

MASSACHUSETTS

Safe Routes to School

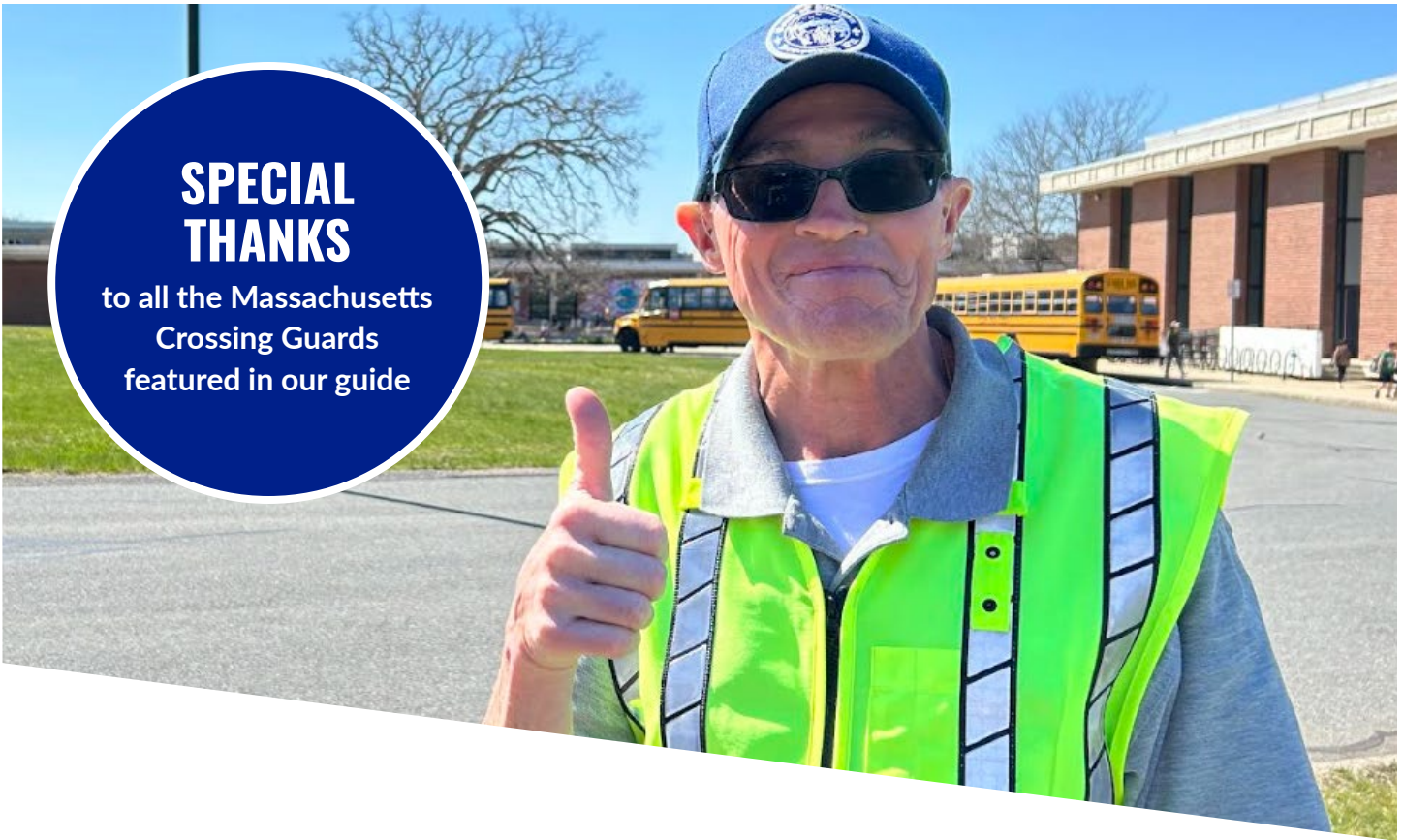
Crossing Guard Reference Guide

2026 Edition



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SPECIAL THANKS

to all the Massachusetts Crossing Guards featured in our guide

INTRODUCTION

Crossing Guards play a vital role in keeping our students safe every day. Their work requires patience, courage, and care—often in challenging weather and unpredictable traffic conditions. Crossing Guards are community heroes who put their personal safety on the line so students can start their day with confidence and peace of mind.

This guide provides an overview of Crossing Guard responsibilities, conduct, emergency procedures, and required equipment. It is intended for school administrators, public safety personnel, and other staff responsible for supervising or training Crossing Guards.

