

FLORIDA SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD TRAINING GUIDELINES

August 1, 2023



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Introduction

Adult school crossing guards play an important role in helping children cross streets safely at key locations on their way to and from school.

In 1992, the Florida Legislature adopted the Ramon Turnquest School Crossing Guard Act. This law (incorporated in [Section 316.75, F.S.](#)) requires most local governmental entities administering school crossing guard programs to train their guards in accordance with uniform guidelines adopted by the [Florida Department of Transportation \(FDOT\)](#).

Basic standards and guidance for supervision of school crossings by adult crossing guards are provided in the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD, 2009\)](#), which is adopted by FDOT as Florida's manual on traffic control devices (pursuant to [Section 316.0745, F.S.](#)). To develop more complete guidelines, FDOT convened a task force in 1992.

Crossing guard supervisors from counties with crossing guard training programs, public safety officers, and others with relevant experience comprised the task force. The Training Guidelines ("Guidelines") were first published in 1993 and periodically updated.

The [Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program](#) was established to train and certify local school crossing guard trainers in accordance with the Guidelines. Trainers train local school crossing guards. Uniform training promotes consistent, effective operation of guarded school crossings used by public and private school students.



PLEASE NOTE

In these Guidelines, descriptions of practices that are considered **mandatory** use the verb "*shall*." Statements of **recommended** practice use the verb "*should*." Statements of **optional** practice use the verb "*may*."

***Unless the verbiage says, "shall," agency direction shall supersede "should," or "may."*



1 Administration

1A Staffing and funding a local crossing guard program

An agency should generally have at least two certified guard trainers, and additional trainers as needed to manage its training needs in accordance with the FSCGTP Guidelines.

An agency should provide for program expenses in its annual budget. These include salaries for guards and trainers, training expenses, and costs of uniform articles and equipment. A county or municipality is authorized under [Section 318.21\(1\), F.S.](#), to impose a surcharge on parking fines for the sole purpose of funding a school crossing guard program, and **effective July 1, 2023** are authorized to enforce the speed limit in a school zone through speed detection systems **pursuant to Section 316.1894 F.S.** Five dollars of the penalties assessed and collected for violations must be retained by the county or municipality for the School Crossing Guard Recruitment and Retention Program. (Hyperlink to be provided when available in the Laws of Florida/2023 Statutes.).

1B Training and certification of guard trainers

The Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program provides training for school crossing guard trainer certification and recertification. A trainer candidate shall successfully complete a one-day trainer course and

the prerequisite computer-based training (CBT) to be certified or recertified. Agency coordinators request training for their trainers through the on-line crossing guard database found at [FDOT's Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program](#) website. Agencies should ensure that potential trainer candidates have sufficient experience and skills prior to attending trainer-training.

In the training course, candidates acquire background information, practical knowledge, and skills needed to train school crossing guards for their agencies. The training includes classroom instruction and practical training. To be certified or re-certified as a school crossing guard trainer, a candidate shall pass the written examination with a minimum score of 85 percent and complete the practical training with satisfactory marks on all areas of the performance checklist.

Trainers should have yearly training that exceeds that required for guards. To be recertified, a trainer shall successfully complete a one-day trainer course and the prerequisite computer based training (CBT).

Trainer certification is valid for 8 years. Trainers shall not conduct guard training more than (8) eight years after the date of his or her most recent trainer certification or recertification.*

**Trainer certificates awarded on or before March 1, 2016, are valid for a period of 10 years.*

1C Qualification of guards

Adult crossing guards should possess the following minimum qualifications as outlined under [Section 7D.03](#) of the MUTCD:

- A. Average intelligence;
- B. Good physical condition, including sight, hearing, and ability to move and maneuver quickly in order to avoid danger from errant vehicles;
- C. Ability to control a STOP paddle effectively to provide approaching road users with a clear, fully direct view of the paddle's STOP message during the entire crossing movement;
- D. Ability to communicate specific instructions clearly, firmly, and courteously;
- E. Ability to recognize potentially dangerous traffic situations and warn and manage students in sufficient time to avoid injury;
- F. Mental alertness;
- G. Neat appearance;
- H. Good character;
- I. Dependability; and
- J. An overall sense of responsibility for the safety of students.

A morning or afternoon crossing guard shift requires a guard to stand for the duration of that period at an assigned crossing, and remain for the entirety. Noticing and reacting to driver movements requires alertness and agility. A prospective crossing guard should therefore be given a basic physical examination that checks mobility, blood pressure, vision, and hearing.

A criminal background check shall also be conducted on all prospective crossing guards.



1D Training of crossing guards; certification

Each local government entity that administers a school crossing guard program shall provide at least one guard training course each year. It should be scheduled shortly before the start of the school year. An agency should provide additional trainings to maintain an adequate number of school crossing guards. Only a certified trainer shall train and recertify crossing guards.



Training consists of three elements:

1. Classroom instruction,
2. Practical training, and
3. Supervised duty

Requirements for successful completion of each element are described in [Section 1E](#) of these Guidelines.

A crossing guard candidate shall successfully complete classroom instruction and practical training before being assigned to a crossing. Supervised duty should be completed within four weeks of a guard's assignment to allow the trainer to promptly address any problems with the guard's conduct. After a guard is certified or recertified, supervisors or trainers should periodically inspect, observe and mentor their guards.

Trainers use a set of test questions and a performance checklist to examine the guards' knowledge, skills and abilities.

The performance checklist, shown in [Figure 1](#), is a tool that reflects the techniques and procedures of the Guidelines. The performance checklist aids local agency supervisors and trainers in assessing and certifying their crossing guards. A certified trainer documents the classroom training date, exam score, practical training date, practical training evaluation, on-site observation dates and times, and respective evaluations on the guard's performance checklist.

