



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Go Safely, California: September is Pedestrian Safety Month

Santa Cruz, Calif. – September is Pedestrian Safety Month and Santa Cruz Police Department will join law enforcement agencies across the state to educate the public on how to be safe when walking or driving.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfire emergencies have had an impact on Californians, the safety of pedestrians remains a cause for concern.

Since 2009, the number of pedestrians killed or injured on California roads has increased dramatically, accounting for nearly 25% of all roadway deaths. A report released earlier this year by the [Governors Highway Association \(GHSA\)](#) projected that pedestrian deaths in 2019 reached the highest point in more than 30 years.

“More people are out walking, exercising and doing what they can to spend a little time outdoors after spending so much time inside staying at home,” Santa Cruz Police Department Sergeant Wes Morey said. “Looking out for one another is the least we can do during these difficult times.”

For the safety of everyone walking or driving, Santa Cruz Police Department will have additional officers on patrol throughout the month of September specifically looking for violations made by drivers and pedestrians that make roads unsafe.

These violations include speeding, illegal turns, failure to yield, not stopping for signs or signals, and pedestrians who do not cross in marked crosswalks or designated crossing areas.

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

Pedestrians

- Ditch the distractions. Keep your eyes up and phones down, especially when crossing the street.
- Always use marked crosswalks, preferably at stop signs or signals.

- Make eye contact and nod or wave at drivers. A quick nod or wave is an easy way to let a driver know you see them, and they see you.
- Be extra careful crossing streets or entering crosswalks at night when it is harder to see. Get in the habit of walking with a flashlight or wearing a reflective vest so it is easier for drivers to spot you.
- If you need to briefly walk into the street to maintain social distancing on sidewalks, remember to look both ways for cars.

Drivers

- Slow down on busy streets and at intersections.
- Avoid distractions, which includes cell phones, eating, using in-dash touch screens, or turning to talk to passengers.
- Be extra careful approaching crosswalks. Be prepared to stop for pedestrians. Stop prior to the crosswalk.
- Try to avoid blocking the crosswalk when making a right-hand turn.
- Have your headlights on and slow down at night when pedestrians are difficult to see.

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