A simple one-page “Quick Reference” sheet intended for Crossing Guards is included at the end of this guide. This shortened document reinforces the same core procedures and promotes statewide consistency.



01 | ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ADULT CROSSING GUARDS ARE TRUSTED AMBASSADORS FOR STUDENT SAFETY.

Their key duties include:

- Helping people safely cross the street.
- Reminding drivers to be aware of pedestrians.
- Observing and reporting unsafe conditions or behaviors.
- Supporting a culture of safety in and around school zones.
- Modeling alert, responsible pedestrian behavior.

Note:

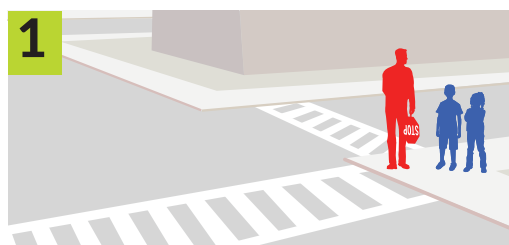
Crossing Guards do **not** direct traffic. Their role is to create a safe gap in traffic and clearly signal when it is safe for pedestrians to cross.

02 | CROSSING PROCEDURES

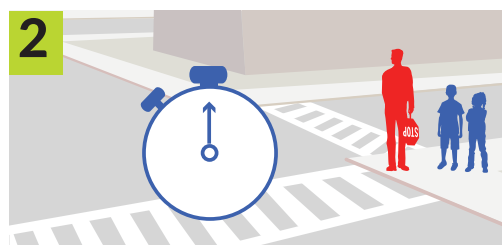
MASSACHUSETTS LAW REMINDER

Under Massachusetts law, drivers must yield to pedestrians who are in the same half of the roadway as the vehicle or within 10 feet of entering that half of the roadway. Crossing Guards reinforce this law by helping create a safe gap in traffic and ensuring drivers are aware of people crossing.

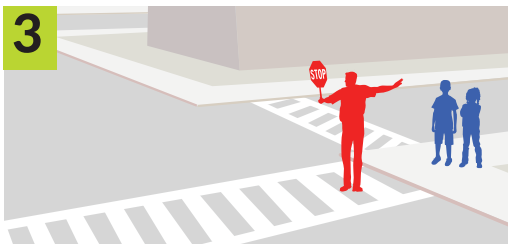
Crossing Guards should follow these steps each time they assist students in crossing the street:



1 Assemble students at the curb, standing at least one step back from the roadway. Stand on the sidewalk while waiting for people to gather.



2 Wait for a safe gap in traffic. A *gap* means no approaching vehicles within 100 to 200 feet (about half a football field).



3
Step into the crosswalk while holding the STOP paddle shoulder-high and facing oncoming traffic.



4
Make eye contact with drivers. Confirm all vehicles have come to a full stop.



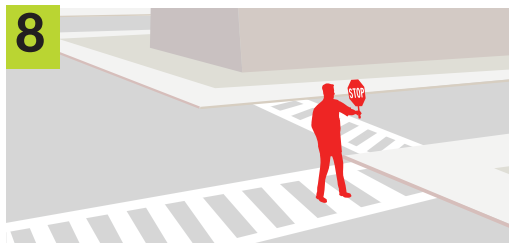
5
Stand in the crosswalk facing traffic, scanning continuously. Crossing Guards should not direct traffic, such as instructing lines of traffic to turn.



6
Verbalize the crossing. Say, "Okay, cross now!" Do not use hand gestures as this may confuse drivers.



7
Remain in position until all people have reached the opposite curb.



8
Return to their post with the STOP paddle raised.

Multi-Lane Roads:

For crossings with four or more lanes, two adult Crossing Guards should work together. The Crossing Guard on the side where people begin crossing starts the process, and the Crossing Guard on the opposite side mirrors their cues to stop traffic in both directions.



03 | EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Crossing Guards are not first responders, but they may need to act quickly in an emergency. Programs are encouraged to provide Crossing Guards with first aid kits and to offer CPR and first aid training to help them feel prepared.

During an emergency or other urgent event, Crossing Guards should follow these steps to protect themselves and keep all students safe:



1 Crossing Guards should first ensure their own safety. If the scene is unsafe or the Crossing Guard is injured, assistance should not be attempted.

2 Crossing Guards should keep students together on the curb or sidewalk and pause all crossings, prioritizing the safety and supervision of the group.

3 Emergency services (911) should be called immediately, or another adult should be directed to make the call.

4 Injured individuals should not be moved unless they are in imminent danger.

5 Trained and certified Crossing Guards may provide first aid or CPR when it is safe to do so and all students are secure and supervised. If CPR is initiated, it should continue until trained responders arrive and take over.

