

PLEASE USE CROSSWALK



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Life In The Crosswalk

Walking is such a routine part of our everyday life many of us don't consider the safety aspects. As a pedestrian, we take for granted that we can walk around without incident, because most of the time we do. We sometimes forget to look both ways when crossing the street, we ignore traffic signals at intersections, and there are times we do not pay attention to the traffic moving around us.

Statistically, pedestrian fatalities account for 12 percent of motor vehicle fatalities per year. Nationally, on average, one pedestrian is injured every 8 minutes, killed approximately every 2 hours.

A 3000 pound car can do serious damage to a pedestrian or bicyclist. In 2006 in Connecticut, 44% of the accidents involving pedestrians were due to "unsafe use of the highway by the pedestrian." In other words, the pedestrian was at fault in nearly half of all these accidents.

There are many laws and regulations regarding pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic. Most of these laws are simple and require only common sense.

Use the following 'good sense' rules when walking:

- Cross the street at marked crosswalks;
- Stop and look for traffic in all directions before crossing the street;
- Pay attention to the "Walk" signals – never cross on a solid or flashing "Don't Walk;"
- Walk facing traffic when there are no sidewalks;
- If walking or jogging at night, dress to be seen. Use a flashlight and wear reflective clothing;
- Familiarize yourself with and use the walking escort program. Dial "2-WALK" (2-9255 from any campus phone. Or use the night shuttle service: www.yale.edu/parkingandtransit).

Remember, look once, look twice, and look three times before you cross. Drivers don't always obey the "No turn on red" signs, or stop during the caution light. Make yourself known when you're approaching an intersection. Make eye contact with the driver.

EHS and the Yale Traffic Safety Committee would like to remind the Yale community to 'share the road' and be aware, whether you are a pedestrian, cyclist or driver. Each of us should practice good safety sense when traveling the Yale campuses and the streets of New Haven.

Mind Full, or Mindful?

mind·ful·ness - *noun* ('mɪndfʊlnəs/)

- 1: the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.
- 2: a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment.

Are you paying attention? Have you ever been walking or driving and arrived at your destination only to realize you remember nothing about how you got there? Exactly what distracted you that much that you don't remember? Where on earth had your mind gone?

Today we seem to be constantly multitasking, so that our minds just aren't really on the 'task at hand,' and we don't even realize it.

And don't fool yourself. You may think you're a really good 'multitasker', but studies have shown that just isn't so. People are rarely as good at multitasking as they think they are.

Distracted pedestrian injuries have been on the rise for the last few years. Our minds just aren't on the simple task of walking. We're on 'auto-pilot,' with our cell phone stuck to our ear or in front of our nose. Do you really think you can simultaneously look at traffic and at that cell phone keypad?

All of us need to be more conscious and aware by focusing our attention on the present moment, more "mindful" of our actions and what is going on around us.

So, whether you're driving, biking or walking "be mindful" not to distract yourself with your cell phone or music device. Be aware and pay attention to the traffic lights and walk signs. Think, before you take that right on red or step into that crosswalk.

Use good judgment, common sense and above all, be courteous.

Over 70% of pedestrian fatalities occur at non-intersections versus at intersections.

NHTSA's Traffic Safety Facts published April 2014.

The Dangers Are Real

Whether you're on a city street, in a parking lot or shopping center, there is usually someone strolling while talking on a phone, texting with his head down, listening to music, or playing a video game.

About 1,100 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms in the US in 2011 for injuries suffered while walking and using a cellphone or some other electronic device, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which receives annual data from 100 emergency rooms. Those figures could likely be underestimated, as patients may not mention they were using a cellphone or other device at the time they were injured, or that information may not be included by the doctor or nurse in their report.

A study at Ohio State University at intersections on campus found that people talking on cellphones were significantly more likely to walk in front of cars than pedestrians not using phones. Another study by researchers at Stony Brook University in New York compared the performance of people asked to walk across a room to a target – a piece of paper taped to the floor – without distractions and then again next day while talking on a cellphone or texting. The group that talked on the cellphone walked slightly slower and veered off course a bit more than previously, but the texting group walked slower, veered off course 61 percent more and overshot the target 13 percent more.

The danger is real. Distracted pedestrians are being injured at an increasingly alarming rate.

We all remember the video that went viral when a Philadelphia woman walking through a shopping mall tumbled into a large fountain directly in front of her.

Psychological studies show most people can't focus on two things at once. Rather, their attention shifts rapidly back and forth between tasks, and performance suffers. But like a lot of drivers who use cellphones behind the wheel, pedestrians often think they're in control and that it's all the other fools on their phones who aren't watching what they're doing.

The solution? Take a break from your cellphone while walking. That email, text or phone call can wait. If it absolutely can't, stop walking, step to the side, take care of it, and then put your phone away. Distractions as a pedestrian are just as real as distractions when driving.

You are more likely to be struck by a vehicle and seriously injured when you are outside a crosswalk.



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Rules of the Road

History of Pedestrian Right of Way in Crosswalks

In 1929, the CT General Assembly gave local traffic authorities power to designate crosswalks for pedestrians. It also established that pedestrians had the right of way over vehicles so long as they crossed the street during a green signal (CGS § 395 (1930)).

The 1955 legislature modified the crosswalk law by requiring pedestrians crossing intersections controlled by "walk" and "don't walk" signals to cross only during the "walk" signal (CGS § 1403d (1955)). A 1967 law permitted the traffic authority to create specially marked crosswalks around schools and to place traffic signs near schools warning motorists of the upcoming crosswalks (1967, P.A. 639).

In 1978, the legislature made several changes to the crosswalk laws (PA 78-309). The 1978 law:

1. specified that vehicles must yield to pedestrians who are at the curb of a crosswalk or in either lane of traffic while in a crosswalk,
2. prohibited vehicles from passing other vehicles which were stopped at crosswalks,
3. required pedestrians to yield the right of way to all vehicles when they were not in a crosswalk,
4. required pedestrians to yield the right of way to all emergency vehicles which indicated by flashing lights or sound that they were operating under emergency conditions,
5. prohibited pedestrians from crossing intersections diagonally,
6. required pedestrians to use the right hand side of crosswalks whenever possible.

Finally, a 1994 law made a semantic change in the crosswalk laws. Vehicles were required to "grant" pedestrians the right of way as opposed to "yielding" the right of way (PA 94-189).

Campus Safety Services

Yale Security and the Yale Police Department provide many services that are designed to keep students and other community members safe. They have over 500 Blue Phones scattered around campus, and students can also use Bulldog Mobile to turn their own cellular devices into a safety device.

The Security office provides nighttime safe rides as well as walking escort services. Community members can also request Police and/or Security presence at events. The ID and Lockout Services provided by our Security Department are especially popular among undergraduate students.

Visit: publicsafety.yale.edu/campus-safety-services to find out more about all the services and resources they provide.

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