

# Driver Safety Letter

presented by



## Prevent Roadway Accidents Involving Pedestrians

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Many pedestrians assume drivers will see them easily and stop their vehicles. However, due to factors such as heavy traffic, poor road conditions and various kinds of distractions, drivers don't always react quickly enough — and the statistics bear this out. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that accidents involving single motor vehicles account for 92% of pedestrian fatalities from motor vehicle crashes.

Listed below are some of the types of people and situations you might face while driving. Being mindful of these factors as you take the wheel helps make you better able to react at the moment you encounter a pedestrian.

- Elderly citizens. They often take a long time to cross the street, their ability to react may be slow, and hearing and vision impairments may make them unaware of oncoming traffic.
- Drunk or impaired individuals. With little or no warning, pedestrians under the influence of alcohol or drugs can step into the road without proper judgment of oncoming traffic's speed or distance.
- Dense urban areas. Such districts often feature restaurants, stores, theaters and sports venues. Foot traffic is heavy, and people often enter streets from between parked cars instead of crosswalks.
- Nighttime visibility. Darkness hinders vision for both drivers and pedestrians, and more than half of all pedestrian deaths occur between 6:00 and 11:59 p.m. While pedestrians should wear light-colored clothing and carry a flashlight or glow stick, many do not.
- Electronic and other distractions. Talking and texting while driving is a dangerous distraction and is against the law in a CMV. Similarly, many pedestrians are distracted by their electronic devices and may behave somewhat erratically — similar to someone under the influence.
- Driving in unfamiliar areas. Being unfamiliar with surroundings can force you to pay more attention to buildings and street signs than to traffic signals and pedestrians.
- Busy neighborhoods. Such areas often have large populations of children on their sidewalks and streets. According to Safe Kids Worldwide™, unintentional pedestrian injuries are the fifth leading cause of injury-related death in the U.S. for children ages 5 to 19. Playgrounds and fields used for local sports can increase the chances of encountering a child in traffic.

As you drive, be aware of these situations and always practice the following safe driving habits:

- **Long distance scan.** We were born with two feet. We were meant to walk. When we're walking, if we look two seconds ahead, we will avoid running into walls. In a truck, the scan must be 16 seconds ahead, or as far down the road as possible.
- **Get the big picture.** Too often, we don't observe or understand what is coming in the next mile. Good drivers need to anticipate and plan for events that could occur in the next mile. What are the road and weather conditions? The traffic conditions?
- **Keep your eyes moving.** Don't become fixated on one area. Be fully engaged in your environment and what's going on around you. Scan every two seconds left and right, front and back of the cab.
- **Leave yourself an out.** Always anticipate poor driving decisions and avoid being surprised or trapped. Think about your best possible escape route or options at all times.
- **Make them see you.** When driving situation, other motorists often don't register your presence until they make eye contact with you. Don't assume they have.

With the growth of congestion on most of our nation's roadways accelerating rapidly, you need those tools more today than ever before.

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