6 Upon arrival, emergency personnel should be given full control of the scene.

7 The Crossing Guard's supervisor should be notified, and an incident report should be completed as soon as possible.

Note:

Massachusetts' *Good Samaritan Law (M.G.L. c. 112 § 12V)* protects individuals who provide reasonable emergency assistance in good faith. Crossing Guards who act within their level of training and without expectation of compensation are covered under this protection.



04 | OBSERVATION & REPORTING

CROSSING GUARDS ARE THE “EYES ON THE STREET.” THEIR OBSERVATIONS ARE VITAL FOR KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE AND IMPROVING CONDITIONS AROUND SCHOOLS.

Crossing Guards should report any of the following to their supervisor:

- Drivers speeding, distracted, or failing to stop.
- Unsafe pedestrian behavior or student conflicts.
- Construction, parking violations, or visibility issues.
- Unsafe street conditions such as snowbanks or plowed snow blocking sidewalks, crosswalks, or curb ramps, damaged signs, or other access concerns.
- Damaged or obstructed lighting.
- Suspicious activity or unsafe conditions near school.
- Students who are not wearing helmets or are wearing helmets incorrectly.

05 | EXPECTATIONS OF CONDUCT

CROSSING GUARDS REPRESENT BOTH THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.

They are expected to maintain professionalism and engage positively with students, families, and drivers. The following guidelines outline expected conduct while on duty:

- Crossing Guards should arrive on time and remain alert throughout their shifts.
- Crossing Guards should have all required equipment on hand for each shift (see below for details).
- Eating, drinking, or smoking while on duty is not permitted.
- Crossing Guards must remain standing at their assigned posts unless an emergency occurs.
- Both hands should remain free—umbrellas or items that limit movement should not be used.
- Communication with students and drivers should be courteous yet firm.
- A calm, confident, and friendly attitude should be maintained at all times.
- Crossing Guards should follow the direction of their supervisor.
- Assigned schedules and post locations must be followed; any changes should occur only with prior approval through official channels.



06 | EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Crossing Guards must use approved safety equipment to ensure they are visible and effective in their duties. These requirements come from the [FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD, Part 7D\)](#) and the [MassDOT Crossing Guard Safety Bulletin \(March 2025\)](#). Use the table below to ensure all equipment meets the required safety standards and visibility specifications.

TABLE 1: REQUIRED & OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT

DESCRIPTION/STANDARD

High-Visibility Retroreflective Outerwear (Required)



Must be fluorescent yellow-green or fluorescent orange-red and labeled either: ANSI/ISEA 107–2004 Class 2 or Class 3, or ANSI/ISEA 107–2015 Type R2 or Type R3. Garment must include reflective stripes on both shoulders and a band that fully encircles the torso.

- Wear as the outermost layer.
Bib-style vests or crisscross harnesses are not acceptable.

STOP Paddle (Required)



Octagonal red paddle with white retroreflective border and 6-inch reflective letters on both sides. Minimum size 18 inches. May include LED lighting for enhanced visibility. Use of a pole or handle is recommended for stability and ergonomic support.

Reflective Hat (Recommended)



Should match the ANSI/ISEA Type R2 or R3 standard to enhance visibility above traffic.

