

Introduction

Every trip—whether by car, rail, bicycle, bus, or air—involves some walking. This means that everyone taking a trip is a pedestrian at some point. Education of pedestrians is critical for ensuring road safety, and is therefore integral to the concept of Complete Streets. This section covers messages and methods to educate pedestrians about how to behave safely on the road; other sections will focus on safety education for other users. Some examples of encouragement programs have also been included.

Educational Messages for Pedestrians

The following are messages for pedestrians that should be addressed when creating educational campaigns. A lot of the same messages can also be used when educating motorists.

At Crosswalks:

- At unsignalized crosswalks, pedestrians have the right-of-way, but should always cross with caution and not enter the crosswalk without leaving motorists sufficient time to see them and stop.
- At signalized crosswalks, pedestrians should wait for a “walk” signal, or if there is no pedestrian signal, they should wait for a green light in the direction they want to go. Crossing against a “don’t walk” signal or a red light is considered jaywalking.
- Per Ohio law, pedestrians also have the right-of-way to cross at unmarked crosswalks (i.e., at any intersection where pedestrian crossing is not prohibited by a “don’t walk” sign or red light). However, not many motorists are aware of this law, so pedestrians should be cautious.
- Pedestrians should be aware that drivers may not see them at crosswalks. If a vehicle stops for a pedestrian, another driver in the adjacent lane may not see the pedestrian and may not yield. This is a danger particularly at crosswalks on multi-lane streets. This problem may also be alleviated by measures that encourage motorists to stop at some distance before the crosswalk, such as painting stop bars on the road surface.
- If a crosswalk is nearby, pedestrians should use it, rather than crossing at a point outside the crosswalk, which is considered jaywalking.
- Pedestrians exiting buses should exercise extra caution, whether crossing in front of the bus or behind it. The bus can visually shield the pedestrian from other drivers, even if the pedestrian is in a crosswalk and has the legal right to cross. If crossing in front of a bus, pedestrians should also make sure the bus driver sees them.
- Pedestrians need to be aware of their surroundings. Part of being aware is not being distracted by a text message, music (ear buds), cell phones, or other technology use. Some electric cars can be particularly quiet and hard to hear over music coming from headphones.

► Example of a crosswalk with signage.

(Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

- Proper signage warns drivers in ample time of the possibility that pedestrians may be crossing.



At Railroad Crossings

- Walking on railroad tracks is considered trespassing on railroad property; this behavior is not only illegal but extremely dangerous.
- Pedestrians must cross railroad tracks only at designated crossings.
- Pedestrians stand little chance against a train: a freight train going 60 mph takes about a mile to stop after the emergency brake is applied. Furthermore, trains are a lot quieter than they used to be and overhang on each side by at least 3 feet, up to 12 feet.



▲ Example of a pedestrian crossing at a railroad with gates and lights. (Photo: FHWA)

Walking facing traffic on road without sidewalks

- Walking facing traffic is a concern, especially in rural areas and on roads without a wide paved shoulder, but also on urban and suburban streets without sidewalks, or on streets with sidewalks that are temporarily impassable due to snow or ice.
- Pedestrians should walk facing traffic so that they can see and take evasive action from any vehicle that may pose a danger to them.
- Dark clothing increases the hazard of being struck by a motorist who does not see the pedestrian, especially on a high-speed road without street lights.
- When walking at night, in addition to walking facing traffic, pedestrians should wear reflective clothing and should consider wearing lights (e.g., LED armbands or headlamps).



◀ A pedestrian correctly walking facing traffic on an urban street without a passable sidewalk (Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

- Note that the parked car in front of the pedestrian will cause him/her to walk further in the street.

Chapter 5—Education

5.1 Education & Encouragement for Pedestrians

Pedestrian Laws

The Ohio Revised Code definition of a “crosswalk” is the following (§4511.01 LL):

(1) That part of a roadway at intersections ordinarily included within the real or projected prolongation of property lines and curb lines or, in the absence of curbs, the edges of the traversable roadway.

(2) Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere, distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface.

(3) Notwithstanding divisions (LL)(1) and (2) of this section, there shall not be a crosswalk where local authorities have placed signs indicating no crossing.

- Per item (1), there is still legally a crosswalk at an intersection where no crossing is striped or marked.
- ORC §4511.48 states that pedestrians who are crossing a roadway must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles, except when crossing at a [marked or unmarked] crosswalk.



▲ Pedestrians have the right-of-way at this mid-block unsignalized crosswalk.

(Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

- Even when crossing at marked locations, pedestrians should still use caution to ensure that motorists are seeing them and yielding to them.

