



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2019

Joyce Blaschke (831) 420-5844, jblaschke@cityofsantacruz.com

Think Two Steps Ahead: September is Pedestrian Safety Month

Santa Cruz, Calif. – Santa Cruz Police Department is working with law enforcement agencies across the state to promote safe behaviors that allow drivers and those on foot to get where they need to go safely.

September is Pedestrian Safety Month, and California continues to see more and more pedestrians getting injured or killed on roads. In 2016, 867 pedestrians were killed and more than 14,000 injured in California alone. A [report](#) released earlier this year by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) projected that more than 6,200 pedestrians were killed in the United States last year, the highest number since 1990. So far this year, 1 pedestrian has been killed and 9 injured in crashes in the City of Santa Cruz.

In order to reduce the number of collisions involving pedestrians, Santa Cruz Police Department will have additional officers on patrol throughout the month of September specifically focused on drivers and pedestrians who violate traffic laws that increase the risk of crashes. These violations include speeding, driving or walking distracted and/or impaired, failing to stop for signs and signals, and not yielding to drivers/pedestrians who have the right of way.

“Someone crossing the street should not have to fear for one’s life, but they should also be mindful that drivers are going places too,” Santa Cruz Police, Sergeant, Scott Garner said. “It goes both ways.”

Despite advancements in vehicle technology that increase the chance of survival for drivers and passengers in crashes, pedestrians face the same amount of risk of getting seriously injured or killed when struck by a vehicle.

“Sooner or later, a driver has to get out of their car and walk, so we are all pedestrians at some point,” Sergeant Garner said.

“Think about how you would want a driver to act when you are walking, and vice versa. Keep that in mind and follow the rules of the road so we can all arrive where we’re headed safely, regardless of how we get there.”

Santa Cruz Police Department offers steps drivers and pedestrians can take to keep everyone safe:

For Pedestrians

- Look left-right-left before crossing the street. Watch for cars turning and obey traffic signals.
- Only cross the street in marked crosswalks, preferably crosswalks at stop signs or signals.
- Avoid distractions. Stay off the phone while walking.
- Make eye contact with drivers. Don’t assume drivers can see you.
- Be seen. Wear bright clothing during the day and use a flashlight at night.

- Always walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the shoulder, facing traffic and as far away from cars as possible.
- Do not walk near traffic after drinking or using drugs that affect judgment and coordination.

For Drivers

- Follow the speed limit. The higher the speed, the longer it takes to stop.
- Never drive distracted or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Look out for people walking, especially at night and in poorly lit areas.
- Pedestrians have the right of way at crosswalks even if they are not at a stop sign or signal. Prepare to stop when a pedestrian enters a crosswalk.
- Avoid blocking the crosswalk when attempting to make a right-hand turn.
- Be careful backing up and leaving parking spaces in shopping centers with heavy foot traffic.

Funding for pedestrian safety enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

###