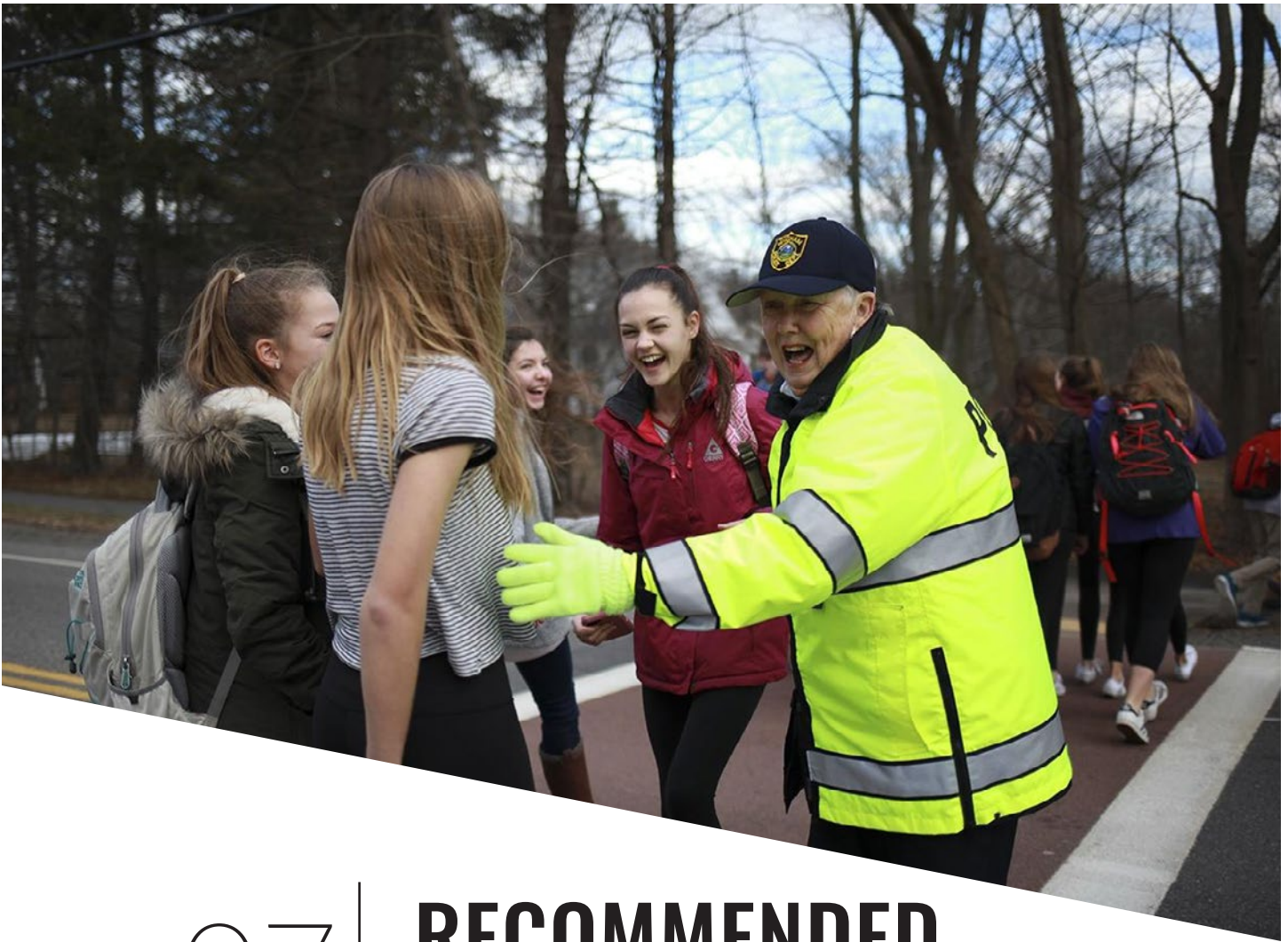
Whistle (Recommended)



Use only to alert unresponsive drivers—never to signal students.

Note:

Equipment must be inspected regularly and replaced when damaged or faded to maintain compliance with state and federal visibility standards.



07

RECOMMENDED QUALIFICATIONS

Crossing Guards carry significant responsibility for student safety and should possess the following qualities:

- Good physical condition (sight, hearing, and mobility).
- Ability to communicate clearly and calmly.
- Reliability, punctuality, and professionalism.
- Mental alertness and readiness to perform duties safely.
- Ability to recognize hazards and respond quickly.
- Strong sense of responsibility and care for children.



08

TRAINING & REFRESHER GUIDANCE

CONSISTENT TRAINING SAVES LIVES.

Crossing Guard training should include the following:

- **Initial training:** within the first month of service.
- **Refresher training:** every two years, or after reassignment.
- **Review of emergency procedures:** annually before the start of the school year.

Massachusetts programs are encouraged to adopt statewide training standards aligned with the [FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(Part 7D\)](#) and [National Center for Safe Routes to School guidelines](#).



09

PROGRAM COORDINATION & STAFFING

Strong coordination and staffing are essential for safe, consistent, and sustainable crossing guard programs. Establishing clear systems, defined responsibilities, and open communication helps ensure safety, reliability, and liability protection.

Program administrators should:

- Regularly review staffing needs and school zone coverage.
- Reassess Crossing Guard post locations periodically to ensure they still reflect current conditions such as traffic volumes, pedestrian patterns, or new development.
- Pay particular attention to crossings near convenience stores or other high-activity areas, which may pose higher safety risks for students.
- Maintain clear communication between schools, police, and municipal staff.
- Involve school staff or trusted volunteers to ensure continuity and backup coverage.
- Clearly define where and when each guard will operate.
- Screen, train, and equip guards properly.
- Communicate schedules and procedures with teachers and families.
- Verify insurance and documentation for all personnel and posts.



