



# FactSheet

Extension

## Ohio State University Fact Sheet

### Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering

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## Pedestrian Safety in Amish Country

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### Walking Is a Way to Get Somewhere

Everyone at some point in time is a pedestrian. This is especially true in Amish country. Many Amish walk to work, school, the store, and from home to home, in addition to riding in buggies and on bicycles. Rural populations have increased, and tourism in Amish communities has risen. This leads to many more motorists sharing the roads with pedestrians.

It is generally accepted, and enforced with laws in most situations, that pedestrians always have the right-of-way in crosswalks. While this may be true, pedestrians still need to take certain steps to stay out of danger and to reach their destination safely.

### Increasing the Visibility of Pedestrians

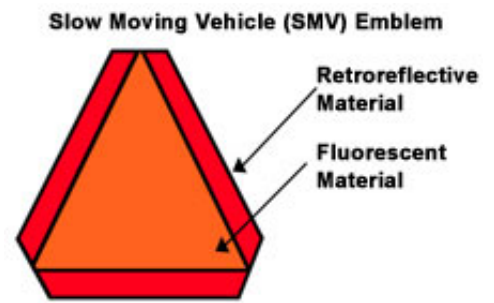
Wearing appropriate clothes will increase visibility and make it easier for drivers of motor vehicles to recognize pedestrians on or along the roadway. The pedestrian should wear bright and/or fluorescent and retroreflective material to make themselves more visible to motorists.

Bright and/or fluorescent material reflects surrounding light and makes the wearer more visible during the daytime. An example of fluorescent material is the center triangle of a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem found on the back of many Amish buggies.

Retroreflective material reflects light back to its source during low-visibility situations at night. An

example of retroreflective material is the darker red border of the SMV emblem. Wearing this retroreflective material, along with carrying a flashlight or a lantern, will help pedestrians increase their visibility to motorists who are driving at night, dusk, dawn, and in the rain.

The fluorescent and retroreflective materials may be found sewn into or attached to clothing, armbands, vests, leg wraps, etc., and may come in a variety of colors. For those who make clothes, these materials should be available at local fabric stores or buggy shops.



## Walking on Rural Roads

Pedestrians who are walking along rural roads need to be ready to take action. Vehicles are moving much faster on rural roads than they would be in an urban setting.

Pedestrians should always walk **FACING** traffic (meaning on the left shoulder of the road), single file, and as far to the left as possible. It's important to always walk **FACING** traffic as this allows you to see approaching vehicles and keeps you from walking with your back turned to oncoming traffic. Stop and move away from the roadway if large machinery or trucks are approaching.

Watch for vehicles meeting each other at the same time they are meeting the pedestrian. On narrow country roads it is common for vehicles to drive on the shoulder to safely meet other vehicles. This leaves little room for pedestrians.

Before crossing the road, always look left, right, and then left again. When a pedestrian crosses the road, the first danger will come from the left, so the left needs to be checked first and last before moving into the roadway to cross it.

## Walking in Towns or Cities

In towns and cities, pedestrians should always walk on the sidewalk, if available. If there is no sidewalk, always walk **FACING** traffic (meaning on the left shoulder of the street).

When crossing the street, always cross at a crosswalk or street corner. Obey the crosswalk signals, if present.



When crosswalk signals are not present, cross the street when traffic in the lanes to be crossed has a red light.

Look left, right, and left again and then continue to look each way while crossing in any situation. Be aware of turning traffic while crossing the street at intersection corners. Be sure to make eye contact with the driver whose vehicle is turning before stepping off the curb.

Avoid crossing in the middle of a block or from behind a parked vehicle. Never "dart" out into traffic to cross the street or to retrieve an item, such as a ball. Always WALK, don't run while crossing, but remain alert.



## Teaching Good Habits

Preschool-aged children should never be left alone near roads or streets. However, it is important that younger, school-aged children develop safety habits early. One of the best ways to teach a young child is by example. Follow recommendations presented in this publication at all times while walking with a child. Observe the young children using safe pedestrian behaviors unassisted numerous times before letting them walk alone.

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