

MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

Pedestrian Safety

Walking is a healthy activity, but you need to know the rules of thumb of pedestrian safety.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the next 24 hours, on the average, 430 people will be treated in emergency departments for traffic-related pedestrian injuries. In the next 2 hours, on the average, 1 pedestrian will die from injuries in a traffic crash. In 2013, a total of 4,735 pedestrians were killed in traffic deaths and more than 156,000 were treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries.

Tips to practice to help avoid becoming one of the statistics listed above:

- ✓ **Walk facing traffic** - If there is no sidewalk and you must walk on the side of the road, choose the side where you are facing oncoming traffic.
- ✓ **Cross safely** - At intersections, it is wise to cross only when you have the pedestrian crossing light. But even then, be aware of drivers turning. Be sure to make eye contact with drivers who may be turning and also wave at them vigorously. Do not attempt to jaywalk, as it can be an infraction and a safety hazard.
- ✓ **Walk single file when not separated from the road** - Unless you're on a sidewalk separated from the road or in a wide bike/pedestrian lane, you should walk in single file. This is especially important on a road with curves, where traffic has only a split second chance of seeing you before hitting you.
- ✓ **Stay aware of bikers and runners** - Share the road with bikers and runners. Bike riders should alert you when approaching with a "passing on the right/ left." Listen for them and move to single file, allowing them to pass safely.
- ✓ **Be predictable** - Make it a practice by staying on one side of the path instead of rambling back and forth from one side to the other. Watch your arm motions- or you might be giving a biker, runner or walker a black eye.
- ✓ **Be visible** - Wear bright colors when walking in the daytime. When walking at night-wear light colored clothing and reflective clothing or a reflective vest. Drivers may not be expecting walkers at night, so you need to give them every chance to see you, even at crossings that have crossing signals. Also, be cautious at dawn and dusk, as drivers may have limited visibility, may even have the sun in their eyes.
- ✓ **Keep the volume down** - Don't drown out your environment with your earbuds or headphones. Keep the sound at a level where you can still hear bike bells or warnings from other walkers or runners.
- ✓ **Hang up and eyes up** - Chatting, texting or playing phone games on a mobile device is just as dangerous as doing things that distract you while driving. These things will distract you, causing you to less likely recognize traffic dangers, passing joggers or bikers. Adopt habits that allow you to keep your phone in your pocket or at least close to you until you finish your task.
- ✓ **Walk dogs on short leashes** - It can be a tragic situation to see a dog running into traffic or getting into a fatal dog fight, whether on a leash or not. It is also a potential hazard to walk with a long leash that could trip over bikers or walkers. Keep you and your pet safe by learning proper leash walking.
- ✓ **Know when to stop walking** - Dehydration, heat sickness, heart attack or a stroke can strike walkers at any age. Learn the symptoms of medical emergencies and carry a cell phone with you to dial 9-1-1.
- ✓ **Be Aware of stranger danger** - Choose a walking path that is frequented by other walkers, runners and bikers. If you see a suspicious looking "joker," alter your route, go into a public building or a store to avoid them. Acting alert and aware can convince bad guys to choose an easier target.

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Excerpts: <https://www.verywell.com>

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/pedestriansafety> 5/3/2017

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