

18. Pedestrian crossing safety

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Pedestrian crossings provide a safe place for people to get from one side of the road to the other.

Crossings are either 'controlled' or 'uncontrolled'. At controlled crossings, both the drivers and pedestrians are given instructions, either by traffic lights or crossing wardens (for example, 'lollipop ladies'). At uncontrolled crossings pedestrians have to decide for themselves when it is safe to cross, relying on the courtesy and consideration of drivers.

When approaching a pedestrian crossing you must always be on the lookout for pedestrians, especially children and elderly people. Be prepared to slow down and stop if there are pedestrians about. When pedestrians are on the crossing, they always have priority.

Don't instruct pedestrians to cross - allow them to make their own decisions. By waving to a pedestrian you could be inadvertently exposing them to a danger that you have not seen; for example, there may be another vehicle overtaking illegally. The pedestrian normally has a better all round view of the traffic from the footpath than you have from the driving seat.

Zebra crossings are marked by Belisha beacons - black and white poles with an amber flashing globe at the top. You must always be on the look-out for people near the crossing and be prepared to stop to allow them to cross. On the approach to, and after, the crossing there are zig-zag white lines painted on the road surface. It's dangerous and illegal to park or overtake within these lines.

The sequence of pedestrian traffic lights sometimes differs from regular traffic lights; at pelican crossings there is a flashing amber light. When the flashing amber light shows you may proceed if there are no pedestrians on the crossing. (Note: you must stop, as usual, at the steady amber light that shows before red.) Watch out for pedestrians near the crossing who may have pressed the button to activate the lights; use your hazard routine and be prepared to stop.

School crossings often have flashing amber lights under a 'children crossing' sign; these indicate that there is a school crossing patrol ahead. The crossing may be manned by a school warden, traffic warden or by a police officer. You must stop when you are instructed to do so. Wait until all the children have crossed and the warden is back on the footpath before you move off.



Lesson Notes:

