

When Driving, Look Out for People and Children Walking

Everyone traveling in North Texas, regardless of their destination, has one thing in common: at some point they are a pedestrian. Even if you prefer to drive, you likely have neighbors, friends or family members who depend on a safe walking route for getting exercise, going to work or school or running errands. Drivers can help keep streets safe in their communities by looking out for people walking along the road and crossing at driveways and intersections.

People traveling by foot, wheelchair, stroller or similar means are pedestrians, and they are among the most vulnerable users of the road. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on average, nationwide 445 people are treated in an emergency room for a traffic-related pedestrian injury every day.

When walking, cross the street at crosswalks or intersections. Drivers should stop or yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, regardless of whether they are marked or unmarked.

When driving, be prepared to yield to pedestrians by scanning the road and sides of the road, especially near schools, neighborhoods, parks, trails and other areas where people often walk. Never block or park in a crosswalk. Preventing people from using designated crosswalks creates unsafe circumstances for everyone.

Since sidewalks are not always available, people may need to walk on the shoulder or side of the street. Maintaining the legal speed limit provides more time to spot pedestrians.

School zone speed limits are especially important. Nearly one in four traffic deaths among children ages 14 and under are pedestrian deaths, according to the CDC. When driving, be aware of children's unpredictable movements in these zones. Their small size makes them more difficult to see when they cross the street.

Unfortunately, the number of crashes between people driving and people bicycling or walking has increased in recent years. Understanding how people should interact together while traveling is more important than ever for improving safety on area roads. To learn more about how people bicycling, walking and driving can look out for each other, visit www.LookOutTexans.org.