10 | LIABILITY & RISK REDUCTION

Crossing Guards and their sponsoring agencies are buffered from liability when acting within the scope of their official duties and following proper procedures.

To minimize risk:

- Make sure all Crossing Guards receive standardized training.
- Keep documentation of training and assignments.
- Provide all required equipment.
- Review site conditions regularly and report changes promptly.



11 | RESOURCES

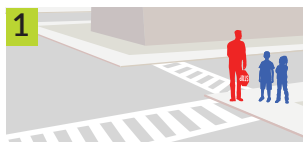

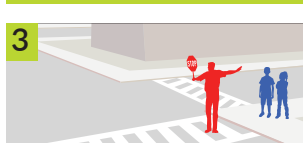
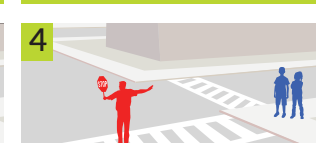

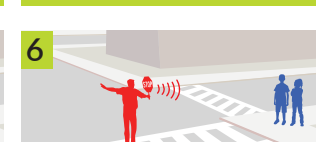


1. Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Website
www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school
2. MassDOT Crossing Guard Safety Bulletin (March 2025)
www.mass.gov/doc/crossing-guard-safety-bulletin-march-2025/download
3. FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Part 7D)
https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/11th_Edition/part7.pdf
4. Massachusetts' Good Samaritan Law (M.G.L. c. 112 § 12V)
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter112/Section12V>
5. National Center for Safe Routes to School – Crossing Guard Guidelines
http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/
6. Colorado DOT – Training and Curriculum (2022)
<https://www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/saferoutes/training-curriculum>
7. New Jersey DOT – Crossing Guard Training Videos
youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoA0XAFUGtsCiTfbEcQMapw8tZADAib0S

CROSSING GUARD QUICK REFERENCE

(FOR CROSSING GUARDS – KEEP WITH YOUR GEAR)

Know the Law

In Massachusetts, drivers must yield at a crosswalk if a pedestrian is walking in that half of the road or is within 10 feet of crossing that half. Your job is to reinforce this law by helping create a safe gap in traffic and ensuring drivers are aware of students crossing. Crossing Guards do not direct traffic – they stop traffic only as needed to allow pedestrians to cross safely.

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>1</p> <p>Assemble students at the curb, standing at least one step back from the roadway.</p> |  <p>2</p> <p>Wait for a safe gap in traffic. A gap means no approaching vehicles within 100 to 200 ft.</p> |
|  <p>3</p> <p>Step into the crosswalk while holding the STOP paddle shoulder-high and facing oncoming traffic.</p> |  <p>4</p> <p>Make eye contact with drivers. Confirm all vehicles have come to a full stop.</p> |
|  <p>5</p> <p>Stand in the crosswalk facing traffic, scanning continuously.</p> |  <p>6</p> <p>Verbalize the crossing. Say, "Okay, cross now!" Do not use hand gestures.</p> |
|  <p>7</p> <p>Assemble students at the curb, standing at least one step back from the roadway.</p> |  <p>8</p> <p>Return to their post with the STOP paddle raised.</p> |

Multi-lane crossings: Two Crossing Guards work together—the lead Crossing Guard initiates on one side of the crosswalk, the opposite Crossing Guard mirrors on the other side of the crosswalk.

Stay Safe, Stay Seen

Crossing Guards are required by federal and state safety standards (*MUTCD, Part 7D*) to use specific high-visibility equipment. Local supervisors or municipalities are responsible for providing and maintaining this equipment.

- ✓ **Wear your high-visibility vest or outerwear** (ANSI Class 2) as the top layer.
- ✓ **Use your STOP paddle** (red, octagonal, 18 inches minimum, 6 inches, white letters).
- ✓ **Optional:** reflective hat and whistle (whistle only for unresponsive drivers).
- ✓ **Keep both hands free**—no umbrellas, drinks, or phones while crossing.

Responding Calmly in an Emergency

Stay calm and focused. *Your priority is always the safety of students and families.*

1. Keep students together on the curb or sidewalk.
2. Call 911 or direct another adult to do so.
3. Do not move an injured person unless there is immediate danger.
4. If trained, provide CPR or first aid until help arrives.
5. Notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

Eyes on the Street

Report to your supervisor any:

- Unsafe driver or pedestrian behavior
- Construction or visibility issues
- Damaged signs, snow, or blocked crosswalks
- Safety concerns such as no helmet or no seat belt
- Suspicious activity near school

Stay Reliable

Families depend on Crossing Guards for student safety.

Remain at your post for your full shift and report any absences to your supervisor.