



Walking Santa Barbara Safely

Santa Barbara is a wonderful place to walk. Marvelous weather, beautiful parks and beaches, and quality food, drink, and shopping establishments provide a unique pedestrian experience. The City of Santa Barbara wants to make sure that your pedestrian experience is both fun and safe.

The City maintains about 300 miles of sidewalks for your walking pleasure. Continuously throughout the year we replace, repair, and grind sidewalks to make them as walkable as possible. The City also maintains 30,000 street trees. As street trees grow, they can move, lift, and crack our sidewalks. Even with our aggressive sidewalk maintenance and replacement schedule, we cannot immediately repair the damage to our sidewalks caused by so many trees. This means that you need to be observant while walking our sidewalks to avoid tripping on an occasional sidewalk uplift.

You may also be walking next to vehicular traffic and crossing City streets. Drivers may not be paying attention or driving responsibly, which can present hazards to pedestrians.

Here are some safety tips to help you stay safe while walking in Santa Barbara:

1. Wear comfortable walking shoes that are in good condition. They should be lightweight, and have a low heel not exceeding 1", a non-slip sole, and closed toe and heel.
2. Be predictable. Follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
3. Walk on sidewalks whenever they are available.
4. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible.
5. Stay alert at all times; don't be distracted by electronic devices that take your eyes (and ears) off the road and sidewalk.
6. Whenever possible, cross streets at crosswalks or intersections, where drivers expect pedestrians. Look for cars in all directions, including those turning left or right.
7. If a crosswalk or intersection is not available, locate a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic. Wait for a gap in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely; continue watching for traffic as you cross.
8. Never assume a driver sees you. Make eye contact with drivers as they approach to make sure you are seen.
9. Be visible at all times. Wear bright clothing during the day, and wear reflective materials and use a flashlight or headlamp at night.
10. Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways, or backing up in parking lots.
11. Avoid alcohol and drugs when walking; they impair your abilities and your judgment.
12. Use a backpack to carry items, try to keep your hands free.
13. Use extreme caution when walking near areas under construction.
14. Consider using trekking poles to help with your balance if recommended by your physician.

If you have a mobility disability, are blind or sight impaired, or have any other disability, and would like specific walking safety tips, please contact Public Works Streets Operations at 805-564-5454.

Remember—No one is more responsible for your walking safety than YOU!