



# CROSSING GUARD PROCEDURES

Welcome to the Hutto ISD's Child Safety Program. You are embarking on a very important job within your community. The Child Safety Program is responsible for hiring and supervising crossing guards near or in front of our schools. If you are returning to a crossing guard position, you will undoubtedly agree that the care and well being of children is a rewarding responsibility. The Hutto Independent School District also recognizes that safety must always be a top priority.

## I. Crossing Guard Job Description

*The purpose of a crossing guard is to use safe gaps and when necessary create gaps in traffic to help students cross the street at officially designated school crossing locations.*

## II. Objectives of the Program

1. To provide a uniform level of training and skill among the crossing guards on duty.
2. To encourage patterns of proper behavior by school children.
3. To deter school children, as necessary, from committing unsafe and unlawful acts.
4. To inform motorists, by appropriate signals, that school children are using, or are about to use, the crossing.
5. To observe and report incidents and/or conditions that present a hazard to the school children's or the crossing guard's safety, to their supervisor.

## III. Extent of Crossing Guard's Responsibility

The first concern of a crossing guard is for the safety of the children. When necessary, you are to create a **safe gap** in the traffic flow. For safety purposes, always wait for semi-trucks, school buses, ambulances and police vehicles to pass before creating a gap. You may want to pick a fixed object to use as a reference point to judge the stopping distance for motor vehicles traveling the speed limit. This will help you with consistency. If a vehicle looks like it is traveling faster than the speed limit, let the car go and wait for another gap.

Crossing guards have no law enforcement powers and shall take no enforcement action. **DO NOT whistle, yell or make exaggerated motions at motorists that are speeding or violating traffic laws.** Crossing guards are prohibited from directing traffic.

## IV. General Crossing Guard Procedures

You must set a safe example for children and you must reinforce safe crossing habits. **Research has shown that children are more influenced by adult behaviors than by instructions.** This means that you should use extra care to **look for traffic first to your left, then, scan in front of you as you look to your right, glance over your shoulder, then back to your left and look over your left shoulder before entering the street. Please keep looking as you cross the street.** All communication should be uniform, crisp and clearly informative so that both motorist and pedestrians will know what is expected of them. Crossing Guards should always talk to the children, as they are gathering and waiting to be crossed. You must also watch for students rushing to join the group.

- A. Instruct children to wait at the curb **at least an arm's length** away from the edge of the street.
- B. Instruct children on how to safely cross the street using the techniques listed below.
  - Look left.
  - Look in front of you.
  - Look right.
  - Look over your shoulder.
  - Look back to the left again.
  - Then keep looking as you cross the street.
  - Never run or dash across the street. See if any cars are coming, if not, then walk across the street.
  - **SEE AND BE SEEN!** Look at the **driver** and make sure **the driver sees you**.
  - Always walk at least an arm's length away from the edge of the street.
- C. **Wait** for a gap in the traffic on your side of the street. (If necessary, you must create a safe gap in the traffic.)
- D. **Signal** traffic to stop by raising your stop sign. Raise your free arm with your palm facing approaching traffic.
- E. Walk to the center of the street using the safe crossing techniques listed in the first paragraph.
- F. Stand on the crosswalk line facing approaching traffic.
- G. Verbally instruct the children to cross in front of you.
- H. Wait until the last child of the group reaches the opposite curb or edge.
- I. Return to your curb.
- J. Remain standing on the curb and wait for the next group of children to assemble.

## A. Visibility

Visual clutter such as advertising signs can sometimes divert a motorist's attention. Visual barriers such as parked cars, utility poles/signs can hamper a driver's vision. One of the responsibilities of a crossing guard is to cut through the visual clutter and potential distractions to make sure that each lane of traffic sees and recognizes that the crossing guard is about to cross students. A crossing guard helps children cross the street by being **conspicuous** to motorists through signals and clothing. These same visibility concepts help ensure that the guard remains safe while performing his or her duties. Many bicycle and pedestrian-related crashes occur because the motorist did not see the pedestrian. You want to make absolutely sure you are seen before you step into the roadway to begin crossing students.

Visibility means two things. It means:

1. Being visible in the sense that guards should wear retro-reflective or fluorescent material that alerts motorists that pedestrians are crossing or are about to cross the street.
2. Being visible in the sense that a crossing guard's presence tends to deter unlawful or unsafe acts on the part of pedestrian and motorists.

A crossing guard's actions must be precise, firm, and clear. Some tips that should help you in this endeavor are:

- A crossing guard must **always give the visual signal to stop**, even if there are no cars in the immediate vicinity or when traffic is light.
- Before entering the roadway, it is important to **make eye contact** with the first driver in the line of cars that are about to stop.
- Crossing guards help children learn to look and see by proper positioning and performing proper search patterns.
- Crossing guard's equipment is what tells the motorist that the pedestrians are about to enter the roadway.
- The worst times for a pedestrian or bicyclist to be seen are night and twilight or dawn when the glare is at its worst.
- Children can improve their visibility by wearing bright clothes with contrasting colors.
- The most visible colors are yellow, white, orange, hot pink, and bright green.
- Contrasting colors such as pink and blue, stripes and polka dots are also helpful.
- Least visible colors are dark colors such as black, navy, brown, forest green, and camouflage.
- Retro-reflective materials work best at night or in twilight conditions because they reflect light when shined upon.
- Weather conditions dramatically affect the visibility of drivers to see crossing guards and children.

- During rainy weather conditions, drivers are often distracted from seeing pedestrians.
- Drivers also need more stopping distance in bad weather, so greater visibility is required.

