



Walking

Tips on Using Transportation
Options in Florida



[SafeMobilityFL.com](https://www.SafeMobilityFL.com)

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Walking is a popular physical activity for all ages and can be used as a transportation option to help maintain independence as you age.

Whether you are on foot or use a wheelchair or walker, walking is a great way to travel, especially for shorter distances.

In this booklet, we share the benefits of walking and tips for walking safely and proactively. You will also learn about different markings, signs, and signals, plus some key Florida laws to help improve your safety while walking.

Walking as a Transportation Option



Walking is not just for recreation—it can also be a practical part of your daily transportation routine. The questions and tips below can help you use walking as a transportation option to get around your community.

- > Do you already walk for exercise? Are there parks, restaurants, or shopping centers within a comfortable walking distance from your home?
 - Try to combine walking for exercise with running an errand, such as picking up a prescription, having lunch, or doing light grocery shopping.

- > Is there a bus stop within walking distance of where you live and the places you need to go?
 - Walking can be used in combination with other modes, such as driving a car, using public transportation, or a Transportation Network Company, like Uber or Lyft.
 - Even if you live in an area that's not well-suited for walking, there are ways to incorporate walking in your daily routine. For example, when driving your car to run errands, park in a central location and walk to your destinations.
- > Do you feel comfortable while walking in your community?
 - As you walk, notice features that influence your comfort and safety—like lighting, sidewalks, or crosswalks. Identifying these issues can help you advocate for improvements through neighborhood meetings or conversations with local public representatives.

The information in this booklet provides guidance on how you can feel more comfortable using walking as a mode of transportation.



QUICK TIP

Before you begin a walking routine, it is a good idea to talk with a healthcare provider about any health concerns that could limit or prevent you from walking.

Benefits of Walking



Not only can walking get you where you need and want to go, but it may also provide an enjoyable way to stay active, spend quality time with others, and stay involved in your community.

Engaging in regular physical activity, such as walking, can make other activities, like gardening, shopping, and household chores, easier. While results may vary, walking can be an ideal, low-impact exercise that may improve your physical and mental well-being.

Walking briskly



Lifestyle Benefits

Social isolation and loneliness can create a greater risk for potential health problems. Spending time outdoors can not only improve your health but can also help you connect with your neighbors and community.



QUICK TIP

A short daily walk strengthens your balance and coordination, which can lower your risk of falling.

Invite a friend, family member, or neighbor to walk with you. Walking with a buddy can help you feel safer, stay motivated, and enjoy time talking together. Do you want to meet new people with similar goals? Look for a local walking group—or consider starting one in your community.

To get started, here are a few tips to help find a walking group or club in your area:

- > Ask your co-workers, neighbors, family, and friends.
- > Go to your local community or recreation center, such as a YMCA.
- > Check online to find local walking groups.

If no groups exist in your community, here are tips on how to start an organized walking group:

- > Ask your local senior or community center, library, neighborhood association, or place of worship if they want to help organize a group.

- > Start a conversation or use email or social media to connect with others and spread the word about joining your walking group.
- > Meet in a safe and public place. Consider the weather, convenience, difficulty level, and accessibility when choosing a location.
- > Map your walking route in advance and make sure there is room for a group to walk together. Streets with less traffic may help you feel more comfortable.

Walking is a great way to stay active, connect with your community, and improve your overall well-being while getting around. Following the tips and information in this booklet can make walking a safe and enjoyable part of your daily routine.



Safe Walking Tips



Many of us will experience natural physical changes with age, which can affect how safe and comfortable we feel while walking. Although the following information on walking safely is relevant for pedestrians of all ages, it is especially important for older adults. Here are some useful tips and ideas for being safe while walking.

FACT

If there is no sidewalk, walk along the grassy shoulder facing traffic, and maintain a safe distance from the travel lane.

| *Section 316.130, Florida Statutes.*



Get Ready to Walk

Whether you are walking a short or long distance, always be prepared and plan ahead.

- > Dress to be visible. Wear light-colored clothing and reflective material, especially at night. For extra visibility, carry a flashlight or wear a headlamp.
- > When walking alone, tell a friend or family member where you're going and when you expect to return.
- > Carry identification and a cell phone.
- > Plan your route along streets and sidewalks where you feel safe and comfortable walking.
- > Use walking devices such as canes or walkers, if needed. Make sure they are in good condition and ready for outdoor use.
- > In warmer weather, wear lightweight clothing, a hat, and protect your skin with sunscreen.
- > Wear appropriate footwear. Check the weather forecast ahead of time!
- > Stay hydrated. Bring a water bottle and a snack, especially when taking longer walks.