To produce a Florida school crossing guard certificate, an agency supervisor may generate a certificate by entering a record of the guard into the crossing guard database, or produce a certificate approved by the agency administering the school crossing guard program.

1E Demonstration of competence

To be certified as a school crossing guard, a candidate shall have completed each training element satisfactorily. Typically, a **minimum of four (4) hours** are allotted to the classroom instruction/practical training component.

The guard candidate shall satisfy the following respective requirements:

- A. Classroom instruction**
Pass at least 75 percent of the items on the written examination;
- B. Practical training**
Perform each of the duties listed on the performance checklist satisfactorily. As described in [Section 2B](#), children are not present during this phase of training; and
- C. Supervised duty**
Perform no less than two observed shifts in accordance with the duties outlined on the performance checklist. Notwithstanding the

guard's performance during the first observation, the guard shall perform all duties listed on the performance checklist satisfactorily during the second or final observation under the following conditions:

1. *Trainer does not intervene after starting checklist entry for an observation,*
2. *Each observation is conducted during a regular shift at a crosswalk to which the guard is assigned during that shift,*
3. *Observation is continued for **at least 30 minutes**, or for the duration of the guard's shift at the crosswalk if it is less than 30 minutes, and*
4. *If the guard performs crossing duty in both the morning and the afternoon, one observation should be conducted in the morning and the other in the afternoon.*

Any duties not performed satisfactorily in an observation should be reviewed with the guard at that time. If guard performance at the second observation is not entirely satisfactory, a third and final observation may be conducted within two weeks of the second observation. A guard who fails to perform all duties satisfactorily in a final observation shall not continue to perform crossing guard duty.

1F Training of a multiple assigned, reassigned, or transferring guard

It is recommended that guards be familiar with different types of intersections and crossings. If a certified guard (as described in [Sections 1D thru 1F](#)) is assigned to a crosswalk other than the one or ones at which the guard was observed for certification purposes, a trainer should familiarize the guard with

conditions at the newly assigned station or stations, and check that the reassigned guard is able to manage satisfactorily. Key considerations include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- A. Guard assesses traffic to determine an appropriate time to cross (at an unsignalized crosswalk) or uses available signal intervals (at a signalized crosswalk);**
- B. Guard is familiar with traffic patterns, signal timing and sequencing;**
- C. Guard searches for potentially conflicting traffic before entering crosswalk;**
- D. Guard is properly positioned and continues to scan; and**
- E. Guard is able to command the crosswalk**

The trainer should help the guard implement any adjustments that may be needed.

If an agency hires a guard who has been certified by another agency in accordance with either [Section 1D](#) or [1F](#) and assigns the guard to a crosswalk without recertification, the agency shall provide both orientation and familiarization before the guard conducts any crossings with children. Orientation includes orientation to agency ([see Sections 2A.01 and 2A.13](#)), uniform requirements ([see Section 2A.04](#)), and devices for alerting traffic ([see Section 2A.05](#)). Familiarization for a transferred guard is the same process outlined above for a reassigned guard.

1G Requirements for a substitute guard

A substitute guard should have sufficient experience to be familiar with the crossing procedure appropriate for any school crossing to which the guard might be assigned. If a community service officer or traffic control officer is to be available for substitute crossing guard duty, they should complete the same training as regular guards. *(Although officers may be experts in vehicular traffic control, it is important for them to receive the training to appreciate the limitations of children's traffic skills).*

A guard who continues to perform guard duty shall be re-certified once per school year to assure that he or she maintains the knowledge, skill and abilities to supervise school crossings.



1H Recertification of a guard

A guard who continues to perform guard duty shall be recertified once per school year to assure that he or she maintains the knowledge, skill and abilities to supervise school crossings.

Guard refresher training includes a briefing on any changes to the program, procedures and techniques.

Supervised duty is conducted as prescribed in [Section 1E item C](#). Observations of guards who return at the start of the next school year should be conducted as soon as practical after any new guards have been observed.

1J State of Emergency

If within the certification year the Governor declares a state of emergency, guard and trainer certification requirements will be **extended by 30 days** of lifting the state of emergency and reopening of schools.



Figure 1. The performance checklist is used by trainers to assess guards (instructions on next page).

Rev. August 1, 2023		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Certification <input type="checkbox"/> Recertification <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Performance Checklist for Florida School Crossing Guard				
Guard's Name _____		Employing Agency _____		
Practical Training Skill Exam	For each task performed satisfactorily, place an "S" in the appropriate field. For each task performed unsatisfactorily, place a "U" in the box. See back for instructions.	On-Site Observations		
		First	Second	Third
	1. Guard is punctual, has brought all assigned agency equipment (to include a whistle and regulation retro-reflective outer garment & STOP paddle), and is using it properly in conformance with State Guidelines. Guard is wearing the complete uniform adopted by the employing agency.			
	2. Guard verbally instructs students, prior to performing the crossing, on proper crossing techniques.			
	3. Guard is correctly positioned in front of students prior to crossing them.			
	4. Guard demonstrates the proper search pattern (left, right, left and over shoulder) at all times.			
	5. Guard ensures students remain behind the stand-back line or, if none, 3 feet or more from the curb or roadway edge until they are verbally instructed to cross.			
	6. Guard enters the crosswalk ; raised STOP paddle preceding (or leading) them with opposite arm raised to approaching traffic with whistle prepared. Guard initiates one long blast on the whistle when stepping off the curb.			
	7. Guard properly positions self in the roadway, within the crosswalk, for maximum visibility.			
	8. Guard ensures all vehicular traffic has stopped on the roadway and is not obstructing the crosswalk before crossing students.			
	9. Guard verbally instructs students to cross behind them, reminding them to stay within the crosswalk.			
	10. Guard remains in the intersection until all students have safely crossed continuing to scan, with stop paddle raised to traffic.			
	11. Guard demonstrates understanding of the function of pedestrian signals, traffic signals and crosswalks and how to utilize gaps.			
	12. Guard is alert and attentive to potential hazards and the overall safety of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.			
Classroom Training Date _____		Practical Training Date _____		
The guard successfully completed the Classroom Instruction portion of the certification process with a score of _____ percent on the final exam.		Trainer's Signature _____		
Trainer's Signature _____		Printed Name _____		
Printed Name _____				
1st On-site _____	2nd On-site _____	3rd On-site _____		
Time Observed _____	Time Observed _____	Time Observed _____		
Trainer's Signature _____	Trainer's Signature _____	Trainer's Signature _____		
Printed Name _____	Printed Name _____	Printed Name _____		
Comments:				
Guard's Signature _____			Date: _____	

