

Pedestrian Safety for Seniors



Walking is a good way to get around as it is free and is good for the environment. Walking is also a great form of physical activity for seniors as it is low impact and offers health benefits such as maintaining wellbeing and fitness, weight control and lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

However, older people are at higher risk of pedestrian injury. Declining mobility, hearing and eyesight, the likelihood of being on prescription medication which may affect balance and mobility, and because our ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of moving traffic as we age are all factors associated with pedestrian injury among seniors.

People aged over 65 years comprise around 12% of the state's population, but around 20% of those killed as pedestrians. On average around five people aged over 60 years die as pedestrians each year in WA, with the likelihood of being killed or seriously injured rising substantially for those aged over 70 years¹. In Albany 38% of pedestrians killed or seriously injured on local roads between 2003 and 2012 were aged 70 years or older².

Improving your safety as a pedestrian

Plan your walk

To improve your safety as a pedestrian, it is recommended that you:

- ✓ Plan your route to include footpaths and quieter roads;
- ✓ Cross as few roads as possible;
- ✓ Use designated pedestrian 'zebra' crossings or pedestrian refuges where available if you have to cross a road.

- ✓ Be visible by wearing brightly coloured clothing;
- ✓ Walk at times when there are other pedestrians, and try to avoid walking at dusk and dawn when visibility is poor.

Cross roads safely

To safely cross roads it is important that you:

- ✓ Stop, look and listen in all directions;
- ✓ When safe to do so, cross the road using the shortest possible route. By law, you must cross at a pedestrian crossing if you are within 20 metres of it;
- ✓ Courtesy crossings are often raised plateaus constructed of bricks or paving. Unless marked as pedestrian 'zebra' crossings, these are not official pedestrian crossings and motorists are not obliged to stop at them;
- ✓ Cross dual carriageways (dual lane roads such as North Road) in stages using the median strip to break your crossing.

Tips for older pedestrians

- ✓ Have your eyesight and hearing regularly checked;
- ✓ If you take medication, ask your GP or pharmacist to explain how it may affect you as a pedestrian;
- ✓ Be alert when walking in car parks. It can be difficult for drivers to see pedestrians among parked vehicles;
- ✓ Establish eye contact with drivers when attempting to cross roads. Never assume a driver has seen you just because you have seen them.

¹ Office of Road Safety, 'Pedestrians – Fact Sheet', accessed <http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/HTML-Documents/Pedestrians/Pedestrians-Fact-Sheet> October 2014

² WA Local Government Association, 'Local Road Crash Report 2012 – Great Southern Region, 2012

Choosing the Safest Place to Cross



Use a pedestrian refuge to stage your crossing.



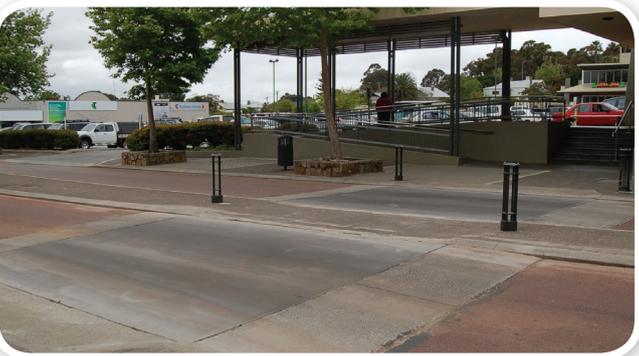
When crossing at a roundabout, be careful to look in all directions for traffic. Cross once it is safe to do so. Make use of pedestrian refuges to stage your crossing.



Use a designated pedestrian crossing.

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Use Caution When Crossing



At courtesy crossings. Motorists are not obliged to stop at these crossings.



Among parked vehicles. It can be difficult for motorists to see you, increasing your risk of injury when crossing. If possible, choose a spot free of parked vehicles to cross.

For more information

There are several existing walking groups in Albany which provide a great opportunity for regular physical activity in a fun, social environment. To find a Heart Foundation Walking group near you, please contact Great Southern Population Health on 9842 7500.

More information about pedestrian safety more generally can be found at the Office of Road Safety's website: <http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/>