QUICK TIP

You can use online tools such as Google Maps to map and measure your walking route.

Walk Proactively

While we cannot control what others do on the road, we can each take steps to help reduce risks when sharing the road. Proactive walking involves identifying high-risk situations and making informed decisions to stay safe.

When crossing the street:

- > Look left, look right, and look left again before entering the roadway.
- > Make eye contact with oncoming drivers and bicyclists; do not assume that they will stop for you.
- > Keep watching traffic as you cross, even after you start walking.
- > At signalized intersections, only enter the marked crosswalk when you have a WALK signal.
- > Pay close attention to drivers who may be turning, especially when crossing at intersections, driveways, or shopping centers.
- > When crossing multiple lanes, stop after passing the first lane and confirm there isn't an oncoming car before proceeding. Verify that drivers see you and come to a complete stop before continuing.



QUICK TIP

Always STOP and check for traffic before entering the roadway.

When walking in a parking lot:

- > Use the main aisles, sidewalks, and marked crosswalks. If possible, avoid walking directly behind or between parked cars.
- > Always be aware of your surroundings and watch for moving vehicles in all directions.
- > Watch for vehicles backing out of parking spaces.
- > Listen for engine noise and watch for brake lights as some vehicles make less noise than others.



QUICK TIP

Never assume a driver sees you.
They may not see you even if you see them.

Avoid Distractions

Distracted walking can be just as dangerous as distracted driving.

- > Keep your head up and avoid looking down at your cell phone while you walk.
- > Do not multitask; your attention should be focused on staying alert to your surroundings.
- > Pay extra attention to uneven surfaces, curbs, and other potential tripping hazards.
- > Remember, alcohol and some medications can impair your judgement and reflexes.

Pedestrian Markings, Signs, & Signals



This section discusses different pavement markings, signs, and signals that you see on the roadway when you are walking, driving, and biking. These signs, signals, and markings can be found on local and state roads. They are designed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration to improve pedestrian safety.

As a pedestrian, you are more exposed and less protected than other people using the roadway. Never assume you are fully protected, even if you have the right-of-way or are using these devices. Stay alert at all times and follow the safety tips in this booklet.

FACT

A pedestrian is any person afoot.
| *Section 316.003, Florida Statutes.*



Drivers and bicyclists are also required to obey the traffic control devices in this section. When approaching these devices on the roadway, they should always:

- > Slow down.
- > Scan the roadway and look for a pedestrian.
- > Stop in advance of the crosswalk or stop bar when a pedestrian is crossing.

Learning how to use these devices properly, not only as a pedestrian but also as a driver and bicyclist, can improve safety and reduce fatalities and serious injuries for pedestrians of all ages.



Marked and Unmarked Crosswalks



A **crosswalk** is the part of a roadway where pedestrians are meant to cross. **Marked Crosswalks** have parallel white lines and sometimes have cross bars to make them easier to see.

However, not all crosswalks are marked. In Florida, **every intersection has crosswalks**, even if you do not see markings on the pavement. An **Unmarked Crosswalk** extends from one sidewalk to the other at an intersection.

Crosswalks show pedestrians where it is best to cross the street and let drivers and bicyclists know where to expect people walking. This helps everyone slow down, pay attention, and share the road more safely.



QUICK TIP

Wait until vehicles come to a complete stop before stepping into a crosswalk. Even when the signal says it is safe to walk, look left and right to be sure traffic is clear.

When you are **walking** and **see** a crosswalk, **do** the following:

- > Activate and obey the pedestrian signal if one is present.
- > Wait for traffic to clear before crossing.
- > Cross the street at a steady pace.
- > Look left, look right, and look left again before entering the roadway.
- > Look over your shoulder for turning vehicles, especially at intersections and driveways.
- > Make eye contact with drivers and bicyclists when possible. Do not assume they will see you or stop.
- > Keep watching traffic as you cross, even after you start walking.



Midblock Pedestrian Crossing



A **Midblock Pedestrian Crossing** is a marked crosswalk located between two intersections. You may see these crossings on longer blocks where intersections are far apart. Some of these crossings include signals or flashing beacons to alert drivers.