Instructions

Performance checklist for Florida school crossing guard

For each task performed satisfactorily, place an “S” in the appropriate field.

For each task performed unsatisfactorily, place a “U” in the box.

During Supervised Duty, two observations are conducted for a **minimum of 30 minutes** each at the guard’s assigned crossing during his regular shift (*if the guard performs crossing duty in both the morning and afternoon, one observation should be conducted during the morning shift and the other during the afternoon*).

The guard must perform all tasks listed satisfactorily in the second observation. If not, a third and final observation may

be conducted within two weeks of the second observation. If one or more tasks are performed unsatisfactorily during the *Third On-Site Observation*, the guard does not meet certification standards and should be suspended until successfully retrained or terminated.

A line for any comments and notations is available on this form.

A line for the guard’s signature and date acknowledges they have received and reviewed this document, and verifies the date of their training.



2 Guard Training Course

2A Classroom instruction

This section describes information that shall be covered in the classroom element of guard training.

2A.01 Introduction to school crossing guard program

A. Overview:

The primary function of a crossing guard is to help children safely cross a street as they walk and/or bicycle to/from school, while promoting the use of safe crossing skills. The guard's job description, its requirements, and compensation shall be reviewed.

B. Orientation to agency:

Crossing guards should understand their affiliation with the agency that employs them.

1. *A guard should know the agency's standard operating procedures in case of lightning or other inclement weather, emergencies, etc.*
2. *A guard shall know how to contact by phone at least one law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction on the streets at any crossing assignment.*
3. *Crossing guards should receive orientation to the schools associated with their assigned school crosswalks.*



C. Basis for use of adult crossing guards:

Use of crossing guards is based on an *MUTCD Option*: “Adult crossing guards may be used to provide gaps in traffic at school crossings where an engineering study has shown that adequate gaps need to be created and where authorized by law” (*Section 7D.02, MUTCD*).

FDOT’s Vehicle Gap Size Study form (*in Chapter 8 of the FDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Studies*) may be used to determine the size and number of gaps in the vehicular traffic stream for a school crossing study.

Florida Statutes present criteria for assessing “*hazardous walking conditions*” for public elementary school students on “*walkways perpendicular to the road*” in *Section 1006.23, F.S.*, for purposes of determining student busing needs. Whether a crossing guard is present at times when students walk to or from school is among the criteria considered.

D. Cooperation of guards and vehicular traffic:

Unless trained as a traffic control officer and employed subject to the conditions described in *Section 316.640(4), F.S.*, a crossing guard shall stand in the roadway when conducting crossings but shall not direct traffic in the usual regulatory sense.

are about to use or are using the crosswalk, and that all vehicular traffic must stop. (Section 7D.05, MUTCD)

At unsignalized locations, guards select opportune times to use or create sufficient gaps in traffic flow.

In other words, they extend selected gaps as necessary, obligating drivers to yield the right of way, so children have time to complete their crossings. At signalized locations, guards use the signal intervals which allow time for pedestrian crossing.

2A.02 Common traffic hazards at crosswalks

Pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions at intersections usually involve an unexpected violation of road rules by at least one of the parties (*pedestrian or driver*) and the subsequent failure of both parties to take adequate evasive action. Even when driver practice is poor, pedestrians who practice good crossing techniques can sometimes anticipate conflicts and avoid collision.

Pedestrian crashes of the “**multiple threat**” type have resulted in serious injuries to children at uncontrolled crossing locations. This scenario (see *Figure 2*) develops when a driver stops to let a pedestrian cross but a driver in the adjacent lane fails to stop. The pedestrian enters the crosswalk in front of the stopped vehicle. The stopped vehicle obstructs the views of the pedestrian and the overtaking driver. Inexperienced pedestrians sometimes assume if one driver stops for them at an uncontrolled crosswalk, others will too.

However, the second driver erroneously assumes there is no reason to stop and begins to pass.

The crossing pedestrian neglects to scan for approaching traffic before proceeding past the stopped vehicle, at which time the second driver and pedestrian collide.

The operating procedures for crossing guards is based on an MUTCD standard:

Adult crossing guards shall not direct traffic in the usual law enforcement regulatory sense. In the control of traffic, they shall pick opportune times to create a sufficient gap in the traffic flow. At these times they stand in the roadway to indicate that pedestrians



Figure 2. Multiple-threat crash scenario.

Neither pedestrian nor driver anticipates the other and takes evasive action.

The visible presence of guards crossing children in a roadway tends to improve driver behavior. Guards also deter improper crossings by children (e.g., *darting into the roadway*).

Hazardous driver behaviors that may still occur at a guarded cross-walk include:

- Speeding (when crosswalk use is not noticed);
- Right turn into crosswalk on green light;
- Entering crosswalk to make right turn on red light;
- Left turn into crosswalk on green light;
- Distracted driving;
- Environmental factors; and
- Visual clutter

Traffic edges can be curbs, parked cars, and stopped vehicles, beyond which moving traffic might be encountered. At each traffic edge, one should verify, by searching in the directions from which traffic might approach, that it is safe to proceed.

