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## **WALKING SAFELY TIPS**

Walking is a great way to travel and in El Cerrito there is much to enjoy. However, before you take a walk, remember that safety is a shared responsibility for all road users, including drivers and pedestrians. We hope the information below will help you become more street smart, and therefore a safer and more responsible pedestrian. If you are a parent, or guardian, please review the information also with the children in your life.

As a pedestrian you have the right to cross at the intersection of any two streets, (unless there are signs prohibiting crossing) or any other marked crossing. State law indicates that drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians crossing the street in a marked or unmarked crosswalk at intersections or a marked crosswalk at a mid-block location. However, a pedestrian must also take due care for his or her own safety. Pedestrians cannot suddenly enter the street and walk or run in the path of a moving vehicle, especially when entering the street will cause an immediate hazard. Also, while in the street, pedestrians cannot unnecessarily obstruct traffic. Below are some helpful tips that can make walking in El Cerrito more safe and enjoyable.

### **SEE**

- Look left, right, and left again before stepping into the road even at crosswalks controlled by traffic signals.
- At uncontrolled crosswalks, wait for gaps in traffic. (An uncontrolled crosswalk is one that does not have a traffic signal or stop sign to control traffic movements.)
- Step out slowly and carefully to see vehicles and make sure drivers see you. Be especially cautious if obstacles (bushes, parked cars, etc.) block your view of approaching traffic.
- Watch for turning vehicles especially for vehicles making a “right on red”; make sure the driver sees you and will stop for you.
- Look across ALL lanes of traffic you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. A driver yielding in the near lane may prevent a driver in the next lane from seeing you.

### **BE SEEN**

- Make eye contact with drivers, don't just look at the vehicle. Give drivers a signal, such as a wave, to make sure they see you. Keep looking both ways until you have safely crossed the street.
- During the day, wear bright-colored clothing when you walk.
- At night or in bad weather, wear light colors or reflective material and carry a light.
- Cross in a well-lit area at night.

## **BE SMART**

- Always walk on the sidewalk. If there isn't a sidewalk, walk on the left side of the road facing traffic. Walk as far away from the street as possible.
- Avoid wearing headphones. Keep the volume down on your iPod or other electronic devices so you don't drown out your environment.
- Hang up your cell phone. Chatting or texting on a cell phone while you walk is dangerous. You are distracted and are less likely to recognize traffic danger.
- Be alert to engine noise or lights on cars that are backing out of parking spaces and driveways.
- Stay sober; walking while impaired increases your chance of being struck.

## **UNDERSTAND PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS**

- Press the pedestrian button when one is available.
- If the signal shows a steady "walk" or symbol of a person walking, it is okay to cross, but watch for turning cars. This is similar to a green light for vehicles.
- If the signal shows a flashing "Don't Walk" or a flashing hand symbol, don't start crossing. However, finish crossing if you are already crossing the street. This is similar to a yellow light for vehicles. If you reach a flashing hand symbol before crossing the street, press the pedestrian button (if one is available) and wait for the next cycle of pedestrian signals.
- Some locations have a flashing hand with a timer that counts down the seconds remaining for you to cross the intersection safely. When the seconds run out, a steady hand will come on.
- If the signal shows a steady "Don't Walk" or a steady hand, don't start crossing. This is like a red light for vehicles.