



STREET SMARTS: CROSSWALK SAFETY 101

Red and white lights flashed from the ambulance and fire truck as a form was lifted from the crosswalk and laid on a gurney. Another student had been hit in the crosswalk.

Every four minutes a child dies because of an accident on a road.

Road traffic injury is one of the top four causes of death for children older than five years and is the number one cause of death for ages 15-17. According to a study by SafeKids.org, a global organization dedicated to preventing injuries to children, every day 61 children are struck by vehicles in the United States. These accidents occur most often during the hours before and after school and peaking in September when the school year starts.

But children are not the only ones at risk.

The reason a teenager is more likely to be hit by a car is theorized to be caused by distracted walking due to cell phone use. The 2013 study "Ambulatory cell phone

injuries in the United States—An emerging national concern" estimated that between 2000 and 2011, more than 11,000 injuries resulted from phone-caused distraction while walking.

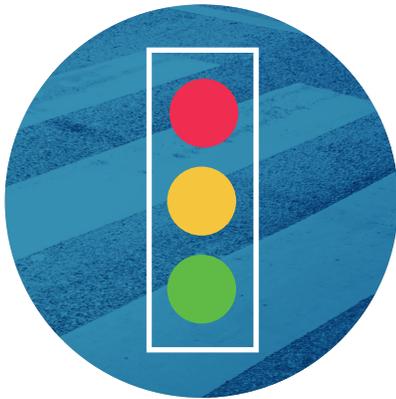
According to the Pew Research Center, 90 percent of American adults own a cell phone.

Cell phone use lessens the user's awareness of their surroundings because the user's attention is directed to his/her phone. The National Safety Council reports about 6,100 pedestrian deaths and 170,000 injuries occurred in 2012. Just as driving distracted can result in tragic loss, walking without paying attention in crosswalks and near roadways is an extremely unsafe practice.



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Here are 10 pedestrian safety tips² to practice year-round and review with your children for a safer school year.



“Every day 61 children are struck by vehicles in the United States.”

- 1 Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street
- 2 Cross only at designated crosswalks.
- 3 Never dart out into traffic mid-block or from between parked cars.
- 4 Always walk on the sidewalk, if one is available
- 5 If you must walk on the street, walk facing oncoming traffic and wear reflective or bright colored clothing
- 6 Be aware of your surroundings, especially in congested areas
- 7 Do not walk with headphones in your ears
- 8 Never walk while texting or talking on the phone
- 9 Be extra alert when walking during dusk and dawn hours. Glare from the setting/rising sun can limit visibility of both pedestrians and approaching vehicles
- 10 Young children should hold an adult’s hand while crossing the street or walking to school

References:

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