

Walk Audit Checklist | Guidance for Lead

A Walk or Bike Audit examines student arrival/dismissal routes for safety within school neighborhoods. This process encourages an open dialogue between stakeholders to build consensus on recommendations. These instructions and the checklist on the following page provide simple guidance for conducting a walk audit in your community. Please [contact your Safe Routes to School Coordinator](#) to schedule a Walk Audit.

Before the Walk Audit

1. **Identify the school walk zone** (typically ½ mile or a 10-minute walk to/from school) **and/or the bike zone** (typically 2 miles or a 10–15-minute ride to/from school). Identify key routes, intersections and Park, Walk & Roll locations to focus on during the audit.
2. **Meet with the school Principal** and Safe Routes champions to determine the goals of the Walk Audit (identifying obstacles, finding Walking School Bus Routes, etc.), discuss the school’s successes and challenges, and learn where students live.
3. **Share meeting details** (date, time, and meeting location) with key participants. If desired, share a map of the area identifying the walk/bike zone and key routes/locations and the Walk Audit Checklist.

During the Walk Audit

1. **Conduct introductions:** have all participants give their name, organization, and how they’re involved in bicycle, pedestrian, or SRTS issues.
2. **Provide an overview of the walk audit:** the group will observe together or disperse to pre-determined locations, then reconvene as a group (specify the location) to report back their observations.
3. **Designate a scribe** to consolidate notes and a **photographer** to take pictures.¹
4. Discuss key observations:
 - What is it like for a student to cross a street from their perspective?
 - What is it like for a driver to be able to see this student cross a street?
 - Where have you felt unsafe when walking or biking in the area? Where have you experienced issues?
 - What problem behaviors do you see from drivers, people walking, or people biking?
5. **Provide participants with the Walk Audit Checklist, Sample School Area Signs, and the Walk Audit Observations sheet on the following pages.** Consider sending these in advance for participants to prepare for the audit. Ask them to focus their observations on existing barriers to walking/biking and on observed behaviors. They should note issues related to driving only in the context of how they affect walking/biking (for example if drivers fail to yield to people walking).
6. **Walk the route** and ask participants to observe and report what they see, then gather for a debrief.
7. **Record the following information:**
 - Walk audit date, day of the week, and time
 - Attendees (name, organization, email)
 - Weather
 - Arrival and dismissal schedule/timing
 - Crossing guard locations and are they paid or volunteers?
 - Bike parking locations, types, and number of racks

After the Walk Audit

Prompts for Discussion with Participants:

- What is the most uncomfortable location that you observed? What about it made you feel unsafe?
- What is the most unpleasant element of the route you observed? What about it made it unpleasant?
- What changes would you make to help improve access for people walking, biking and rolling? What is the most important short-term change? What about the best long-term change?
- Could some of the issues you observed be addressed through education or encouragement, rather than infrastructure changes?
- What improvements would you make for individuals with mobility impairments?

¹ If the Walk Audit is being conducted by a MA Safe Routes to School representative, they will be taking the notes and the photos.

Walk Audit Checklist

A Walk/Bike Audit examines student arrival/dismissal routes for safety within school neighborhoods. This process encourages an open dialogue between stakeholders to build consensus on recommendations. This list describes what to observe during the audit.

Inventory specific locations on your **Walk Audit Observations** map (page 5) and record the driver, bicyclist, and pedestrian behavior. Mark the checkbox for those that you have addressed and to get a photograph of each observation.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Conditions

- Sidewalks – continuity/gaps, width, condition, tripping hazards, and obstructions (utility/light poles, signs, and vegetation)
- School area signs and pavement markings (see pages 3-4) – presence, placement, type, visibility/obstruction, and condition
- Paths – formal or informal, surface material
- Bike lanes – continuity, width, presence of on-street parking
- Bicycle parking – presence, location, visibility, degree of security, and utilization
- Visibility - pedestrian lighting, line of sight obstacles (parked cars, vegetation, signs and poles)
- Environmental – plants obstructing the sidewalk or signs, drainage issues, snow placement, solar glare, lighting, adequate shade, beehives
- Personal safety – areas with abandoned buildings, trash, unleashed dogs, and known (or suspected) crime, “Beware of Dog” signs
- Access to a bike path/share path
- Type of bike lane (sharrow, protected, shared use path)

Street Crossing Conditions

- Marked crosswalks (see page 4) – condition, type, landings, visibility, do they connect to sidewalks, and are they properly signed
- Curb ramps – presence at corners, ADA compliant design (tactile pads, landings)
- Sight lines – can drivers see the crosswalk or are curves or hills obstructing the view
- Traffic signals – pedestrian signals, pushbutton location and reach distance, countdown feature, and sufficient crossing time
- Crossing guards – placement, behavior, where they park