2A.03 Understanding children's need to master safe crossing skills

A crossing guard shall actively reinforce safe street crossing practices, coaching children to search for traffic before crossing—to “**look left, right, left**” for any approaching vehicle and (*at a corner*) over the shoulder for turning traffic.

Children have only partially acquired the knowledge, skills, and abilities that experienced pedestrians use.

Children in traffic:

- Can be impulsive;
- Are easily distracted by electronic devices;
- Have limited peripheral vision and ability to locate relevant sound sources;
- Have poor ability to assess vehicular approach speeds and gaps;
- Are short and easily screened from view by cars;
- Are apt to assume that if one driver stops for them, the coast is clear; and
- Are apt to consider simply running across a road a viable crossing strategy.



A key skill to mitigate crossing hazards is to recognize and pause at “traffic edges.”

The Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program training videos and other training resources should be shown to trainees to help them understand how children's physical and psychological development affects their ability to detect and recognize traffic risks and make safe choices.

2A.04 Uniform

An adult crossing guard shall wear a high-visibility, retro-reflective outer garment that is labeled as **ANSI 107-2004 standard** performance for Class 2 or higher risk exposure (*Section 7D.04, MUTCD*). The apparel background material shall be either fluorescent yellow-green or fluorescent orange-red. The retro-reflective material shall be orange, yellow, white silver, yellow-green, or a fluorescent version of these colors.

A crossing guard should also wear:

- A. Pants, skirt or shorts, styles/color to be determined by the agency;
- B. Light-colored shirt or shirt labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2 risk exposure (*Section 7D.04, MUTCD*);
- C. Uniform crossing guard patch if issued by the agency;
- D. Hat or cap; and
- E. As needed, a windbreaker, jacket, or rain-wear that is labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2 risk exposure or above (*Section 7D.04, MUTCD*) or worn underneath a vest labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2 risk exposure.
- F. Closed-toe shoes. Refer to agency policy for specifics.



Patches and uniforms shall differ from those of law enforcement officers (*Section 843.085, F.S.*).

Wearing a hat or visor gives a guard a more official appearance, enhances visibility, and protects the head from UV radiation.

2A.05

Devices for alerting traffic and indicating waiting position for students

A guard shall be equipped with the following items:

A. Whistle*; and

*If agency policy permits, guards trained with such may use an agency approved electronic whistle. However, guards shall be equipped with a traditional whistle on their person, accessible at all times.



- B. **STOP paddle that is MUTCD-compliant for use by crossing guards, octagonal, at least 18 inches by 18 inches**, i.e., having a red back-ground and white border, displaying the word STOP in upper-case white letters at least 6 inches high on both sides, and retro-reflectorized (*Section 7D.05, MUTCD*)

Guards should also wear and use orange or yellow-green gloves.



Figure 3. Stand-back line at a school crossing.

A “stand-back” line may be marked or taped **at least 3 feet behind the curb** at a school crossing location to indicate an appropriate stand-back distance for students (see [Figure 3](#)).

2A.06 Understanding applicable traffic regulations

The state traffic code is set forth in **Chapter 316 of Florida Statutes**, known as the *Florida Uniform Traffic Control Law*. It includes rules that pertain to speed limits in school zones, right-of-way at crosswalks, parking or stopping at or near crosswalks, and the operation of bicycles. Although drivers do not always comply with these rules and guards should not depend on them to do so, guards should understand the basic traffic laws commonly applicable at school crossings.

During times indicated for school speed zones:

A person may not drive a vehicle on a roadway designated as a school zone at a speed, greater than that posted in the school zone in accordance with this section. Violation of the speed limits established pursuant to this section must be cited as a moving violation, punishable as provided in chapter 318. ([Section 316.1895, F.S.](#))

The display of a green light by a traffic signal does not convey an unconditional right-of-way to a driver facing the green light:

Vehicular traffic facing a circular green signal may proceed cautiously straight through or turn right or left unless a sign at such place prohibits either such turn. But vehicular traffic, including vehicles turning right or left, shall yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully within the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk at the time such signal is exhibited. ([316.075, F.S.](#))

A pedestrian is usually understood to be lawfully within a crosswalk if he or she is finishing crossing after entering the crosswalk at a time when it was legal to do so (i.e., when the pedestrian faced an illuminated Walk signal or, where no pedestrian signal is installed, when the pedestrian faced a green light). **Chapter 316 Section 075 - 2022 Florida Statutes**

A driver facing a red light “shall stop before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection” ([Section 316.075\[1\] \[c\] \[1\], F.S.](#)).

Where no (functional) signal is present, a driver is obliged to yield right of way to a pedestrian who is “crossing the roadway within a cross-walk”:



Useful Link
The 2022 Florida Statutes

When traffic control signals are not in place or in operation and there is no signage indicating otherwise, the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping if need be to so yield, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a crosswalk when the pedestrian is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger. ([Section 316.130\[7\]\[c\], F.S.](#))

If “**signage so indicates,**” however, the driver must stop for the pedestrian:

The driver of a vehicle at any crosswalk where signage so indicates shall stop and remain stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross a roadway when the pedestrian is in the crosswalk or steps into the crosswalk and is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger. ([Section 316.130\[7\]\[b\], F.S.](#))

