



## Get the Facts: Be a Street Savvy Pedestrian

### In a Nutshell

Whether you're a walker or a driver, keeping pedestrians safe means knowing the law and paying attention.

### Being a smart adult pedestrian

- See and be seen! Wear bright-colored clothing during daylight hours and, if walking when it's dark, carry a flashlight and wear reflective material. Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing a roadway.
- Know your traffic control signals. Don't enter a crosswalk while the "Don't Walk" sign is flashing. Be aware of turning vehicles even if the "Walk" signal is on.
- Always walk on the sidewalk; if there isn't one, walk facing traffic. That way you can see oncoming traffic. Walking in the same direction is risky as you must rely only on your hearing to anticipate approaching vehicles. You're also less visible to drivers.
- Runners are pedestrians, too. Runners should stay on sidewalks or paths; it's illegal to run on roadway pavement if alternatives are available. When there's no alternative, run facing traffic.

*In 2021, 57 pedestrians were killed in Minnesota, the most in five years. An average of 42 pedestrians died per year over the last 13 years.*

### Keeping young pedestrians safe

- Start with the basics. Remember, children under age 10 may lack the necessary skills to judge the speed or distance of oncoming traffic; in addition, their peripheral (side) vision is one-third less than adults. Children often act quickly and behave unpredictably in traffic situations.
- Don't let children play in streets or driveways, and always provide supervision. Drivers have difficulty seeing small children. That's especially true when





backing up – a big risk to those ages 1-3. Older children should be taught to never dash into the street and to always stop at the curb before proceeding.

- Teach youngsters these steps to safely cross:
  - Stop at the edge of the road or curb. If there are parked cars present, check to make sure they are not about to move (engine running, drivers inside). Proceed past the parked vehicle and stop again.
  - Fully turn your head and eyes left, right, and left again to make sure there are no cars approaching.
  - If crossing at a corner, be aware of cars turning the corner. Only enter the street if no traffic is approaching. Continue looking both left and right.
  - If there is a car approaching, wait and repeat the checking process again before attempting to cross.
  - When preparing to cross in front of a vehicle, make eye contact with the driver before proceeding.
  - Know your traffic control signals such as the "Walk" and "Don't Walk" signs. Never enter a crosswalk when the "Don't Walk" sign is flashing.
- Use reflective material on children's outerwear. Hoods or umbrellas should not block a child's vision.
- Remember, you're the example. When grownups practice safe pedestrian habits, kids learn.

### **Doing your part as a driver**

- Minnesota law requires you to stop for crossing pedestrians at every intersection, even those without crosswalks or stop lights.
- Follow all posted speed limits. When children are present near schools, the speed limit is typically lower than those of surrounding roadways. In residential areas, be alert for children who may be playing near the street. Children often dart out from between parked cars or shrubbery.
- Be extra careful around school buses. When red lights are flashing you must stop. Wait a few extra minutes after the bus is gone to make sure there are no children present.





- Elderly pedestrians may not be able to cross quickly or hear you approaching. Give older adults plenty of time to cross the street.
- Be alert when turning corners. If the car in front of you stops at a corner, be prepared for the possibility of pedestrians crossing.

**Sources:**

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Safe Kids Worldwide

National Safety Council

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