Encouragement Programs and Activities for Pedestrians

Encouragement for pedestrians refers to a variety of programs and activities that support and promote walking. Following are examples of encouragement programs. It is important to note that any encouragement effort should be accompanied by education.

Crosswalk Stings

Pedestrian safety “stings” are events aimed at improving motorist behavior, in which police officers target a particular (usually unsignalized) crosswalk during a specific time period, and issue warnings or citations to motorists who fail to yield to pedestrians.

- Studies have shown these operations to result in a long-term improvement in motorists’ yielding behavior at the locations where they take place. One example is Miami Beach, FL, where yield rates at one location increased from 3.3% to 27.8% (Van Houten and Malenfant, 2004).
- MORPC organized crosswalk stings in central Ohio in September 2010, and more information on them can be found in Section 6.4.



◀ A police officer is conducting a crosswalk sting. (Photo: MORPC, Columbus, OH)

- Cars should always yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.

Walk to School events

Walk to School events are special events during which children who live within a walkable distance from their school are encouraged to walk to school instead of riding buses or being driven by their parents.

- Parents, teachers, law enforcement officers, and community leaders often participate in walk to school events.
- Walk to school events can be valuable opportunities for educating children about pedestrian safety.
- For more information, visit MORPC’s website at www.morpc.org/walktoschool or see Section 5.5.



◀ Kids walk to school on International Walk to School Day 2009. (Photo: ODOT, New Albany, Ohio)

- International Walk to School Day is held in October, but it is important to encourage kids to walk or bike to school throughout the school year.

Smart Trips Program

Smart Trips is an individualized marketing program with information about many different modes of travel, including walking. This program originated in Australia and Europe, but has been used successfully in many communities in the U.S. over the past decade. Some of the goals of Smart Trips include: reducing drive-alone trips, increasing walking, biking, transit, carpooling and car-sharing trips, and increasing neighborhood mobility and livability. A small geographic area of the city is chosen for the program each year; residents within this area receive individualized marketing on other modes of transportation besides driving alone. Some of the walking-related items include:

(Bicyclinginfo.org entry on Portland SmartTrips, 2011):

- Calendar of walks and walking tours in the residents' areas
- Area walking maps
- A Walk to Wellness brochure focusing on health
- A crosswalk laws brochure
- A free pedometer and a walking log to keep count of daily steps
- For more information, see Section 5.7, Smart Trips

Columbus Neighborhood Walking Maps

Walking maps have been created for several neighborhoods within the City of Columbus by the Columbus Public Health program “Healthy Places.”

- The neighborhood walking maps include routes that reach destinations, such as grocery stores, recreation centers, multi-use paths, libraries, parks and commercial districts.
- Residents may suggest routes for the maps and assist with safety-related information (e.g., no street lights, abandoned homes, unchained dogs, etc.).
- For more information, visit the Healthy Places website:
<http://publichealth.columbus.gov/columbus-walking-maps.aspx>.



◀ Portion of a Neighborhood Walking Map.

(Image: Healthy Places, Columbus Public Health Department)

- This maps shows safe walking routes by distance to various destinations in the nearby neighborhood.

Senior Strolls Walk Event

The so-called Senior Strolls events are part of the Smart Trips program in Portland, Oregon. However, such a series of walks targeted at seniors could be held apart from the full Smart Trips program. Below are some more facts about Senior Strolls ([Portland Bureau of Transportation, Senior Strolls 2010](#)):

- They offer seniors an easy, pleasant, social walking experience.
- They give seniors the confidence to consider walking as a transportation option. Strolls range from 1 to 2 plus miles in length.
- Walking with other senior strollers provides the added benefits of a valuable support network and new friendships.
- AARP has developed an online motivational walking program. It is focused on the health and fitness aspects of walking. For more information, visit their website: <http://aarp.stepuptobetterhealth.com/>



◀ Participants enjoy a Senior Stroll event in Oregon.

(Photo: Transportation Options, Portland, OR)

- The Seniors use the asphalt paved trail for recreational use. The asphalt trail provides smooth, comfortable walk.

Senior Pedestrian Safety Program—Walk Wise, Drive Smart

Walk Wise, Drive Smart is a community-based pedestrian safety program working to build community support for and awareness of senior-pedestrian safety issues. Funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), this program in Hendersonville, North Carolina has several components:

- Educational workshops and walking audits in different neighborhoods.
- Gathers community feedback through surveys and interviews.
- Identifies elements for a pedestrian safety plan.
- For more information visit the Walk Wise, Drive Smart website: <http://www.walk-wise.org>

Chapter 5—Education

5.1 Education & Encouragement for Pedestrians



Sources

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