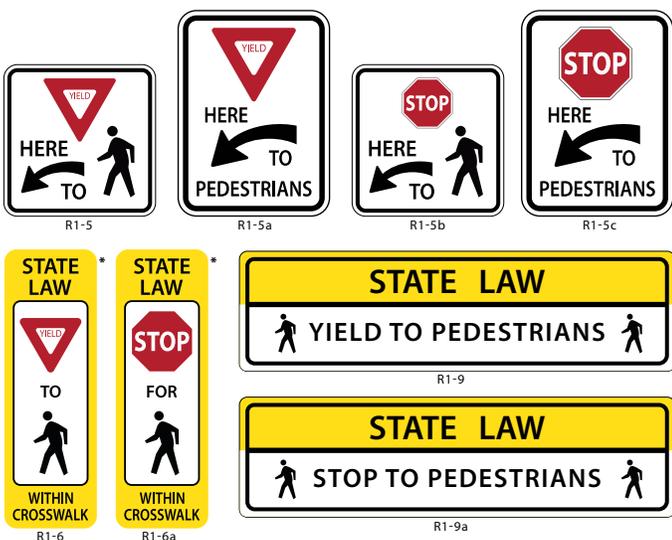
A sign that “so indicates” could be an In-Street Pedestrian Crossing sign that displays the STOP FOR [pedestrian symbol] legend ([Section 2B.12, MUTCD](#)).

A pedestrian’s right to enter a crosswalk is qualified: *No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield.* ([Section 316.130\[8\], F.S.](#))

Stopping or parking on a crosswalk is prohibited: *Except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, no person shall stop, stand, or park a vehicle on a crosswalk.* ([Section 316.1945\[1\] \[a\] \[4\], F.S.](#))



A cyclist riding on a roadway is subject to the rules for drivers; a cyclist operating on a sidewalk or crosswalk has the rights and duties of a pedestrian, but is still subject to the same bicycle equipment and passenger transport requirements that apply to roadway riders.



* The legend STATE LAW is optional. A fluorescent yellow-green background color may be used instead of yellow for this sign.

A sign that “so indicates” could be an In-Street Pedestrian Crossing sign that displays the STOP FOR [pedestrian symbol] legend ([Section 2B.12, MUTCD](#))

Thus, on both roadway and sidewalk, the following apply:

- A rider under age 16 is required to wear a bicycle helmet;
- A bicycle ridden between sunset and sun- rise must have operating front (white) and rear (red) lights, as well as a rear reflector;
- A bicycle must have brakes;
- A bicycle may carry only as many persons as it was designed for.

Key bicycle regulations can be found in [Section 316.2065, F.S.](#)

Although dismounting before crossing in a crosswalk is not legally required, it is best to ask children on bicycles, scooters or skateboards to dismount before crossing. Walking across helps avoid conflicts among crossing children and allows the guard and children to be more attentive to traffic hazards and react more quickly to them.

2A.07 Understanding traffic signal operation at crosswalks

A guard assigned to a signalized crosswalk should understand how pedestrians are expected to cross at such locations. *Guards should be familiar with signal timing and sequencing.* Guards shall know the meanings of pedestrian signal indications, (as defined in [Section 4E.02, MUTCD](#)):



WALKING PERSON symbol or “WALK” indication:

Pedestrian may start to cross the roadway in direction of the indication;



Flashing UPRAISED HAND symbol or “DON’T WALK” indication:

Pedestrian may not start to cross, but any pedestrian already crossing shall proceed out of the roadway;



Steady UPRAISED HAND symbol or “DON’T WALK” indication:

A pedestrian shall not enter the roadway.

The pedestrian clearance time (defined in [Section 4E.06, MUTCD](#)) extends from the start of the flashing indication to the time when any conflicting green is illuminated.



The time ordinarily recommended should be sufficient for a pedestrian who travels **at least 3.5 feet per second** and began crossing during the WALK interval to reach the far side of the traveled way (*or a refuge island*) before a conflicting green is displayed.

At many signalized crossings, a **WALK** interval can be initiated only by pressing a pushbutton. Where no pedestrian signal is provided for a crosswalk, a pedestrian is permitted to start crossing when facing a circular green light ([Section 316.075, F.S.](#)).

For example, the agency that maintains the signal may be able to add time to the pedestrian clearance interval, or (*if the crossing has used only one guard*) an additional guard could be assigned to the crossing.

If a traffic signal’s timing seems too short to finish crossing children before a green light is illuminated for traffic on the crossed roadway, guards should inform their supervisors so adjustments may be considered.

2A.08 Familiarity with school crossing-related signs and pavement markings

A guard should be familiar with the signs and pavement markings used at and on approaches to an assigned crossing. These may include crosswalk markings, warning signs, school speed zone signs and markings, parking prohibition signs, **STOP** signs, and stop lines. Guards should report to their supervisors any signs or markings that seem to be missing, damaged, or

otherwise in need of maintenance. Refer to *Index 17344* of the *FDOT Design Standards* and *Chapters 7B* and *7C* of the *MUTCD*.

2A.09 Reporting hazards and operational problems

Various conditions can increase risks to school children traveling to, in, and from school crosswalks. A condition that is hazardous should be reported in accordance with agency policy on hazard reporting. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Unmanned active school crossing post;
- Sidewalk obstruction (e.g., fallen tree limb or motor vehicle parked on sidewalk) or construction closure;
- Sight obstructions (including any that might be due to parked vehicles);
- Standing water or mud in the pedestrian pathway;
- Driver violations that threaten crossing safety; or
- Disorderly behavior, or harassment of a child.

Guards should immediately report (*in accordance with agency policy*) a traffic signal malfunction (*i.e., does not operate in its normal mode, either flashing or going dark*) at a school crossing.

A driver violation that threatens crossing safety should be reported. While a law enforcement officer must ordinarily observe a traffic violation in order to issue a citation in this case, information provided by a crossing guard can help to identify the

offender in case of another violation. Such reports can also help to identify operating conditions that may require attention. A guard should be able to describe a vehicle operated by a driver who has endangered student safety, and if possible, the driver. Vehicles can be described with respect to make, model, color, body style, and license tag number.

