

School Student Travel Scheme

Guidelines For Determining the Safety of a Walking Route to School

The following information is issued as a guideline only. Officers carrying out “safety” surveys should also take into account their knowledge of the area, and any other local issues that may impact upon student safety. Wherever possible surveys are to be carried out and traffic densities determined at the time students would normally be walking to or from school. The Department’s “Survey Report Of Walking Route To School” should continue to be used during a survey to record the nature of the terrain, the condition of roads and footways, and traffic densities encountered.

ROADWAYS

Freeway/Tollway:

Not safe to cross unless at overhead footway or underpass.

Highways and Main Traffic Routes (heavy traffic areas):

Considered safe if crossed at pedestrian traffic lights, intersections controlled by traffic lights with pedestrian activation and phasing or, at over or under passes.

Highways and Main Traffic Routes (medium traffic volume)

Minimum requirement for safe crossing – pedestrian aid eg. marked foot crossing or pedestrian refuge in middle of road.

Highways and Main Traffic Routes (light traffic areas and country locations):

Safe to cross providing pedestrians are not obscured from motorists by a bend in the road or hill. Pedestrians must also have an adequate view of vehicles approaching from both directions.

Suburban Roads/Alternate Traffic Routes (Heavy Traffic Volume):

Considered safe if crossed at pedestrian traffic lights, intersections controlled by traffic lights with pedestrian activation or, at over or under passes.

Suburban Roads/Alternate Traffic Routes (Medium Traffic Volume):

Minimum requirement for safe crossing – pedestrian aid eg. marked foot crossing or pedestrian refuge in centre of roadway.

Suburban Roads/Alternate Traffic Routes (Light Traffic Volume):

Safe to cross providing pedestrians are not obscured from motorists by a bend in the road or hill. Pedestrians must also have an adequate view of vehicles approaching from both directions.

Residential Streets:

Safe to cross providing pedestrians are not obscured from motorists because of a bend or hill.

ROUNDBABOUTS

Suburban Roads/Alternate Traffic Routes (heavy traffic areas):

Generally not considered safe because of the traffic volume. However, this general rule can often be overruled at locations incorporating pedestrian aids such as ramps and refuges. Determination of safety at these locations is best done on an individual basis after considering all of the circumstances.

Roundabouts – Suburban Roads/Alternate Traffic Routes (light traffic areas – Country locations):

The safety of crossing at these locations is to be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the size of the roundabout, traffic density and any available pedestrian aids.

Roundabouts (Residential Streets):

These are generally considered safe to cross, especially those incorporating pedestrian aids. However, discretion is to be used taking into account the size of the roundabout and traffic density.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Sealed Footpaths:

Safe for walking.

Grass, Mown Verges (Kerb and Gutter):

Determining the safety of these locations is best done on an individual basis after considering all of the relevant information and circumstances. However, generally they are safe for walking providing they are reasonably level and do not contain any obstacles that would render walking unsafe or hazardous eg. potholes, large rocks, undue amount of loose material. Grass verges (those untended by authorities) must also be free of dense vegetation that would impede walking.

Grass, Mown Verges (No Kerb and Gutter) Rural Verge:

Determining safety of these locations is best done on an individual basis after considering all of the circumstances. However, they are generally safe for walking providing they are reasonably level and do not contain any obstacles that would render walking unsafe or difficult eg. potholes, rocks, undue amount of loose material. It is also important that the recognised pedestrian access along the verge is sufficiently far away from the traffic flow to avoid any collision with vehicles. Grass and Rural verges (those untended by authorities) must also be free of any dense vegetation that would impede walking.

Road Shoulders:

As a general rule it is not considered safe for students to walk along any portion of a road. Any departure from this general rule would need to be justified by identifying an extremely low traffic flow.

Excessive Road Crossings:

As a general rule it is not acceptable to insist upon multiple crossings of a roadway so that students can avoid walking along the shoulder of that roadway. The practice of insisting upon students crossing from one side of a roadway to the other should be avoided wherever possible. It is preferable for these students to receive passes on safety grounds.

RECREATION AREAS/PARKS ETC Vehicular/non-vehicular access

These are not normally regarded as being "safety" issues unless there is some danger resulting from vehicular traffic. However, in locations where there is a known danger from undesirable persons consideration can be given to recommending the issue of passes on safety grounds. In these instances surveying officers should seek the comments of the local police.

As a general rule recreation areas or parklands are considered to be part of a normal walking route if they are in an established residential area and the entire walking route through the park is clearly visible from its extremes at all times. The walking route must also be close enough to private residences or public roads so that any call for help could reasonably be expected to be heard.

Surveying officers should also note that the use of the park by children on weekends indicates that it is safe for students to walk through on school days.

WALKWAYS

Safe providing they are in close proximity of residential dwellings and are not obscured by dense foliage.

* These Guidelines were issued by the A/Executive Director, Vehicle Transport of the Department of Transport on 12 August 1996