

Pedestrian Safety Tips

FACT: Pedestrian safety is the responsibility of BOTH the drivers on the road and the pedestrians.

FACT: NO vehicle can “Stop on a Dime”. The average passenger vehicle traveling **40 mph** is moving 59 feet per second, and would take a **minimum of 189 feet to come to a complete stop.**

FACT: Some vehicles travel fast and few reckless people may drive even faster.

FACT: When a vehicle collides with a pedestrian, the pedestrian is ALWAYS the more seriously injured party, regardless of who may be at fault.

Safety Starts with You

Pedestrian Safety Tips

- Cross streets at a corner, using traffic signals where available and crosswalks.
- Always look left, right and left again before crossing a street, and keep watching as you cross. Be aware that drivers have differing levels of eyesight and skill in operating motor vehicles.
- Make sure you are seen:
 - Make eye contact with drivers when crossing busy streets.
 - Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if you are walking near traffic at night.
 - Carry a flashlight when walking in the dark.
- Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. If sidewalks are not available, walk facing traffic on the edge of the road, as far from the travel lane as possible.
- Walk defensively and be ready for unexpected events. Know what’s going on around you and don’t allow your vision to be blocked by clothing, hats, or items that you are carrying.
- Watch the pedestrian signals, not the traffic signal, and follow the “WALK/DON’T WALK” lights (they’re set up to help you cross safely). Look for pedestrian push buttons for crossing protection at signalized intersections.
- Watch out for parked vehicles. Parking lots can be as dangerous as streets.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs as they can impair your ability to walk safely.
- When crossing, use all of your senses and don’t use your cell phone for calls and texting.

- Use particular caution when crossing driveways and alley entrances. Drivers may not expect you to be there or see you.
- Motorists need to be vigilant of pedestrians and pedestrians need to be vigilant of motorists. Although motorists have more responsibility under the law when operating a motor vehicle on city streets, pedestrians have more at stake.

Making our Children Safer

Ensuring the safety of children is a top priority for many parents. Regardless of how children commute to school, they all face some traffic safety hazards. Whether they walk, take a bus, or ride in a car, parents can play a key role in getting them to school safely. Each child's safety depends on the every parent taking an active role.

Talk with children about traffic safety and teach them when and where it's safest to cross streets. Remember that intersections are usually the safely locations for children to cross the street. A majority of child pedestrian collisions occur at non-intersections. Also use crosswalks to model safe behavior for your child. Remind children to take their time to stop, look all ways and listen when crossing streets, even when there is a crosswalk.

It's important to think about safety for our community and your family.

When you are walking or driving to school, please remember the following:

- Obey pedestrian traffic control signals.

Do not step into the crosswalk if the red "Don't Walk" indicator or upraised palm symbol is flashing or steady. Even if the walk or walking person symbol is displayed, look for vehicles before stepping off the curb.

- Always make eye contact with drivers to ensure you see one another.

Just because one lane of vehicles has stopped doesn't mean that the other lanes will.

- Continue to look for vehicles while crossing.

The law states that no pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run in the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield.

Tips for Parents

- **Never** allow children under the age of ten to cross the street alone. Adults should supervise children when crossing streets. Smaller children may be difficult for drivers to see and young children may not be able to judge whether it is safe to cross a street.
- **Instruct** children to look left-right-left when crossing the street and to continue looking as they cross. Children should never run into or across the street.
- **Always** be a role model and teach proper pedestrian behavior. Cross streets at a corner, using traffic signals and crosswalks whenever possible. Make eye contact with drivers prior to crossing in front of them. Don't assume that because you can see the driver, the driver can see you.
- **Educate** children to walk facing traffic, as far to the left as possible, when sidewalks are not available.
- **Require** children to wear light colors and reflective materials. Carrying a flashlight at dawn and dusk or whenever it's dark.
- **Refrain** from allowing children to play in driveways, unfenced yards, streets or active parking lots where there are a high volume of vehicles.
- **Teach** children to cross the street at least ten feet in front of the school bus so the bus driver can see them from the cab of the bus.
- **Never** release a child from a vehicle in the middle of the road. Park the vehicle next to the closest available curb and release the child safely. Double parking is not only illegal but is very unsafe.

As you walk together, you can ask your child **simple questions** to get him or her thinking about pedestrian and road safety:

- Where is the safest place to cross this street?
- What do we need to do before we cross the street together?
- Why do we hold hands to cross the street together?
- When is it safe to cross the street?
- What do we look for when crossing the street?
- What sounds are we listening for when crossing the street?

Knowing When Your Child is Ready to Go Solo

Your child's readiness to cope safely in traffic on his own depends on his development and how much practice he's had around real roads and traffic.

As a general guide, your child is ready to navigate roads safely on his or her own when they know and understand road safety rules. They also need to understand that even though they must follow the road rules, drivers don't always follow the rules.

Your child must be able to pay attention to vehicles on the road and work out how far away they are and how fast they're coming towards them.

And of course, your child must be able to choose safe places to cross streets.

You can still help by:

- Checking that your child stops, looks, listens and thinks before crossing the street.
- Talking about road rules in simple terms.
- Walking and talking together with your child around the streets
- Making sure your child wears colors that are bright and easy to see.

Preventing Driveway Accidents

Toddlers are especially at risk in driveways and yards. Toddlers might not yet realize that cars are dangerous. They can also move quietly and quickly. They get highly absorbed in whatever they're doing, including chasing a ball behind a car. They often don't stop, even if you ask them to.

And it's not just toddlers—older children can get hurt this way too.

Here are some driveway safety guidelines:

- Before moving a vehicle in a driveway, check that no child is behind or in front of the vehicle. Don't rely only on car cameras and sensors. **Always do a visual check** around the vehicle.
- Never leave young children alone to play near parked or moving vehicles in driveways.
- Separate your child's play areas from driveways. For example, you could fence off the driveway or garage so your child can't run towards it.
- Get into the habit of waving goodbye to people from inside your home.
- Always hold your child's hand near cars, even if you're just near your driveway or walking to the mailbox. Explain why it's important for your child to hold your hand.

It's worth noting that **parking lots are similar to driveways** in that reversing drivers find it very difficult to see small children behind their cars. You can use similar safety guidelines.

Safety Getting In and Out of the Car

Always use the curbside, rear passenger door when putting your child into his or her restraint. This way, your child will get used to always getting in and out of the car through the safest door—the one furthest away from traffic.

If you have a baby and a toddler, keep your toddler safe inside the car while you look after your baby.

Once you're all out of the car, hold hands with your child and together work out where cars could come from before you walk away from the car. When you go back to your car, help your toddler in first, because your baby is less likely to move out of sight.

The City of Laguna Niguel Actively Enforces All Traffic Rules and Regulations!

Frequently Asked Question:

What age is ok for my child to cross the street alone?

Generally:

Children ages **10 and older** can cross street safely without the supervision of an adult.

Children **age 4 and under** are at greatest risk for pedestrian-related death and injuries.

Parents often overestimate their children's safety skills. Children are impulsive and have difficulty judging speed, spatial relations, distance and velocity. They frequently do not have the cognitive development and behavioral capacity to react to complicated traffic situations such as intersections.