These crossings can provide a safer, more convenient place to cross the street when an intersection is not nearby. They help drivers and bicyclists know where to expect people walking and encourage them to slow down and stop.



QUICK TIP

Trees, shade, and parked vehicles can make it harder for drivers to see you. Step into a visible area and wait until traffic has stopped before crossing.

When you are **walking** and **see** a Midblock Pedestrian Crossing, **do** the following:

- > Walk to the marked crosswalk and position yourself on the sidewalk to look for traffic.
- > If there is a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon, press the button to activate it. Learn more about these later in this section.
- > Make eye contact with drivers and bicyclists when possible. Do not assume they will see you or stop.
- > Wait until drivers and bicyclists have stopped before stepping into the street.
- > Look left, look right, and look left again before entering the roadway.
- > Keep watching traffic as you cross, even after you start walking.
- > When crossing multiple lanes of traffic, pause in the median, if available, and **repeat the safety tips** above before continuing.



Pedestrian Crossing Sign



A **Pedestrian Crossing Sign** shows where a crosswalk is located on the roadway. You may see this sign near marked or unmarked crosswalks to alert drivers that people may be crossing.

These signs help drivers notice crosswalks and expect people walking. This increases awareness and can reduce the risk of crashes by encouraging drivers to slow down and stop when people are crossing.

When you are **walking** and **see** a Pedestrian Crossing Sign at a crosswalk, **do** the following:

- > Wait until traffic has stopped or is clear before entering the street.
- > Look left, look right, and look left again before entering the roadway.
- > Keep watching traffic as you cross, even after you start walking.

In-Roadway Pedestrian Crossing Sign



An **In-Roadway Pedestrian Crossing Sign** is designed to be placed in the center of the roadway or median, usually in advance of a midblock crosswalk. You may see it mounted on a flexible post or base, so it is visible to drivers and bicyclists approaching the crossing.

This sign is placed directly on the roadway to get drivers' attention. It reminds drivers that they are required to stop for pedestrians who are waiting to cross or already crossing.

Q: Why is this sign placed in the center of the roadway where drivers can hit it?

A: The placement of the In-Roadway Pedestrian Crossing sign in the roadway or median in advance of the crosswalk provides a visual warning to drivers to slow down and be prepared to stop for pedestrians.

Stop Here for Pedestrians Sign

The **Stop Here for Pedestrians Sign** is a regulatory sign placed at crosswalks. It is designed to remind drivers that they must stop for people entering or already in the crosswalk. Drivers can be ticketed if they do not stop for a pedestrian who is already crossing or stepping into the crosswalk.



The sign adds an extra level of awareness for drivers and supports safer crossings for people walking.



QUICK TIP

When you stop for a pedestrian, stay stopped. Moving too soon can put them at risk from vehicles in other lanes that may not have stopped.

When you are **driving** and **see** a Stop Here for Pedestrians Sign, **do** the following:

- > Stop at the stop line for pedestrians entering or already in the crosswalk.
- > Remain stopped until the pedestrian has finished crossing the road.
- > Be patient—pedestrians may walk more slowly or need extra time to cross safely.

Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians Sign

The **Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrian Sign** reminds drivers who are making a right or left turn that they must come to a complete stop for pedestrians before turning.



When you are **driving** and **see** a Turning Vehicle Stop for Pedestrians sign, **do** the following:

- > Before turning, look for pedestrians in the crosswalk, including those who may be stepping off the curb.
- > Come to a complete stop for pedestrians, even if traffic is moving behind you. Proceed only when the pedestrian has cleared the crosswalk.

FACT

Florida law requires drivers to stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk or stepping into one, especially when a pedestrian signal allows them to cross.

| *Section 316.130, Florida Statutes*



Pedestrian Countdown Signals

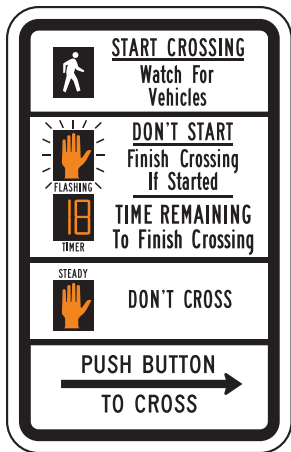


A **Pedestrian Countdown Signal** shows the time you have left to cross the roadway after the WALK period ends. The countdown begins when the WALK signal changes to a flashing Upraised Hand signal and counts down to zero. The time shown is based on the crossing distance and an average walking speed. Wider streets, such as a four-lane roadway, have longer countdown times than narrower streets.