Traffic Circulation and Behavior

- Walking – crossing locations, jaywalking (think about why students are crossing outside of designated crosswalks, if they are), sidewalk crowding, and duration of peak activity
- Bicycling – on-street and sidewalk riding, wrong-way riding, helmet use
- Driving – speeding, heavy turning movements, yielding to pedestrians and bicyclists at crossings, blocking the intersection
- Vehicular drop-off / pick-up – vehicular progression, student exiting and entering behavior, illegal and double parking, illegal movements (including U-turns), and duration of peak activity


Notes

Sample School Area Signs

Figure 7B-1. School Area Signs

Use SCHOOL ZONE AHEAD plaque (shown below)

School Advance Crossing Assembly



S1-1

~~AHEAD~~ W16-5P

OR

200 FT W16-2aP

OR

200 FEET W16-2P


OR

← W16-5P (optional)


OR

↙ W16-6P (optional)

School Crossing Assembly




S1-1



W16-7P

School Zone Sign



S1-1

ALL YEAR S4-7P (optional)

SCHOOL S4-3P (optional)


OR

← W16-5P (optional)


OR

↙ W16-6P (optional)


School Speed Limit Assembly



S4-3P




R2-1




S4-1P

OR




S4-2P

OR




S4-4P

OR



S4-1P



S4-6P



S3-1




S3-2




S4-5



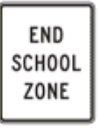
S4-5a




S5-1




R2-6P (optional)




S5-2



S5-3




R2-10




R2-11


B - At the school crossing




R1-6




R1-6a




R1-6b




R1-6c




S1-1



W16-7P*



MA-S4-5bP School Zone Ahead



MA-R2-8 Safety Zone Speed Limit 20

Sources:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdot-standard-sign-book/download> and https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/2009/part7/part7_toc.htm

Sample School Area Pavement Markings

Figure 3B-19. Examples of Crosswalk Markings

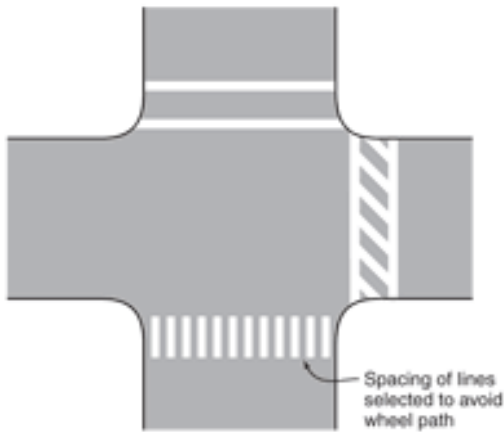
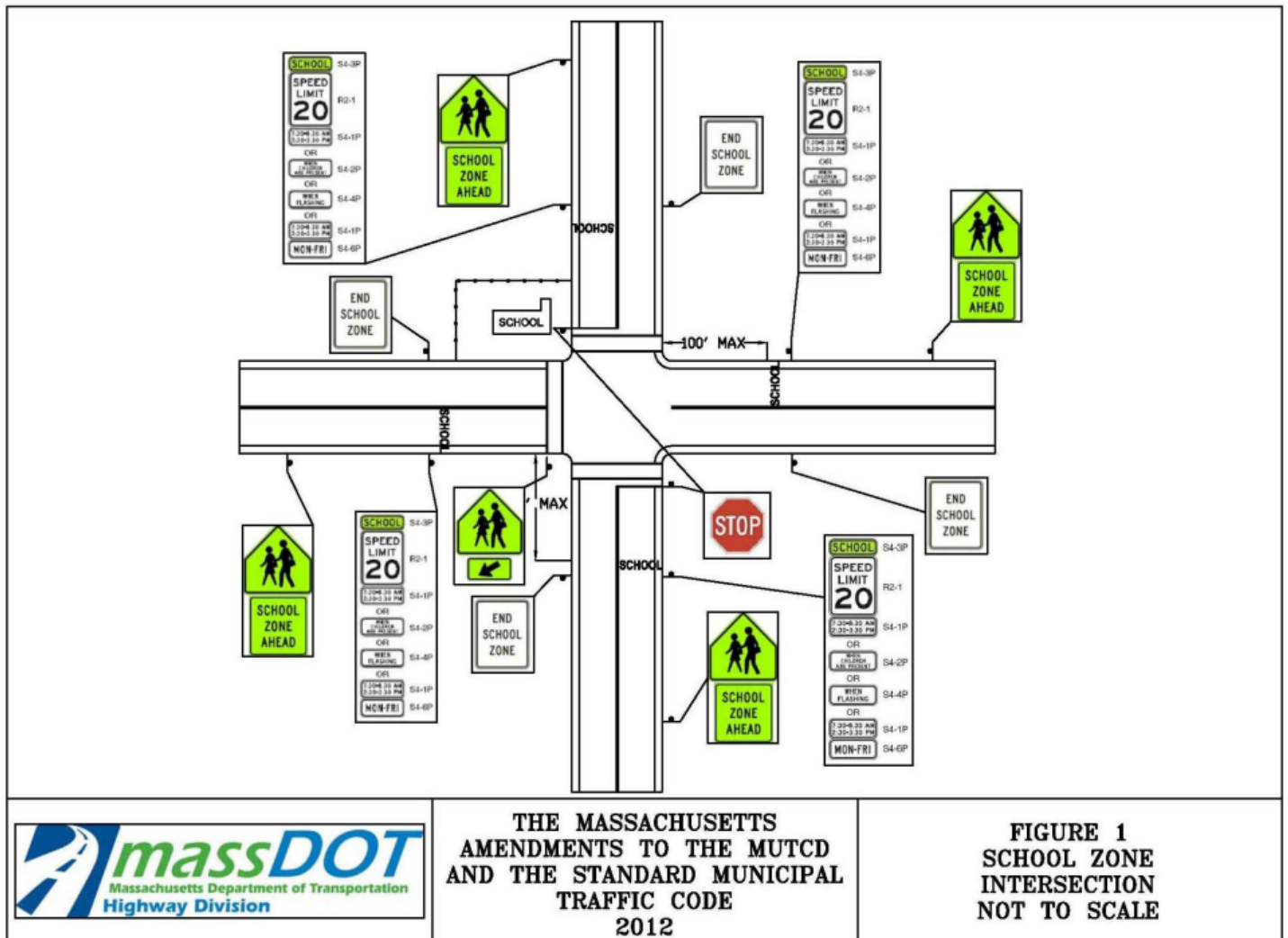