2A.10 Procedure in event of pedestrian crash or fall

An alert, assertive, and agile guard can usually prevent or avoid pedestrian crashes. Occasionally, a child may fall (*e.g., by tripping*) or somehow be injured without being struck by any motor vehicle. If a pedestrian is struck or falls at a crosswalk and appears to be injured, guards should be familiar with and use the procedure prescribed by their agency.

2A.11 Conducting crossings in inclement weather

Rain, hail, thunder, lightning, and other weather conditions can reduce traffic safety at crossings. Refer to agency policy for guidance on crossing during inclement weather.



2A.13 Other considerations

A roadway is most slippery during the **first 10 to 15 minutes** of a rain when oils in the pavement are brought to the surface but have not yet been washed to the sides.

During a rain, vehicles and crossing pedestrians have less traction, motorists require more distance to brake, and their ability to see the road ahead can be reduced. An electrical storm can distract motorists or disrupt the regular operation of a traffic signal.

Guards shall not use an umbrella or other item that would interfere with their ability to perform proper crossing procedure. No tents, standing umbrellas, temporary structures or other non-agency issued items. Any outerwear shall be worn as described in [Section 2A.04, item E](#).



2A.12 Courtesy crossing of adult pedestrians

When no school-aged child requires crossing, a guard may conduct a crossing for an adult pedestrian who requests the service, but should not offer to provide the service.

Adult pedestrians may have little interest in receiving such assistance, or inclination to heed guard warnings. Routine provision of such service can contribute to a misperception that different rules govern use of crosswalks when crossings are not conducted by guards. *Check agency policy for guidance.*

A. Report any absence

Guards shall be at their stations on time, properly attired, and neatly groomed. Guards should notify their supervisors of a planned absence according to agency policy. A guard should follow agency protocol if illness or another unexpected circumstance prevents a timely appearance

B. Parking a personal vehicle

If a guard travels to his or her station in a personal vehicle, it shall be parked only in an allowed location (*e.g., not on a sidewalk, nor on the street in any location where signs prohibit parking at the time*). If parked on the street on an approach to the crossing, it should not block the guard's view of approaching traffic. ([Section 316.1945 of F.S.](#))

C. Remain standing while on duty

A guard shall not sit while on duty. Sitting down somewhere on the roadside could reduce an approaching driver's peripheral view of the guard and suggest to drivers and arriving children that the guard is less than fully prepared to conduct crossings. The visible presence of an alert, standing guard helps deter unsafe behavior and maintain orderly crossings.

D. Avoid distractions and unrelated activities

While on duty, a guard **shall not** eat, smoke, vape or use tobacco products. A guard **shall not** consume beverages (*except for water*) while on duty. While in uniform, a guard **shall not** patronize liquor establishments. A guard **shall not** use foul language while on duty. A guard shall not use any electronic

devices, Bluetooth devices, wear headphones nor read while on duty. Any cellular/ mobile communication device may be used only in an emergency and never while crossing children.

E. Instructions and requests; notice of schedule changes

Instructions and requests should be made only through the guard's chain of command. An agency's designee shall notify guards of any school schedule change or special school function that would affect the guards' work schedules.

F. Emergency response plan

If any emergency response plan has been adopted that involves a special procedure for an agency's crossing guards, guards shall be briefed on the procedure. An agency should have a plan for contacting on-duty guards in case of an emergency.



2B Practical training

Practical training involves highly interactive teaching and practice of the techniques and procedures used to conduct school crossings and an examination of each candidate's skills using the performance checklist. The training is conducted at a crosswalk (or simulated intersection) with children not present.

In this phase of training, trainees practice using **STOP** paddles and whistles, making hand signals, and coaching "children" as they conduct simulated crossings. Trainees alternate in playing the roles of guards, drivers, and children in these exercises.

Signalized and unsignalized crosswalks present different challenges. Practical training should prepare guards for crossing situations that they are likely to encounter, as they may be reassigned to another location in the course of the school year.

Field training at an actual post prior to guards assignment is strongly encouraged.

2C On-site observation

When guards are assigned to a crossing and prior to their first crossing duty, they should be briefed on the approximate number of children to expect and conditions at the location. Once guard duty starts and the trainer has determined that the guard is ready to be observed, the trainer can begin an observation using the performance checklist, as described in [Section 1E](#). However, supervised duty should be completed within the time described in [Section 1D](#).

3 Techniques used in school crossings

This part describes basic techniques used in conducting school crossings.

3A Traffic searching procedure

At an intersection, traffic can approach a crosswalk from various directions (see *Figure 4*). To gauge whether any approaching traffic will have time to see the guard in the crosswalk and stop, a guard uses the traffic search procedure for crossing a street, and instructs children to follow the same steps. This procedure is:

1. **At curb or edge of roadway, stand and face the roadway.** Search to the left and to the right for traffic approaching from either direction.
2. **If at an intersection, search for all traffic that might cross your path.**
3. **At all crossing locations, if the gap seems adequate, before proceeding make a final search.**
4. **When crossing the street, continue to scan.**

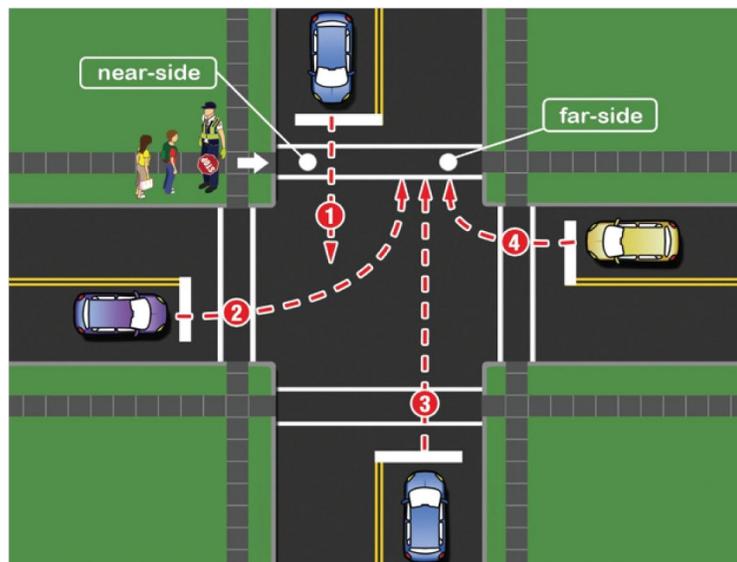


Figure 4. Paths of potential conflict at an intersection crosswalk:

1. Through vehicle approaching near side,
2. Vehicle approaching to turn left onto far side,
3. Through vehicle approaching far side,
4. Vehicle approaching to turn right onto far side.