Countdown signals help you judge whether you have enough time to cross safely. They can reduce stress, support better decision-making, and help you cross at a steady, comfortable pace.

When you are **walking** and **see** a Pedestrian Countdown Signal, **do** the following:

- > Press the call button and wait until the WALK signal appears before entering the crosswalk.



- > If the flashing Upraised Hand signal appears when you are in the crosswalk, safely finish crossing.
- > If the flashing Upraised Hand signal appears **before** you enter the crosswalk, stop and wait for the next WALK signal.
- > Do not cross the roadway when the Upraised Hand is steady.

Q: When do I enter the crosswalk?

A: Only enter the crosswalk when the WALK signal is shown.

Q: Why doesn't the pedestrian signal change as soon as I activate the call button?

A: After you activate the call button, the system is alerted that a pedestrian is present; however, the system may need to finish its cycle before showing the WALK signal.

Q: Sometimes the walk time is too short for me to finish crossing. What can I do?

A: Contact your local traffic engineering department to ask if timing adjustments can be made. If it is a state road, the Florida Department of Transportation can refer you to the proper contact.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon



A **Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)** is a type of signal that people walking can activate to stop traffic and cross busy roadways. A PHB signal has two red lights above one yellow light and stays dark until you push the button. When activated, the lights go through a yellow-to-red sequence, signaling drivers to slow down and come to a complete stop. You will then receive a WALK signal and may begin to cross the roadway.

PHBs improve safety by allowing pedestrians to stop traffic only when needed, rather than constantly stopping vehicles. This can make crossings easier and safer while keeping traffic flowing when no one is crossing.

When you are **walking** and **see** a PHB, **do** the following:

- > Push the call button to activate the signal.
- > Wait for the WALK signal before entering the crosswalk.
- > Look left, look right, and look left again before entering the roadway.
- > Make sure drivers and bicyclists come to a complete stop before you begin to cross.
- > Keep watching traffic as you cross, even after you start walking.



When you are **driving** and **see** a PHB, **do** the following:

- > Stop on red, just as you would at a regular traffic signal.
- > Do not block the crosswalk.
- > When the red lights are flashing, proceed only after pedestrians have completely cleared the crosswalk.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon



A **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)** uses two rectangular yellow lights that flash rapidly to warn drivers that someone is waiting to cross or is crossing. An RRFB is usually activated by pressing the button, and in some locations, it may also turn on automatically when a pedestrian is detected. RRFBs are used at **midblock pedestrian crossings** where extra driver attention is needed.

RRFBs make crossings safer by **getting drivers' attention** when they flash. The high-visibility, strobe-like warning lights remind drivers to slow down and prepare to stop for pedestrians. When used correctly, RRFBs can help reduce crashes between drivers and people walking—especially on busy or multi-lane roads.

When you are **walking** and **see** an RRFB, **do** the following:

- > Push the call button to activate the flashing lights.
- > Check that the lights are flashing before crossing.
- > Look left, right, and left again to make sure traffic is stopped before entering the crosswalk.
- > When crossing multiple lanes of traffic, pause in the median, if available, and **repeat the safety tips** above before continuing.

When you are **driving** and **see** an RRFB, **do** the following:

- > Slow down when you see the lights flashing.
- > Look ahead for pedestrians who may be waiting or crossing.
- > Stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- > Remain stopped until the pedestrian has **safely crossed all lanes of traffic**.

