedestrians have the right of way over motorists, this does not protect you against a careless motorist. For this reason it is important for pedestrians to always remain alert and follow the suggestions outlined below:

- Cross intersections defensively
- Always cross as quickly as possible to minimize your time in the roadway
- When crossing, stop at the edge of the street and look left, right and left again before proceeding
- Always watch for turning vehicles (You may have the legal right to be there, but that doesn't protect you from the carelessness of some motorists)
- Always use sidewalks when they are available
- Wait for vehicles to make a complete stop
- Look for reverse lights and be aware around parked cars and driveways
- Stay alert! Vehicles may be approaching more quickly than you think
- Always cross at intersections and preferably in marked crosswalks (Do not jaywalk or cross from between parked cars)
- Make eye contact with drivers to make sure they see you

Exercise Particular Caution During Nighttime Hours

When out walking or jogging at night (or early in the morning) pedestrians must be even more vigilant than usual. Motorists can have difficulty seeing pedestrians when there isn't enough light.

Pedestrians can increase their chances of being seen by motorists by avoiding dark colored clothing. People who enjoy jogging at night (or during early morning hours) may want to invest in reflective clothing and/or a portable flashing red light to increase their visibility to passing motorists.

Dealing with Large Vehicles

Pedestrians must keep in mind that larger vehicles have a limited range of sight and require a greater distance to stop. When crossing in front of a stopped bus or truck (or any large vehicle) it is wise to cross at least 15 feet in front of the vehicle where the driver will have better vision. For very large vehicles crossing further than 15 feet may be required. Remember, do not cross if the driver of any sized of vehicle cannot clearly see you.

Walk Facing Traffic

Though bicyclists are better served riding with traffic, pedestrians may find it more helpful to walk against traffic. It is more beneficial for pedestrians to be able to see oncoming traffic so you can make eye contact with drivers to determine if they are yielding to you.

Child Safety

Child pedestrians are more likely to ignore crosswalks, cross while the light is red, and run out into the street without looking. They are also generally much shorter than adults and can be harder for drivers to see. Children's involvement in traffic collisions peaks between 5 and 9 years of age.

You can lessen this risk by making sure children that may be playing near the street or walking home from school are supervised by adults and that they have been taught proper pedestrian safety. Children should never be encouraged to play in the street. Also be sure to set a good example by following the safe pedestrian tips yourself.

Always hold a child by the hand while crossing the street and remember, WALK don't run.

Range of Sight

It is vital that pedestrians have their full range of sight at all times. Object such as umbrellas, hoods, hats, and even thick framed sunglasses can limit vision. If a pedestrian is using objects that can limit their sight it is beneficial to use said object in such a way as to limit sight interference: umbrellas can be held higher up, hats and hoods can be pulled back, and unobtrusive sunglasses can be purchased.



If you need further information please call the Traffic Engineering Department at:

925-931-5677