PEDESTRIANS

JUNE 2026

LENGTH 3–5 minutes

TO PREPARE Read the background information.

BACKGROUND

- All of us are pedestrians at some time during the day. As an employer, knowing your employees are walking safely is part of your transportation safety culture.
- An employee engaged in cell phone usage while walking across a street is at a greater risk than ever. A total of 7,388 pedestrian deaths occurred in 2021 according to IIHS, the highest number in decades. Pedestrian fatalities increased 13 percent from 2020, and account for 17 percent of all crash fatalities.
- In this Safety Huddle, employees will learn how to walk or ride more safely when in a roadway where vehicles out-power and outweigh them.
- In the spirit of keeping your employees safe, you can intervene, sometimes by simply saying, “Please be careful!” It’s a helpful way to show you care about your employees’ safety. And don’t forget to set a good example by refraining from distracted walking yourself.

DISCUSSION

- We have all seen them, right? The walking pedestrian who doesn’t see anything but the screen of their phone, or who is mindlessly staring straight ahead while absorbed in an important conversation.
- All of us are pedestrians at some time during the day.

During work hours, what are some of the reasons you might be walking outdoors, through parking lots, and beyond?

Answers will vary.

Sharing the roadway as drivers, walkers, and cyclists, makes walkers and cyclists vulnerable road users. What are some things to keep in mind when you are a vulnerable road user?

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- Whenever possible, **walk on the sidewalk**; if no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic.
- Follow the rules of the road, **obeying all traffic signs** and signals.
- Cross streets at **crosswalks**.
- **Look left, right and left again** before crossing the street, making eye contact with drivers of oncoming vehicles to make sure they see you.
- **Stay alert**—avoid cell phone use and do not walk with earbuds in your ears.
- **Avoid impairment** from alcohol and other drugs when walking.

Most pedestrian fatalities take place on local roads, at night, and away from intersections. What other safety precautions should pedestrians take at night?

- Be alert as the risk of impaired drivers is greater at night.
- Drivers are more likely to speed at night or be fatigued while driving.
- If no crosswalk is available and your view is blocked, move to a place where you can see oncoming traffic.
- Wear bright and/or reflective clothing, and use a flashlight.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

If time allows, discuss pedestrian safety related to driving safety tips and the videos shared at:

- https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety

SUMMARY

- Work-related safe walking practices carry over into safe walking practices everywhere else, helping to keep you safe.
- Being a walker or cyclist means securing your own safety by staying alert and mindful of your path 100% of the time.
- We, as road users, must engage in safety and limit all distractions whether it is driving, walking or biking. There may not be a second chance.

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