Figure 7C-1. Two-Lane Pavement Marking of "SCHOOL"



Sample Diagram of School Zone Intersection Signage and Markings



Walk Audit Observations

Date/Time:		Municipality:	
School Name:		Instructions: Please indicate on the map where you have made observations of walking/bicycling conditions. This process can be simplified by using the codes below for common observations or concerns.	

School Zones

- Z-1 Advanced signs indicating an approaching school zone
- Z-2 School zone speed limit sign
- Z-3 Existing signage faded, damaged or outdated
- Z-4 Signage is not visible / obstructed
- Z-5 Bus Loading Area
- Z-6 Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up
- Z-7 Crossing Guard
- Z-8 Student Safety Patrol
- Z-0 Other school zone concerns

Intersections

- I-1 No curb ramp at the corner
- I-2 Diagonal curb ramp
- I-3 Straight curb ramp
- I-4 Curb ramp difficult for wheelchair user
- I-5 Crosswalk painted
- I-6 Crosswalk not painted
- I-7 Visibility issues
- I-0 Other intersection concerns

General Traffic Concerns

- A-1 High traffic volume
- A-2 High traffic speed
- A-3 Drivers not yielding for crossing guard
- A-4 Drivers not yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks
- A-5 Drivers rolling thru stop signs
- A-0 Other general traffic concerns

Traffic Signals

- T-1 Separate walk signals
- T-2 Push button for walk signal
- T-3 Problems knowing when it was your turn to cross the street
- T-4 Walk signal timing issues
- T-5 Turning drivers not yielding to walkers
- T-6 Drivers turning right on red not yielding to walkers
- T-7 Problems with drivers running light
- T-0 Other traffic signal concerns

Sidewalk

- S-1 No Sidewalk
- S-2 Sidewalk too close to street
- S-3 Sidewalk cracked/broken making walking/rolling difficult
- S-4 Narrow sidewalk making walking/rolling difficult
- S-5 Visibility at driveways obstructed
- S-6 Drivers going in or out of driveways did not yield
- S-7 Building obstructing visibility at intersections
- S-0 Other sidewalk concerns

Other Concerns

- C-1 Concern about dogs or other animals
- C-2 Stranger danger concern
- C-3 Steep or long hills
- C-4 Snow removal concerns
- C-5 Other snow/winter weather related concerns
- C-0 Other concerns