3B Signaling

A guard signals to drivers to alert them to stop for crosswalk users, not for purposes of directing traffic.

While in the roadway, a guard should never make any hand or head movement that might be interpreted by a driver as a signal to proceed. When a guard has taken position, and is ready to cross children, the instruction to children is given verbally, without gestures.

3B.01 Use of whistle for warning

The whistle is a warning device for **motorists**. As the **MUTCD** cautions in regard to warning signs, “excessive” use can result in reduced effectiveness.

The whistle shall be ready when stepping into the crosswalk. The guard shall initiate one long blast on the whistle when stepping off the curb. If a driver fails to stop in response to a hand signal or the display of a **STOP** paddle, the response is to again initiate one long blast on the whistle to warn the driver while looking directly at the driver and continuing to display the **STOP** paddle or hand signal towards the driver with extended arm.

3B.02 Technique for use of **STOP** paddle

To alert traffic to stop with the **STOP** paddle:

- 1. The **STOP** paddle shall lead you into the crosswalk.** With the leading arm raise the **STOP** paddle at least shoulder high. At an intersection, this will be the arm that is farthest from the intersection when you are at the curb facing the crosswalk.
- 2. Hold the paddle at least shoulder-high so both sides are displayed to traffic approaching.** Your body should not block either view of the

paddle. The two faces of the paddle should remain continuously visible to traffic approaching on the respective sides. As shown in *Figure 5*, the **STOP** paddle shall lead you into the crosswalk. Guard shall continually scan.

- 3. Continuing to hold the paddle as described in step 2,** look directly at far-side traffic scanning as you approach the middle of the street.
- 4. If a driver disregards the **STOP** paddle,** use your whistle as described in *3B.01*.

As shown in *Figure 6*, the **STOP** paddle should be kept raised while the guard is in the roadway. A guard shall not switch the **STOP** paddle from one hand to the other or wave it about while in the roadway.

3B.03 Altering traffic with the signaling hand

To make the hand signal for traffic to stop:

- 1. Make eye contact with the nearest driver** to be alerted and point at driver with an extended arm and two (2) fingers or a flat hand;
- 2. Continuing to watch driver and holding extended arm parallel to the ground,** raise your palm upward, facing the driver.
- 3. If driver disregards the hand signal,** use the whistle as described in *3B.03*.



Figure 5. The guard enters the crosswalk stopping nearside traffic using the STOP paddle technique.



Figure 6. STOP paddle should be kept raised while the guard is in the roadway.

4 Techniques used in school crossings

Be alert to turning traffic!

4A Unsignalized crosswalks

4A.01 Crossing procedure at unsignalized intersection crosswalk

STEP 1 Curbside assembly

Stand on the side of the street where children approach. Keep children behind the stand-back line or, if none, 3 feet or more from the curb or roadway edge.

STEP 2 Select an opportune time

Search both approaches for a sufficient gap in traffic before entering the crosswalk. Remind children to wait for your verbal instruction before starting to cross.

STEP 3 Enter crosswalk, stopping near-side traffic

Enter the crosswalk with the raised **STOP** paddle preceding (leading) you to the middle of the roadway and opposite arm raised to approaching traffic. The whistle shall be ready to use; guard shall initiate one long blast on the whistle when stepping into the crosswalk.

STEP 4 Stop far-side traffic

Walking in the crosswalk, as you approach the middle of the roadway, check to ensure the **STOP** paddle is visible to all oncoming traffic, including any turning traffic.



STEP 5

Take position

Facing the intersection, in/at the edge of the crosswalk, with back to crosswalk, continuing to display the **STOP** paddle to both approaches. Make a final check to ensure all traffic on crosswalk approaches has stopped.



STEP 6

Initiate crossing

Turn your head toward the waiting children, make eye contact, use only verbal instructions to tell the students search and cross when the way is clear.



STEP 7

Maintain your position

As children cross behind you, do not allow any driver to enter the crosswalk before the last child in the group has reached the opposite curb or roadway edge and you have completed **Step 8**.



STEP 8

Return to the starting curb

Continue to scan and remain alert for traffic with both arms extended displaying the raised **STOP** paddle.

Keep hand and paddle extended toward immediate vehicular threat as you walk back to your initial position on curb.

Lower hand and paddle to allow traffic to resume—do not motion to them.



The guard should be the first one in the crosswalk, and the last one out.

4A.02 Crossing procedure at unsignalized midblock crosswalk

This procedure follows the same steps used at an unsignalized intersection except that **step 5** is:

Take position

In the middle of the street, on the side closest to the approach with the greatest risk. Face that approach, continuing to display the **STOP** paddle to oncoming traffic. Make a final check to ensure traffic has stopped.

Greater apparent risk of traffic conflict due to greater volume, higher typical speeds, sight distance at crossing etc.

