

Pedestrians: An “At

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According to the National Safety Council, automobiles kill approximately 5,000 pedestrians every year and injure 84,000 others.

Naval Safety Center statistics, meanwhile, show 39 pedestrian Sailors have died and another 139 have been injured in the last 10 years. Here are summaries of seven mishap reports for just one five-month period:

- A 31-year-old E-4 and some liberty buddies were crossing a street in a foreign country when they heard engines revving. Before they could react, a car had hit the E-4, somersaulting him into the air. He landed on the street. Local police and shore patrol quickly arrived on the scene and cared for the victim until an ambulance came. Doctors at a local hospital diagnosed the Sailor with multiple contusions and released him back to his ship for care. He spent two days under observation in the ship’s sick bay for injuries to his left thigh, right knee, and ribs. He then spent four days sick in quarters, followed by seven days of light duty.
- A 33-year-old E-4 was crossing with a green light when the driver of a PMV failed to yield. After being hit, the victim flew up and over the vehicle’s right front end. The driver stopped to help and still was on the scene when local police and an ambulance crew arrived. The ambulance crew checked the victim, then let him



Risk" Community

Navy photo by J03 Devin Wright



return to his ship by public transportation. Ship's medical took the Sailor to a local Navy clinic, where X-rays revealed he had a broken leg. He subsequently flew to a Navy medical center for treatment and also learned he had a cervical strain.

- A 35-year-old E-7 and his date were walking to their vehicle after attending a live concert. They had crossed at a crosswalk and were on the other side of the street when two cars rapidly accelerated from a stoplight—apparently in a drag race. One of the cars veered onto the sidewalk and grass, hitting the E-7 and sending him to the hospital for three days. He lost 30 workdays and spent an estimated four months on light duty. At last report, the police still were looking for the hit-and-run driver.

- A 23-year-old E-4 was crossing a street at an intersection on base. Meanwhile, another Sailor was approaching the same intersection in his PMV. Instead of watching what he was doing, this driver turned his head to look at a ship berthed nearby and didn't stop completely, hitting the E-4. The victim lost three workdays, including one in a hospital. Base police cited the driver for failure to stop at a stop sign, failure to stop for a pedestrian in the crosswalk, and playing loud music on his car radio.

- An E-5 also was crossing a street on base when two Sailors in a speeding PMV hit her. The driver stopped and remained on the scene to give his statement

to base police while his passenger went back to their command to report the incident. A shipmate traveling with the two Sailors in another car also stopped at the scene before going to the victim's command to call for assistance. She was admitted to a hospital in critical but stable condition. Meanwhile, the driver and his passenger who hit her were cited for reckless driving, with additional charges pending.

- A 24-year-old O-2 had attended a college-football game and was leaving an all-night restaurant with a group of friends. He and another person stayed behind while the rest crossed a street near campus. When the O-2 started to cross, a 19-year-old female civilian hit him, and he died hours later at a local hospital. Police cited the driver for underage transportation and consumption of alcohol.

- A 19-year-old E-3 and two shipmates were walking back to the liberty-bus pick-up point in a foreign port when they found themselves on an unfamiliar street. The sidewalk they were on came to an abrupt end, so they tried crossing to the sidewalk on the other side of the street. The spot they were at was located at a downhill curve in the roadway. One shipmate safely had reached the other side when the E-3 started across and was hit at the street's centerline. He lost an estimated 37 workdays, including 12 in a hospital (five days in an unconscious state). The driver didn't stop at first but eventually turned himself into local authorities. He was charged with reckless driving and speeding. The police report also cited a lack of lighting and the victim's dark clothing as contributing factors.

Because of incidents like these, some commands have launched campaigns to educate and remind motorists and pedestrians alike of crosswalk safety. One such command is Naval Station, Pearl Harbor, which took up the banner in December 2003. As noted by Cdr. Richard Verbeke, the NavSta XO at the time, "Our base is loaded with pedestrians, and when you mix a lot of foot traffic with heavy vehicle traffic, people can get hurt."

One part of the December 2003 campaign at Naval Station, Pearl Harbor, involved installing 12-foot-wide speed bumps in crosswalk-problem areas. "Speed bumps not only are cost efficient," said a base

safety specialist, “but they probably are the most effective way to slow people down.”

Another part of the campaign was to make drivers on base more aware of people on foot. Officials produced a video clip and showed it on local Navy television. They also put up signs to remind drivers entering the base of their requirement to give pedestrians the right of way in crosswalks. Personnel going through the pass and ID office on base saw the same signs.

As one occupational and health specialist cautioned, however, “Although pedestrians do have the right of way, they need to make sure they make eye contact with the driver in the front car in each lane of traffic they are crossing in the crosswalk. Don’t assume that all traffic will follow the lead of the *[driver in the]* first lane and stop for you.”

One Naval Station, Pearl Harbor, Sailor made this observation, “The roadway is like a marriage. It works both ways. Pedestrians and drivers need to respect each other.”

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) says it’s not acceptable that nearly 5,000 pedestrians are killed every year in traffic crashes. Their goal is to reduce pedestrian crashes, fatalities and injuries by 10 percent by the year 2008, thus saving 465 lives.

Here are 10 tips the FHWA offers for driving and walking safely:

- It’s your responsibility to drive and walk safely, so always be alert and attentive to the motorists and pedestrians around you.
- Never drink and drive, and don’t let friends drive drunk.
- Always buckle up; the life you save could be your own.
- Obey traffic signals and signs; they are there to keep you and others safe.
- Make sure you have plenty of time to get to your destination so you don’t feel pressured to speed or disobey traffic signals.
- Don’t give into road rage. Your life and the lives of your passengers are more important than angrily reacting to an irresponsible driver.
- Pedestrians always should wear light-colored or reflective clothing at night to be more visible to drivers.
- Before you make a left turn at an intersection, make sure it’s safe to do so. More than one-third of all deaths to vehicle occupants occur in side-impact crashes. Most of these occur at intersections.
- Obey the speed limits, and make sure you drive carefully through intersections and work zones.
- Don’t drive when you’re drowsy. If you’re drowsy, pull over at a rest area, and take a nap before proceeding. **S**

Walking in Traffic

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration urges pedestrians to follow these precautions to protect themselves and their families:

Stay on the sidewalk and crosswalks. Avoid walking in traffic where none exist. If you have to walk on a road with no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.

Cross at intersections. Most people are hit by cars when they cross the road at places other than intersections.

Look left, right and left for traffic. Stop at the curb and look left, right and left again for traffic. Stopping at the curb signals drivers that you intend to cross. Cross in marked crosswalks and obey the signal.

See and be seen. Drivers need to see you to avoid you; stay out of their blind spot. Make eye contact with drivers when crossing busy streets. Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if you’re

walking near traffic at night; carry a flashlight when walking in the dark. Don’t let kids play near traffic or cross the street by themselves; because they’re small, drivers may not see them if they run into the street. **S**

Resources:

- Hit-Run Deaths See 20% Increase, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-10-17-hit-and-run-deaths_x.htm
- Pedestrian Safety, <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/pedstrns.htm>
- Pedestrian Safety Through Vehicle Design, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedestrian_safety_through_vehicle_design
- Best Practices: Pedestrian Safety (Avoiding Near-Misses in Crosswalks), <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/ashore/crosswalks.htm>