

# Pedestrian Safety During National Distracted Driver Awareness Month

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At some point in the day, we are all pedestrians. The risk of distracted driving to pedestrian safety has never been greater. In 2018, pedestrian deaths in traffic crashes increased by 3% to 6,283 – the most deaths since 1990. Strikingly, more than two-thirds of pedestrians killed in traffic crashes were males in 2017. The highest percentage of pedestrian fatalities occur between 6:00 p.m. and 8:59 p.m., when visibility is lowest and pedestrian traffic may be highest.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) encourages pedestrians to take the following steps while walking near a roadway:

1. Be predictable. Follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
2. Walk on sidewalks whenever they are available.
3. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible.
4. Keep alert at all times; **don't be distracted by electronic devices** that take your eyes (and ears) off the road.
5. Whenever possible, cross streets at crosswalks or intersections, where drivers expect pedestrians. Look for cars in all directions, including those turning left or right.
6. If a crosswalk or intersection is not available, locate a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic. Wait for a gap in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely; continue watching for traffic as you cross.
7. Never assume a driver sees you. Make eye contact with drivers as they approach to make sure you are seen.
8. Be visible at all times. Wear bright clothing during the day and wear reflective materials or use a flashlight at night.
9. Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots.
10. Avoid alcohol and drugs when walking; they impair your abilities and your judgment.

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY DURING NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVER AWARENESS MONTH

The NHTSA also offers the following safety tips for drivers to remain vigilant for pedestrians:

1. Look out for pedestrians everywhere, at all times. Safety is a shared responsibility.
2. Use extra caution when driving in hard-to-see conditions, such as nighttime or bad weather.
3. Slow down and be prepared to stop when turning or otherwise entering a crosswalk.
4. Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and stop well back from the cross-walk to give other vehicles an opportunity to see the crossing pedestrians so they can stop too.
5. Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. There may be people crossing that you can't see.
6. Never drive under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
7. Follow the speed limit, especially around people on the street.
8. Follow slower speed limits in school zones and in neighborhoods where children are present.
9. Be extra cautious when backing up—pedestrians can move into your path.

The risks associated with walking alongside a roadway are significantly increased if electronic devices are used by the pedestrian or driver. For a pedestrian, this risk is increased by headphones that prevent hearing approaching vehicles, as well as reading or sending text messages that may distract focus away from safety.

As the school semester concludes and folks continue to seek exercise outside, we are likely to encounter more pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists in our neighborhoods and along our roadways. From our family at Bailey Glasser to yours, please avoid all distractions while operating your vehicle. Be vigilant and be safe this summer while using our roadways.

### **Attorneys**

Travis A. Prince

### **Practice Areas**

Catastrophic Personal Injury