



Drive Safely Work Week

When you're the PEDESTRIAN

GETTING THERE SAFELY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

"Just as drivers need to focus on driving safely, pedestrians need to focus on walking safely — without distractions."

Vernon Betkey, GHSA Chairman

GET THE FACTS

- **Pedestrian deaths were up in 2010** after four straight years of steady decline, according to a report issued by the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA.) In 2009, 4092 Pedestrians were killed (12% of all traffic fatalities) and 59,000 were injured. The GHSA study notes that one factor in the reversal may be the increased distractions for both pedestrians and drivers.
- In 2009, on average, **a pedestrian was killed every two hours and injured every nine minutes** in traffic crashes. However, according to NHTSA, only a fraction of pedestrian crashes that cause injury are ever recorded by the police.
- In a recent NHTSA study, **hybrid vehicles were found to be twice as likely to be involved in pedestrian crashes** at low speeds when compared to cars with conventional engines. This is due to the fact that they are silent when running in electric mode.
- Ohio State University researchers reported that **pedestrian texting accidents (falls, running into things) led to more than 1,000 emergency room visits nationwide** in 2008. At the time of the study, the number of texts sent was less than half of the current annual estimate of 2.1 trillion.
- A recent observational study found **1 in 6 drivers traveling through an active school zone is distracted**. Use of cell phones and mobile electronics were the leading distracter, followed by eating/drinking/smoking, reaching/looking behind, grooming and reading.¹

¹ Safe Kids USA, Distracted Drivers in School Zones, A National Report (observational study spanning 10 states, 2009)



With a national movement to get everyone up, out and moving, and the trend in city planning for more and better walkable communities, chances are you may find yourself as a pedestrian or cyclist more frequently. When you combine the interactive technology being worked into the dashboards of today's vehicles with the technology constantly streaming at us through smartphones, iPods and other personal mobile devices, there is the ever-increasing potential of putting distracted pedestrians in the paths of distracted drivers.

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GOT KIDS?

- When walking with children, set the right example of crossing with the light, even if there is no traffic.
- Even if the "walk" sign is flashing, teach children to stop and look left, right, left before proceeding. This will help them develop the habit to be on the lookout for inattentive drivers.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs examine conditions around schools and conduct projects and activities that improve safety to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice. To see if there is a program in your area and to locate suggested safe routes to your child's school, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.

TIPS FOR GETTING THERE SAFELY WHEN YOU'RE THE PEDESTRIAN

- **Walk defensively.** When approaching intersections, even if you have the light, survey the environment before stepping into the street — many times drivers fail to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians while turning.
- **Keep your head up.** Don't text or browse e-mail or other applications while approaching or walking through intersections.
- **Keep an ear open.** Walking or running with headphones can isolate pedestrians from their surroundings. If you must walk or run with music, leave one ear open, especially at intersections, so you can tune in to the crossing environment.
- **Brighten up.** Consider brightening up if you will be walking. Anything that's bright increases the chance of being noticed by a motorist or bicyclist. At dusk, dawn, or at night, be sure to carry or wear reflective clothing or materials.
- **Walk facing traffic,** if sidewalks are not available, and cross at corners or intersections whenever possible.
- **Stand clear** of parked cars, buses, hedges, or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.
- **Stop, look, listen and look again.** There are more than 2 million hybrid-electric vehicles on the roads since 1999 that are completely silent at low speeds. When crossing in a parking lot, be especially alert for hybrid vehicles backing out, since they may be silent.

Each year, about 16% of pedestrian fatalities occur on freeways, according to NHTSA. If your vehicle breaks down, safely get it off the road, activate the flashers, call for help and stay inside. If unable to move your vehicle to the side, look for a barrier to stand behind or otherwise get yourself away from traffic. Never stand near moving traffic or directly in front of or behind your vehicle.