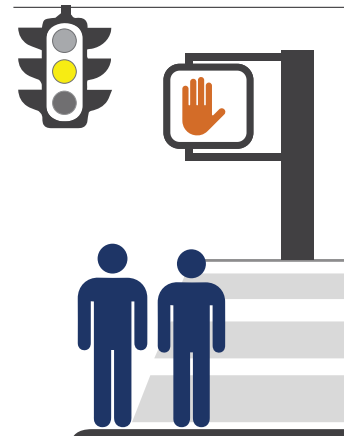


Florida Pedestrian Laws

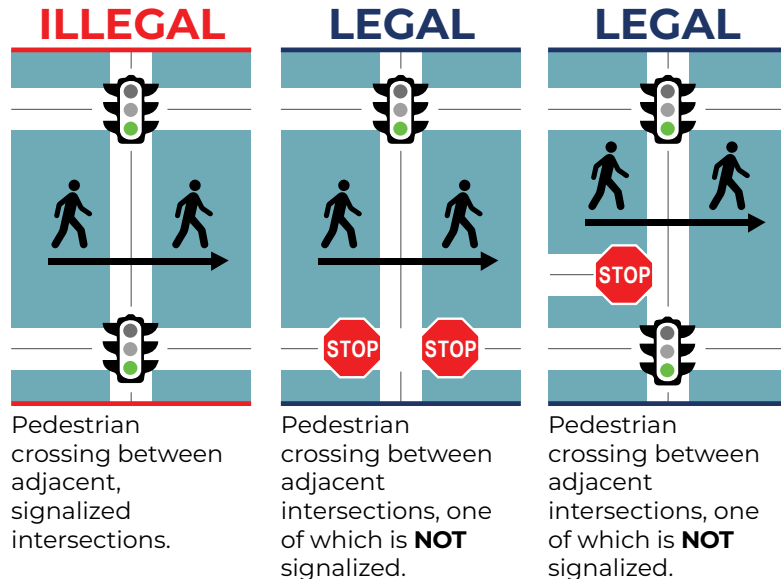


One of the most important ways to be safe while walking is to follow the rules of the road. Florida law sets clear expectations for people walking and for drivers, helping everyone share the roadway more safely. When **walking** in Florida, pedestrians are required to:

- > **Obey** all traffic signals, signs, and pavement markings.
- > Enter the roadway only when a **WALK** signal is shown, where pedestrian signals are present, or when facing a steady green light when pedestrian signals are not provided.
- > Do not start crossing when facing a **DON'T WALK** signal or a steady yellow light.



- > **Walk on the sidewalk** when one is provided, whenever possible.
- > When sidewalks are not provided, walk on the **left side of the roadway**, facing oncoming traffic so you can see approaching vehicles.
- > Yield to vehicles when crossing **outside of a marked crosswalk or intersection**.
- > **Do not cross** between adjacent signalized intersections unless a marked crosswalk is provided. See the illustration below for examples of legal places to cross at and between intersections.



FACT

Pedestrians do not always have the right-of-way.

| Section 316.130, Florida Statutes

Shared Responsibility

Roadway safety is a **shared responsibility**. While people walking should follow pedestrian rules, understanding the traffic laws that apply to drivers also helps protect pedestrians and reduce the risk of crashes. When **driving** in Florida, drivers are required to:

- > Come to a **complete stop** in advance of a crosswalk before making a right turn when facing a steady red light.
- > **Stop for pedestrians** who are crossing or entering the crosswalk before making a permitted left or right turn.
- > When turning right or left while facing a circular green light, **yield to other vehicles** and stop for pedestrians within the intersection or crosswalk.
- > **Never pass another vehicle** that is stopped for a pedestrian crossing in a crosswalk.



Protecting Vulnerable Road Users

Florida laws include special protections for people who are **blind, visually impaired, or mobility-impaired**. These laws help everyone travel safely and confidently. The following protections apply:

- > **White Cane Law** | Drivers are required to come to a **complete stop** for any pedestrian on a public road who is assisted by a guide dog or carrying a cane or walking stick. The cane or walking stick must be white or white with a red tip and should be raised or extended to signal the intent to cross.
- > **Mobility-Impaired Pedestrians** | Drivers must stop and yield the right of way to pedestrians who use a **service animal, walker, crutch, orthopedic cane, or wheelchair** when they are traveling on a public street or highway.
- > **Sidewalk Use** | Pedestrians who are mobility-impaired are required to use sidewalks when they are available. However, they may leave the sidewalk and enter the roadway when needed to **avoid a potential conflict or obstacle**.



Resources

Throughout this booklet, we have shared tips and information on how to use walking as a safe option to get around your community. The contact information listed was accurate at the time of this publication. All the resources mentioned in this booklet, plus others, can easily be accessed in the following ways:

1. Use your camera phone to scan the QR code below.



2. Type fdot.info/walking directly into your browser.
3. Call the Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center at **833-930-2952**.

Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center

P.O. Box 3061121
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Phone: **833-930-2952**

Email: contact@safemobilityfl.com

Website: SafeMobilityFL.com

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