

Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards Recommendations for Crossing Guard Safety

The Problem:

In the United States in 2012, more than twenty-eight crossing guards were hospitalized after being struck by a vehicle, and three of these workers received fatal injuries. In Massachusetts in 2012, nine crossing guards were struck by vehicles, and one crossing guard received fatal injuries.

Recommendations:

The Federal Highway Administration has conducted research on road safety, and has written the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to help cities and towns design safe roads. The MUTCD has a complete chapter for school crosswalks. Highlights of the guideline are provided here for easy reference.

Choose the Crosswalk Location Carefully¹

A crosswalk does not automatically prevent pedestrians from being struck. The MUTCD provides these guidelines:

- First choice: Choose a location with a STOP sign when possible.
- Second choice: Choose a location with a traffic light.
- Crosswalks that are not at intersections require an engineering evaluation which considers pedestrian habits, road visibility, vehicle speeds, and traffic patterns.
- Crosswalks on roads with travel speeds above 40 mph should be avoided.

Make the Crosswalk Visible^{2,3}

- Prohibit parking within 20 feet of crosswalk in both directions of vehicle travel.
- Provide a high-visibility paint and pattern.
- Install high-visibility "Pedestrian Crossing" signs in both directions of travel for crosswalks that are not located at a stop sign or traffic light.
- Follow the Federal Highway Administration's MUTCD guidelines for school crossings.

This crosswalk gives visual clues for motorists. The crosswalk is marked with a high-visibility sign, a distinctive paint pattern, and vision is not blocked by parked cars.



Make the Crossing Guard Visible⁴

- Wear a high-visibility retro-reflective vest which has a reflective stripe on both shoulders, and a reflective stripe that completely wraps around the torso. The vest must have a label which says:
 - ANSI 107-2004 Class 2; or
 - ANSI 107-2004 Class 3, or
 - ANSI 207-2006 “Public Safety Vest.”
- Vests should be fastened to fully cover the torso. Bib-style vests that do not provide reflective fabric under the arms are not acceptable. Crisscross style harnesses are not acceptable.
- When wearing a winter coat or rain gear, the high-visibility reflective vest must be worn over clothing, or the coat itself must be ANSI Class 2 or Class 3.



This ANSI Class 2 vest has reflective stripe on both shoulders, and a reflective stripe that completely wraps around the torso.

Develop Written Standard Procedures⁵

- Crossing guards should not direct traffic, such as instructing lines of traffic to turn.
- When a traffic light is available, wait for the RED light to stop traffic in the lanes you will cross.
- A hand-held “STOP” sign is recommended to alert motorists. Wait for traffic gaps before signaling for traffic to stop.
- Confirm that all vehicles have stopped before entering the crosswalk. Make eye contact with motorist before entering street.
- Crossing guards should stand on sidewalk, not in road, while waiting for children.
- Talking and texting on cell phone should be avoided.

Provide New Hire and Annual Crossing Guard Training⁵

- Training should be combination of classroom and practice drills.
- Employees should be paid for training hours.
- Throughout the year, supervisors should monitor performance with regard to worker safety.
- For training tips, see:
 - Florida “School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines 2012” at www2.dot.state.fl.us/CrossingGuard/index.aspx.
 - Safe Routes for Schools “Adult School Crossing Guard Guidelines” at http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/index.cfm.
 - A sample test is available from Iowa at <http://www.iowasaferoutes.org/crossing-guards>

References:

Federal Highway Administration, Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2009
<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>

- 1 **Stop signs and Traffic Light Preferences:** MUTCD Section 7A.02
- 2 **No parking:** MUTCD Section 3B.19. and Figure 3B-21
- 3 **Pedestrian Crossing signs:** MUTCD Section 3B.17; Section 7C.02 and Figure 7B-4
- 4 **ANSI Class 2 vests:** MUTCD Section 7D.04
- 5 **Training:** MUTCD Section 7D.03 and 7D.05

