

About Cross Walks:

Won't Crosswalks make it safer to cross streets?

A crosswalk is that area of a roadway where pedestrians have the right of way. Crosswalks may be "marked" or "unmarked". A "marked crosswalk" is any crosswalk which is delineated by painted markings placed on the pavement. All other crosswalk locations are therefore "unmarked".



Under the Arizona Law, crosswalks exist at all intersections, extending across the street from the corner curbs, or on other parts of the street designated as pedestrian crossing locations by the painted lines, unless signed otherwise.

Arizona State law states the following in ARS 28-793.

Crossing at other than crosswalk

- A. A pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway.
- B. A pedestrian crossing a roadway at a point where a pedestrian tunnel or overhead pedestrian crossing has been provided shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway.
- C. Between adjacent intersections at which traffic control signals are in operation, pedestrians shall not cross at any place except in a marked crosswalk.

Q: Are marked crosswalks safer than unmarked crosswalks?

A: The City of San Diego conducted a study on the issue in the 1970's, and the report conclusions are often cited as the first comprehensive study of crosswalk safety. Investigators in San Diego observed over 400 intersections during a five-year study period. The results demonstrated that during the five-year period, 177 pedestrians were hit in 400 marked crosswalks compared to 31 pedestrians hit in 400 corresponding unmarked crosswalks.

The study reported that "...more pedestrian accidents occur in marked crosswalks than in unmarked crosswalks by a ratio of approximately 6:1. Furthermore, comparison of the volume of pedestrians using the marked and unmarked crosswalks shows that the crosswalk use ratio is approximately 3:1. This indicates, in terms of usage, that approximately two times as many pedestrian accidents occur in marked crosswalks as compared with unmarked crosswalks. Evidence suggests that this poor accident record is not due to the

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crosswalk being marked as much as it is a reflection on the pedestrians' attitude and behavior when using the marked crosswalk..."

The pedestrians felt that the two white lines painted on the asphalt indicated that it was safe.



Q: How are crosswalks used?

A: At any crosswalk (marked or unmarked) drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. Crosswalks are marked mainly to encourage pedestrians to use a particular crossing. Studies conducted on the relative safety of crosswalks support minimal installation of marked crosswalks.

Q: How and where are crosswalks normally installed?

A: Crosswalks are installed at intersections where there is substantial conflict between vehicle and pedestrian movements, where significant pedestrian concentrations occur, where pedestrians could not otherwise recognize the proper place to cross, and where traffic movements are controlled. Examples of these locations are as follows:

- Approved School Crossing Zones
- Signalized and Stop Controlled Intersections



These examples follow the philosophy of marking crosswalks as a form of encouragement. We are encouraging school children to use a crossing which is normally being monitored. In the second example, we are encouraging all pedestrians to avoid a prohibited crossing.

Q: What causes accidents at marked crosswalks?

A: Research suggests that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security. Pedestrians often step off the curb into the crosswalk expecting drivers of vehicles approaching the crosswalk to stop. However, drivers frequently fail to stop and cause an accident. At all crosswalks, both marked and unmarked, it is the pedestrian's responsibility to be cautious and alert before starting to cross the street.

At crosswalks on multi-lane roadways, another frequent factor in causing accidents involves the driver of a vehicle in the lane nearest to the curb stopping for a pedestrian that is waiting to cross or who is already in the crosswalk. The driver of a second vehicle traveling in the lane next to the stopped vehicle tries to

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pass the stopped vehicle and hits the pedestrian, even though it is illegal for drivers to pass a stopped vehicle at a crosswalk. Pedestrians should be very cautious when walking in a crosswalk, especially when their visibility is limited by vehicles already stopped at the crosswalk.

If you would like to ask questions or discuss further, please call the Public Works Department at 623-349-6800.

