

Ten Safety Tips for Pedestrians

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Being a pedestrian in a world full of cars and bicycles is daunting. Being a pedestrian who is blind in this environment takes some extra precautions to ensure you arrive at your destination without any close calls. Here are some tips and reminders for those of you walking with low or no vision, especially during the change in seasons and its shorter, darker and wetter days.

1. Think about the time of day you are planning to travel. Can you adjust your trip to arrive at your destination before it is dark? Keep in mind that drivers are less likely to see you if their vision is impaired by rain and low light conditions.
2. Remember daylight saving time and adjust your thinking to the fact that it is now dark an hour earlier.
3. Talking on your phone or listening to music prevents your ability to listen for traffic.
4. Keep in mind that although intersections are where you normally encounter cars crossing your path, driveways or parking lots are often more hazardous. When cars are backing up the driver is typically looking in their rear-view mirror where they see only your upper torso. This excludes them from seeing your long cane or dog guide.
5. If you walk with a cane, use a prominent arc prior to initiating your crossings.

6. If you encounter a running car that is blocking the sidewalk it is better to knock on the window and talk to the driver (or take an alternative route) than pass behind a running car.
7. If your route requires you to walk in the street due to no sidewalks, walk on the side of the road so that oncoming traffic is nearest you. The curb will be immediately on your left.
8. While walking on a sidewalk or road edge, stop walking and stay stationary, in a safe place, if a siren is passing or there is a loud noise blocking your ability to hear oncoming cars.
9. If you have a choice, choose a route with streetlights.
10. And number ten, wear reflective clothing! Recent studies show wrist and upper arm bands pick up the swing and movement associated with a person walking. Wearing reflective clothing on the top half of your body is most important. Remember drivers typically see the lower half of your body only. Reflective gear is now affordable and easy to find from gloves, hats, vests, to adhesive reflective tape and hanging reflective tabs.

OCB wishes you safe journeys!