

## **Pedestrian Safety Awareness for Children and Older Adults**

Pedestrian Safety is an important traffic safety issue and public health concern for New York State. Everyone becomes a pedestrian at some point in their travels. Approximately 300 pedestrians are killed and 15,000 injured by motor vehicles each year on the state's roadways and more than 3,000 pedestrians are admitted to the hospital annually. Injuries to pedestrians are among the top 10 leading causes of injury-related hospital admissions and death for almost all age groups in New York State.

Both drivers and pedestrians need to know and follow the rules of the road to assure pedestrian safety. It is a shared responsibility and both can be subjected to fines for not obeying vehicle and traffic laws. The majority of pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes involve driver error, including distraction, failure to yield, and speeding. Pedestrians are responsible for following vehicle and traffic laws as well. One out of four crashes with a pedestrian involve pedestrian error or inattention.

Children and Older Adults (65+) are most vulnerable to pedestrian injuries and death. Pedestrian-traffic related injuries are the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for 1 to 9 year olds, and the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury-related hospital admissions for 5 to 9 year olds. For Older Adults (65+), pedestrian-traffic injuries are the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths, and 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of unintentional, injury-related hospital admissions.

Common risk factors for children's pedestrian-related injuries include: child darting into the street; motorist turning into the path of a child; child hidden from view by a bus and on-coming motorist does not stop; and motorist backing up into roadways, driveways and parking lots. (Name and title) states, "Pedestrian safety education including instruction and practicing basic rules of the road can be effective and should be reinforced by parents and caregivers."

Older adults (65+) can also take steps to prevent pedestrian injuries by recognizing five main risk factors to avoid getting struck by a motorist: properly following signals at intersections; safely stepping off the curb; providing motorists adequate pedestrian visibility; awareness of motorist backing up into roadways, driveways and parking lots; awareness of environmental conditions; and addressing personal health concerns or impairments that could make walking safer. Older adults (65+) are only one segment of the community who need to have the option to walk for errands, health benefits, socializing and other purposes. Communities need to address the pedestrian safety issues that older adults face and provide strategies for safer walking.

In an effort to raise pedestrian safety awareness statewide, the **"See! Be Seen!"** educational campaign was created by the NYS Department of Health and Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to provide safety tips for both pedestrians and drivers. A toolkit of resources including posters, tip cards, PowerPoint presentations, educational tools for law enforcement and video PSAs focusing on pedestrian and driver behaviors can be found at Governor Cuomo's Pedestrian Safety website [www.ny.gov/programs/pedestrian-safety-action-plan](http://www.ny.gov/programs/pedestrian-safety-action-plan).

To prevent and avoid pedestrian-related injuries or death, pedestrians and motorists are encouraged to follow these safety tips:

**“See!”** Tips for Motorists:

- Yield for pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections.
- Do not block crosswalks when stopped at intersections.
- Do not run red lights.
- Slow down and obey speed limits.
- Always look for pedestrians, particularly when turning at a green light or making a right turn on red.
- Take extra care around schools, playgrounds and neighborhoods.
- Be careful when passing stopped vehicles. They might be stopping for pedestrians.
- PAY ATTENTION! Do not text and drive!

**“Be Seen!”** Tips for Pedestrians:

- Cross at intersections and marked crosswalks. Look-left-right-left again.
- Use pedestrian push-buttons where available and WAIT for the signal to cross.
- Use sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic so you see vehicles and drivers see you.
- Stay visible after dark and in bad weather by wearing light-colored or reflective clothing.
- Watch for vehicles backing out of parking spaces and exiting driveways.
- Make eye contact with drivers so they see you.
- Look left, look right, and then look left again before crossing a street.
- PAY ATTENTION! Don’t text while crossing!

For more information on pedestrian safety, visit Governor Cuomo’s Pedestrian Safety website [www.ny.gov/programs/pedestrian-safety-action-plan](http://www.ny.gov/programs/pedestrian-safety-action-plan) or email [injury@health.ny.gov](mailto:injury@health.ny.gov).