

MARKED PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS



What Are the Official Guidelines?

The City of Lewisville follows State policies and the Texas Transportation Code. The Code requires the City to follow the national guidelines outlined in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) for traffic signs, pavement markings, and traffic signals. The MUTCD covers all aspects of the warrants, placement, installation, and maintenance of traffic control devices.

All traffic control devices must:

- **Fulfill a need;**
- **Command attention;**
- **Convey a clear, simple meaning;**
- **Command respect of road users;**
- **Give adequate time for proper response.**

The MUTCD emphasizes *uniformity* of traffic control devices. A uniform device conforms to the dimension, color, wording, and graphics specified in the MUTCD and conveys the same meaning at all times no matter if the device is placed in Texas or Maine. Consistent use of traffic control devices protects the clarity of the message for the intended application. When public safety and human lives are at stake, it is important to present a clear message to the driver using a standard and consistent set of traffic control devices.

What is a Crosswalk?

The Texas Transportation Code defines crosswalks as being either *marked* or *unmarked*. There is no requirement to mark every pedestrian crossing as the majority of pedestrian crossings are not marked. At any crosswalk, drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians that are within the crosswalk. Crosswalks are marked with painted lines to encourage pedestrians to use a particular crossing, not to improve the driver's perception of the crossing. Studies on the relative safety of crosswalks support minimal installation of marked crosswalks.

The City of San Diego, California studied 400 marked and unmarked crosswalks and found some surprising results. Although two and a half times as many people used the marked crosswalks, six times as many accidents occurred in the marked crosswalks. A pedestrian study in Long Beach, reported eight times as many accidents in the marked crosswalks compared to unmarked crosswalks. Similar studies in other cities confirm these results.

What Causes Accidents at Marked Crosswalks?

Research suggests that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security. The visibility of a marked crosswalk to a driver is very small compared to the visibility of the crosswalk to the pedestrian. Pedestrians often step off the curb into the crosswalk expecting drivers of the approaching vehicles to stop. However, drivers frequently fail to stop, resulting in an accident. At all crosswalks, both marked and unmarked, it is the pedestrian's responsibility to be cautious and alert before starting to cross the street.

At mid-block crosswalks on multi-lane roadways, another cause of accidents involves the driver of a vehicle in the lane nearest to the curb stopping for a pedestrian that is waiting to cross or is already in the crosswalk. The driver of a second vehicle traveling in the lane next to the stopped vehicle tries to pass the stopped vehicle and hits the pedestrian, even though it is illegal for drivers to pass a stopped vehicle at a crosswalk. Pedestrians should be very cautious when in a crosswalk, especially when their visibility is limited by vehicles already stopped in the crosswalk as illustrated below:

Where are Crosswalks Normally Placed?

Crosswalks are marked at intersections where there is substantial conflict between vehicle and pedestrian movements, where a significant number of pedestrians occur, where pedestrians do not recognize the proper place to cross the street, and where traffic movements are controlled. Such locations are approved school crossings or signalized and four-way stop intersections.

These examples follow a philosophy of marking crosswalks as a form of encouragement. We encourage school children to use crossings which are normally being monitored and avoid prohibited mid-block crossings. The City normally does not mark crosswalks at mid-block locations that are not controlled by stop signs or traffic signals. However, there are exceptions where school crossings and bike trails result in a high concentration of pedestrians.

If you have questions or concerns regarding traffic, please call the City Traffic Engineering Section at 972.219.3703.

Updated 1/2023.