

MARKED CROSSWALKS

WHAT ARE THE OFFICIAL GUIDELINES?

The City of Vista follows State policies and the California Vehicle Code (CVC). The CVC requires the City to follow the guidelines outlined in the State of California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Traffic Control Devices include traffic signals, traffic signs, and traffic striping and pavement markings. The California MUTCD covers all aspects of the placement, construction and maintenance of every form of approved traffic control device. The guidelines prescribe five basic requirements for all devices. The devices must:

- **Fulfill a need**
- **Command attention**
- **Convey a clear and simple meaning**
- **Command respect from road users**
- **Give adequate time for proper response**

The California MUTCD emphasizes uniformity of traffic control devices. A uniform device conforms to the regulations for dimensions, color, wording and graphics. The standard device should convey the same meaning at all times. Consistent use of traffic control devices protects the clarity of their messages. As stated in the California MUTCD, uniformity must also mean treating similar situations in the same way.

WHAT IS A CROSSWALK?

Crosswalks are either marked or unmarked. The CVC defines a crosswalk as the portion of a roadway at an intersection, which is an extension of the curb and property lines of the intersecting street or is any other portion of a roadway that is

marked as a pedestrian crossing location by painted lines. A marked crosswalk is any crosswalk that is delineated by white or yellow painted markings placed on the pavement. All other crosswalk locations are therefore considered unmarked.

HOW ARE CROSSWALKS USED?

At any crosswalk (marked or unmarked) drivers must yield right-of-way to pedestrians. Crosswalks are marked mainly to encourage pedestrians to use a particular crossing. Studies conducted on the relative safety of crosswalks support the use of unmarked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections.

The City of San Diego studied intersections having both marked and unmarked crosswalks. The results were surprising. Although 2 ½ times as many people used the marked crosswalks, six times as many accidents occurred in the marked crosswalks compared to the unmarked crosswalks. A pedestrian safety study conducted in Long Beach reported eight times as many accidents in marked crosswalks compared to unmarked crosswalks. Similar studies in other cities have reaffirmed these results.

WHAT CAUSES ACCIDENTS AT MARKED CROSSWALKS?

Research suggests that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security. Pedestrians often step off the curb into the crosswalk expecting motorists approaching the crosswalk to stop. As motorists frequently fail to stop, accidents occur.

At mid-block crosswalks on multi-lane roadways, another common cause of pedestrian accidents is the motorist in the lane nearest to the curb

stopping for a pedestrian waiting to cross or already in the crosswalk. Even though it is illegal for drivers to pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk, the motorist in the lane adjacent to the stopped vehicle may continue to drive forward and hit the pedestrian.

At all crosswalks, both marked and unmarked, it is the pedestrian's responsibility to be cautious and alert before starting to cross the street.



WHERE ARE CROSSWALKS NORMALLY MARKED?

Crosswalks are marked at intersections where there is a likelihood of substantial conflict between vehicle and pedestrian movements, where significant pedestrian concentrations occur, where pedestrians may not otherwise recognize the proper place to cross, and where traffic movements are controlled. Examples of locations are:

- **Approved school crossings**

- **Signalized and multi-way stop intersections where there is significant pedestrian traffic and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles can be controlled.**

These examples follow the philosophy of marking crosswalks as a form of encouragement. In the first case, we are encouraging school children to use a crossing that is controlled either by an adult crossing guard or traffic control device. In the second case, we are encouraging all pedestrians to cross at controlled intersections where the likelihood of conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians can be minimized by traffic control devices.

It is the City of Vista's policy not to paint crosswalks at mid-block locations or intersections where traffic is not controlled by stop signs or traffic signals except as recommended on the "suggested route to school" map (refer to following section). Painted crosswalks should only be used where it is necessary to direct pedestrians along the safest route.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL "SCHOOL" CROSSWALKS?

When a marked crosswalk has been established adjacent to a school building or school grounds, it shall be painted yellow. Other established marked crosswalks may be painted yellow if the nearest point of the crosswalk is not more than 600 feet from a school building or grounds.

Crosswalks should be marked at all intersections on the "suggested route to school." Crosswalks should also be marked where there is a potential for conflicts between vehicles and students (while crossing), where students are permitted to cross between intersections. The best safety measure

for school age children is to educate them on how and where to safely cross the street.



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