

Pedestrian Safety and Driver Awareness

The Seattle Police Department would like to remind pedestrians and drivers to be extra careful as the new school year starts. As pedestrians, we need to be mindful of how we are utilizing the street, sidewalks and crosswalks and reinforce with our children to be extra cautious when walking to and from school. As motorists, we need to pay attention to traffic conditions and pedestrians. The best overall advice for any kind of pedestrian and traffic safety - from avoiding an accident to avoiding a purse snatcher- is this:

PAY ATTENTION!

Pedestrian Safety Tips

- Pay close attention to your surroundings, avoid being on "automatic pilot"
- Pay special attention to all traffic signals and crossing guards.
- Use common sense; plan your route to avoid uninhabited parks, parking lots, garages and alleyways. Stick to well-lit areas.
- Pick routes with sidewalks with good lighting and clear visibility.
- Walk with purpose; project a confident image.
- Always walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk and you must walk in roadway, always walk facing traffic.
- Look both directions before crossing a roadway.
- Never cross the street against a red light, even if you don't see any traffic coming.
- Plan a safe walking route to school or the bus/transit stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and if possible, with intersections that have traffic controls.
- See and be seen — drivers need to see you to avoid you. Wear bright/light colored clothing or reflective clothing at night so drivers see you. Put reflective tape on backpacks
- Pedestrians should make eye contact with drivers when crossing busy streets to ensure they have been seen.
- Pedestrians **DO NOT** have the right of way when crossing mid-block. Cross the street only at street corners or marked crosswalks or intersections. Crossing at locations that have traffic signals helps motorists see you.
- Give drivers ample time to stop prior to your entering the crosswalk.
- Do not run across a dark street to catch a bus; cross at crosswalks or intersections.
- If a car is parked where you are trying to cross, look for drivers who may pull out and not see you as they looking for traffic.
- Remember: Telephone poles, utility boxes and parked vehicles block on-coming drivers' ability to see you.
- Arrive early for buses, but not so early that you have a long waiting time. Stay out of the street, wait for the bus or light rail train to come to a complete stop before approaching the street.
- Avoid walking while listening to an **iPod, Cell phone, or other listening device with ear buds or headphones**, these cut down your awareness of what's happening around you and impedes your ability to hear oncoming traffic.
- Develop a plan before you see trouble. Crossing a street or entering a store may get you out of a potentially bad situation.
- If a car follows you or beckons you while you are walking, do not approach it. Instead, turn and quickly walk the opposite direction.
- Wear clothing and shoes that you can move freely and quickly in, especially when walking or waiting for the bus or Light Rail.
- Carry minimal items; overloading yourself can make you appear vulnerable.
- Always hold a child by the hand while crossing the street and remember, **WALK** don't run.



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Driver Awareness - Some Vehicular Safety Tips:

Drivers, be aware that with school back in session children will be walking to and from schools and transit stops. As autumn approaches, there will be less daylight; children will be out early in the morning and more difficult to see.

- Pay attention to and abide by all speed limits.
- Watch your speed when entering school zones. **Speeding in a school zone is a \$214 ticket.**
- Be watchful around schools and bus stops for children running into the street.
- Watch for children entering the street from behind buses or running to catch the bus.
- When driving your children to school, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are safely on school grounds.
- Drive slowly when approaching children riding bicycles and walking near the street.
- **Never pass or overtake a vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk.** A pedestrian is probably in that crosswalk. This infraction is a **\$136 ticket.**
- Motorists should be on particular alert for pedestrians along school-bus routes, at intersections, and near transit stops and centers.
- Pedestrians have the right of way at **ALL** intersections, whether in a marked crosswalk or not.
 - Stop for pedestrians in all crosswalks.
 - **On a two-lane road, the pedestrian must be completely across the roadway before you begin moving again.**
 - **On a multi-lane road, you must stop for pedestrians when they are within one lane of your direction of travel.**
- Always yield to pedestrians upon making turns at intersection
- Use extra caution when backing out of driveways and driving around parking lots.
- Always pull to the right and slow or stop to allow emergency vehicles to go by. Emergency vehicles have either red and/or blue lights.
- Don't let your passengers interfere with our driving.
- Do not drive with distractions (cell phones, eating, etc.)
- Don't talk on your cell phone unless you're using a hands free mode and don't text message while driving. It is illegal and you will be ticketed - **\$136.**
- Headlights should be on at all times; it helps pedestrians and other motorist see you.
- Look ahead for potential dangers or people in the roadway or crosswalks; shift your attention well ahead of the hood of your car.
- If another driver becomes aggressive with you don't engage with them, rather alter your route to get away.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers.
- NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE. In addition to being a hazard to others on the road, the dollar figure for this crime gets into the thousands when you figure tickets, court costs, legal fees, mandatory alcohol treatment programs, potential jail time.
- Be aware of weather conditions, such as ice, before starting a trip, and allow ample time to travel.
- Know your surroundings while you drive, be a good defensive driver. Think outside your car.
- Always have ample driving time, try not to be in a rush. A patient driver is a safe driver.

One other thing to be aware of: automated camera systems are in use in school zones. They are monitoring for traffic violations. The point is to enforce traffic safety in school zones to reduce traffic safety risks to our children.

Captain Sean O'Donnell, North Precinct Commander