

# Pedestrian Safety



## Everyone Is A Pedestrian at Some Point

Everyone is a pedestrian at some point in the day. Distracted walking, not just distracted drivers (talking/texting on phones, loud music, and not paying attention) is one of the main causes of pedestrians losing focus on what's going on around them. Pedestrians are completely unprotected and most vulnerable to serious injuries when walking in urban areas, crossing busy streets, and navigating traffic. We must pay attention to our surroundings and what's happening around us.

Unfortunately, pedestrian injuries and fatalities remain high. In 2021, drivers struck and killed 7,485 pedestrian walking; the most in a single year in four decades, and an estimated 55,000 pedestrians were injured nationwide in 2020. This was an increase of 12% from the previous year. Follow these tips to remain safe as a pedestrian.

## Walking Safety Tips

- **Use sidewalks.** When available, they are the safest place to walk. If no sidewalk is provided, it is usually safer to walk facing road traffic, as far left as possible, but use extreme caution. Stay off freeways and other restricted zones.
- **Be visible.** Wearing clothes of light colors and with reflective materials make you stand out. If you're in a dark area, carry a flashlight to help see where you're going and make yourself more visible.
- **Stay alert.** There are a lot of distracted drivers on the road, so be aware at all times. Don't allow your vision to be blocked by clothing or hats. Don't allow yourself to get distracted using your cell phone. Make eye contact with drivers to have a sense of whether they see you.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They can greatly impair your ability to walk safely and make good decisions. This also includes some over-the-counter medications. Read labels to know potential side effects.
- **Cross streets at a corner.** While it may be tempting to cross mid-block, this is where most injuries occur. Using traffic signals and crosswalks is much safer, especially in high-traffic areas.
- **Look both ways.** Look left, then right, then left again before crossing. Keep your eyes open as you cross and be aware that drivers might not see you even though you can see them.
- **Be especially careful at intersections.** This is where many drivers may fail to yield the right-of-way while turning onto another street. If there is a pedestrian signal, watch and follow the pedestrian signal in favor of the traffic signal.

- **Always [avoid texting and using the internet on your phone while walking](#).** When walking or crossing a street, avoid cellphone use completely so you are observant of your surroundings and reduce risks and dangers. Texting and walking is distracting and makes it difficult to watch for traffic and obstacles in your path.
- **Watch out for parked vehicles.** Parking lots can be especially dangerous as most drivers have a limited view when backing out. Drivers are often not expecting anyone to be walking, so extra attention is always needed. Follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
- **If there is no sidewalk or intersection.** Look for cars in all directions, including those turning left or right.
- Be extra careful crossing streets or entering crosswalks at night when it is harder to see, or when crossing busier streets with more lanes and higher speed limits.
- **Take notice of approaching vehicles and exercise caution.** At 30 m.p.h., a driver needs at least 90 feet to stop.
- **When walking, turn your whole body; not just your neck-to scan for traffic.** Stiff joints and muscles can make it harder to check traffic. Your flexibility increases your ability to be safe.

For more information about pedestrian safety, please visit:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2021/dangerous-street-design-safe-street-design.html>