4B Signalized crosswalks

4B.01 Crossing procedure at signalized intersection crosswalk

This procedure follows the same steps used at an unsignalized intersection crosswalk ([4A.01](#)) except Step 2 is:

Wait for Walk indication: As children collect, press the pedestrian pushbutton if needed to actuate a phase for pedestrian crossing. Remind children to wait for your verbal instructions before starting to cross. When a fresh **WALK INDICATION** symbol (or **“WALK”** message) is displayed (or *when the appropriate green is illuminated if there is no pedestrian signal*), search all approaches before entering the crosswalk.

The **WALK indication** or **Green light** indicates it is your turn to cross. It does not signify that it is safe to cross.

4B.02 Crossing procedure at signalized mid-block crosswalk

In this case, a pedestrian pushbutton is ordinarily installed. The crosswalk is considered “signalized” (*in the sense of “controlled”*) if the signal displays a red indication when activated. If not (*e.g., if the signal is a flashing yellow warning beacon*), use the procedure for an unsignalized mid-block crosswalk, [4A.02](#). The procedure for a signalized mid-block crosswalk follows the steps used at a signalized intersection except Step 5, which is:

Take position

In the middle of the crosswalk on the side closest to the approach with the greater risk and face that approach, continuing to display the **STOP** paddle to oncoming traffic. Make a final check to ensure that traffic on both approaches has stopped.

4C Crosswalks on multi-lane highways

At a signalized or unsignalized crosswalk that crosses four or more lanes (*on either an undivided or divided highway*), two guards should be assigned, so each can handle one side of the highway (see [Figures 7 and 8](#)).

The lead guard and secondary guard enter the crosswalk at the same time. They use the appropriate procedure for an unsignalized or signalized crosswalk proceeding only to the middle of the traffic lanes on his or her side alerting traffic.

The guard on the side which children approach is in charge of initiating the crossing (*thus, the responsibility of the lead guard will switch from one side in the morning to the other side in the afternoon*).

The lead guard makes the final visual check and gives the verbal instruction to the children to make their searches for traffic ([Section 3A](#)) and to cross when clear. Children cross in the crosswalk between the two guards.

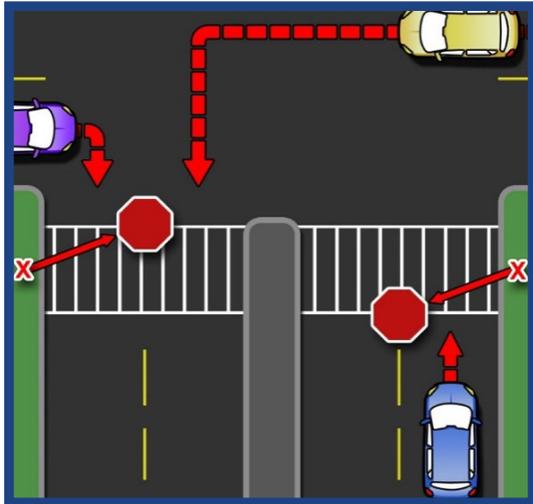


Figure 7. Positions taken by two guards to conduct a multi-lane crossing.



Figure 8. Two guards on a multi-lane crossing.

4D Other crossing configurations

More than two guards may be needed at an intersection of two multi-lane roadway where children must cross two or more legs of the intersection.

For a crossing on a leg of a roundabout, the procedure for an unsignaled mid-block crosswalk can be used.

Crosswalks at a roundabout are usually located a short distance from the circulatory roadway, so if one or more vehicles stop at the entrance to wait for an opening to enter the roundabout, pedestrians can cross behind them. A splitter island provides a median refuge so a crossing pedestrian can concentrate on one direction of traffic at a time.

Crossings at locations with heavy turning movements or other challenging conditions may require adjustments to the procedures described above.

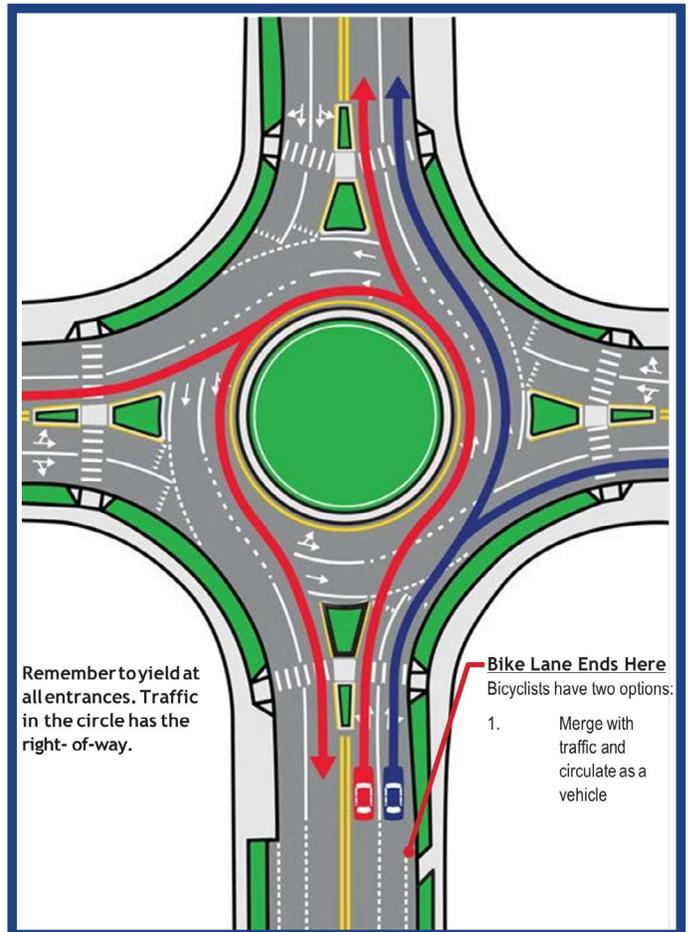


Figure 9. Navigating a modern roundabout.

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