

FLEETING IDEAS

Pedestrians and Intersections

The most hazardous 100 ft. of any road is when it crosses another road. In any collision between a pedestrian and a vehicle, we all know who is going to lose. Actually, both the pedestrian and driver will lose, regardless of who was at fault. Judging speed and distance is a serious challenge for pedestrians and motorists.

A pedestrian may see a vehicle approaching an intersection at a slow speed and misjudge the crossing time/distance. A driver approaching an intersection may see a pedestrian halfway across the street and think it is safe to continue through the intersection without significantly slowing down. These situations illustrate accidents waiting to happen – under normal circumstances. Since it is easier for the driver than for a pedestrian to judge the flow of traffic, the space between vehicles and the width of a street, the primary responsibility for avoiding intersection accidents falls on the driver.

Often you will have additional hazards or unusual situations to watch for at intersections:

- Pedestrians may assume the right-of-way.
- A person may still be crossing the intersection when the light changes.
- Pedestrians may stumble / trip and fall in your path of travel.
- Senior citizens may take longer to cross a street.
- Children may dash into the street at the last possible moment.

Key Points

Merge your defensive driving skills and safety knowledge to avoid accidents at intersections.

1. Slow down and position your foot over the brake so you will be better prepared to stop.
2. Scan the intersection; look left, right, then left again.
3. Obey traffic signs and signals.
4. Maintain an adequate following distance considering vehicle type, size, and weather conditions.
5. If you are going to turn at an intersection, signal your intentions at least 100 ft. prior to the turn.
6. Establish eye contact when you have to depend on others to stay put.

