

Safety ... Off The Job



Walking At Night

Thousands of people are injured or die every year as a result of collisions between pedestrians and automobiles. Pedestrians must do everything possible to ensure drivers can see them, especially at night.

In the past it was thought wearing white or light colored clothing made pedestrians safely visible at night. But recent studies show this is not the case. Drivers approaching pedestrians wearing white will have to be within 180 feet to be able to see them. However, tests show under ideal, flat road conditions, a driver travelling at 60 mph needs 260 feet to stop. Add darkness, snow or rain and oncoming headlights, then the time needed to react increases significantly.

Pedestrians can greatly improve their visibility by wearing clothing with reflective strips. The beam from automobile headlights hits the reflective material and sends the light back to the driver. This is not fluorescent material. Studies show fluorescent colored fabrics create no greater visibility at night than white ones.

Reflective clothing is available at most sports stores in the bike accessories section. Manufacturers produce many different items including reflective vests (similar to the kind worn by traffic crossing guards), reflective arm/leg bands and reflective tape.

So the next time you walk, run or jog at night, take steps to improve your visibility to drivers and follow these tips:

- If there is a sidewalk, use it.
- If there is no sidewalk, use the shoulder of the road facing the traffic.
- Wear light colored clothing with some sort of reflective device.
- Carry a small flashlight.

Pedestrians need to ensure their safety when walking at night. Don't walk alone in strange, deserted areas, use well-lighted routes and wear clothing easily seen by drivers.

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