

What is a crosswalk?

According to Oregon Revised Statute 801.220, a crosswalk exists at any public road intersection, whether marked or unmarked. Crosswalks may also exist at other locations along the roadway, such as mid-block, but marking the crosswalk is required.

The nationally accepted minimum standards for crosswalks are described in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. It calls for crosswalk marking to be white, either solid transverse lines or longitudinal or diagonal lines extending the full width of the pavement.

How do crosswalks come about?

An engineering study and State Traffic Engineer approval are required before establishing crosswalks at locations on state highways, other than at stop signs and traffic signals.

A written request must be made to the ODOT Region Traffic Manager in your part of the state (see back panel).

For more information and guidance on installing crosswalks and addressing crossing strategies, refer to the *ODOT Traffic Manual* on the internet on the Publications page at: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/TRAFFIC/. Or contact ODOT Traffic Engineering & Operations Section at (503) 986-3568.

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Crosswalks: A Safety Tool for Everyone

How travelers benefit
from crosswalks



Learning About Crosswalks

Crosswalks are an important tool in traffic flow and pedestrian safety. The Oregon Department of Transportation encourages you to learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of crosswalks and how it is determined whether or not to mark one.



Advantages of Crosswalks

“Marking” a crosswalk can be a significant way to improve pedestrian safety and make it easier to cross the roadway. Walking is considered an important means of transportation, and pedestrians should be able to use the system safely and without unreasonable delay.



Why is it important to mark crosswalks appropriately? Although pedestrian-vehicle crashes are relatively rare, the risk of injury is high — and at speeds of 30 mph or more, severe injury is almost a certainty.

Crosswalks can typically be found at:

- **Traffic signals and stop signs.** Marked crosswalks are used to direct pedestrians to the proper crossing location and prevent motor vehicle traffic from blocking the pedestrian path.
- **School Zones.** At unsignalized locations, marked crosswalks are used to designate the safest locations for school children to cross.

Crosswalks are marked at other uncontrolled locations (where neither stop signs or signals are in place) when studies show that the number of lanes, traffic volume, pedestrians and speeds make the use of marked crosswalks desirable for pedestrian safety and mobility.

Disadvantages of Crosswalks

Some past studies have suggested that marking crosswalks at uncontrolled locations is less safe than leaving the crossing unmarked. More recent studies suggest that increased traffic volumes and multilane roadways are associated with higher pedestrian-vehicle crash rates at these marked crosswalks. Most

studies find that marking crosswalks alone does not improve pedestrian safety.

In addition to this tool, traffic calming techniques should be considered to encourage drivers to drive appropriate speeds and improve safety of pedestrians crossing. Pedestrian islands and curb extensions, for example, are effective at increasing pedestrian safety. Enhanced marking and advance stop lines may reduce multiple threat crashes (multiple threat crashes occur when one lane stops and the second lane in the same direction does not).

Allowing a proliferation of marked crosswalks may reduce the overall effectiveness of crosswalks, so it is important to make sure they are placed correctly.

Things to consider when marking crosswalks

The decision process for marking crosswalks involves evaluating numerous elements. In the end, the real question is, *what are the most effective measures to enhance safe pedestrian crossings?*

An engineering study will review the following when considering marking a crosswalk:

- Traffic speeds
- Crossing distance
- Number of lanes
- Visibility
- Reducing conflicts
- Special needs of nearby vulnerable or at-risk pedestrians
- Proper signing
- Lighting
- Traffic and pedestrian volume
- Crash experience
- Geometry of the roadway