## VI. Employment Status

- A. Prior to assuming your job duties, formal training is required. The training will involve classroom and field exercises. Successful completion of both classroom and field training exercises is required prior to service as a crossing guard.
- B. You must tell your supervisor if you do not feel that you are adequately prepared to safely carry out the demands of your assignment.
- C. If your crossing guard post is near a school entrance, you are encouraged to introduce yourself to the school principal. Your supervisor will notify the school's administration that you have been hired and have been properly trained for the position. We also encourage you to introduce yourself to a police officer who may regularly pass your post. You, the school's administration and the local police officers are the safety team for the children.
- D. Your crossing guard job is a civilian assignment, and you must exercise the proper attitude and maturity to safely carry out your duties. Understand that you are not a police officer, so you have no law enforcement powers other than those delegated by law to all private citizens. As well, you are forbidden to carry a firearm while on duty as a crossing guard. (You have received a copy of the HISD Employee Handbook covering Sexual Harassment, Drug-Free Workplace and Concealed Handgun Law (Weapons). **You are responsible for reading and complying with these policies.**)
- E. You are to be present at your post **only** during your assigned work hours. School zones coincide with your duty hours, and it is more dangerous to cross children when the school zone are not active. If you arrive at your post earlier than scheduled or remain at your post after your assigned duty hours, you will still be responsible for assisting anyone who wishes to cross. **Avoid any confusion by arriving at your post on time and leaving as scheduled.**

## VII. Absenteeism

**The safety of children relies on your dependability.** If you are unable to report for your assignment, **you must notify your supervisor. If you are absent without notifying your supervisor, you are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.** Your dispatcher goes on duty at 5:30 a.m. in the morning and again at 1:00 p.m. in the afternoon. If an **emergency** arises during regular business hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and you cannot notify your supervisor, you may call the Transportation Department at (512) 759-2105. Also, your supervisor has an answering machine to take messages during off-duty hours.

As the school year affords numerous days off for holidays/teacher in-service/short days, etc., (not to mention three months of summer vacation), it is extremely important that you schedule any doctor's appointments, errands or other personal time off during these periods only. It can be very difficult to find a back-up person on short notice; when you consider that there are well over 10 guards on duty, the potential for problems is very great.

We realize that you cannot always predict when or for how long you might be ill. However, we must insist that you call your supervisor at least thirty minutes before your shift so that your supervisor has time to find a replacement for your post. Call as early as possible so that there is not a last minute scramble to get your post covered.

All absences **for any reason** will be documented. It is reasonable that you may be sick sometime during your assignment period, however, **good attendance is a requirement for continued employment.** Excessive absences may result in progressive discipline.

## VIII. Public Image and Your Attitude

The service you provide to school children requires the cooperation of the general public. This means you must present a professional and courteous image to instill the confidence of the children, their parents, school officials, local authorities and motorists. Because many people do not make distinctions between different entities, crossing guards often serve as a liaison between the Hutto Independent School District and Transportation, the various school districts and the public. We are confident of your ability to perform this job and we expect your public image to be **exemplary**. We also expect you to maintain a positive attitude even under adverse conditions.

- A. **The attitude you project must create an image of trust.** The public expects this of you. Be aware that innocent circumstances may appear inappropriate to a passerby. Children should never be allowed to loiter about your automobile, and you should never leave your assigned post when waiting for pedestrians. Be on time. Do not read newspapers or books, listen to radios or wear headsets, or watch or listen to televisions while on duty. **Being professional requires you to refrain from being overly friendly or overly affectionate toward any particular child.**
- B. Cooperate with motorists. In fact, you will probably become familiar with drivers who pass your post at the same time each day. Make sure you smile and give a familiar hand wave. Motorists respond better to crossing guards that are perceived to be friendly and non-aggressive.
- C. You will need to give **advance warning** of your intentions to the motorists. Making eye contact with the driver and then signaling the traffic to stop by raising your stop sign does this. You should raise your free arm with your palm facing approaching traffic before entering the street. You should be realistic, however, about your ability to make vehicles respond to your direction.
- D. Projecting a professional image requires that you **refrain from use of all tobacco while on duty. You should never patronize a liquor store while in uniform.** Children are influenced by adult behaviors. Any employee engaging in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct, according to policies set forth in the Employee's Handbook.
- E. Employees while on duty are at all times individually responsible for conducting themselves in a professional and ethical manner and for treating coworkers and members of the public with respect and dignity. The intent of this policy is to make a clear statement that unprofessional and abusive behavior will not be tolerated in the workplace. Any use of inappropriate language and/or gestures will not be tolerated. Any employee engaging in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct, up to and including termination.

## IX. Safety Equipment

You will be issued safety equipment to aid you in your crossing guard duties. Keep your equipment clean and in respectable condition. You must wear and use the safety equipment at all times. Failure to use the safety equipment will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- A. Vest

The highly visible traffic safety vest issued to you at the time of your employment must be worn over all of your clothing at all times when you are on duty. This includes wearing your vest over coats and raincoats. This is for **your own safety** as well as **the safety of the children**. **You must notify your supervisor immediately if your vest is lost or stolen.**

B. Stop Sign Paddle

A hand held "STOP" sign paddle will communicate the most important direction to motorists; to **STOP**. **You must notify your supervisor immediately if your stop sign paddle is lost or stolen.** You should signal the traffic to stop by first making eye contact with the driver of the vehicle, **and then** extend the stop sign in a stationary position with the arm extended horizontally away from the body. The stop sign paddle should be held high as you escort the children across the roadway. The stop sign paddle should be lowered only after all children, as well as you, have safely cleared the roadway. For your safety, as well as the children's safety, you must **always** use the stop sign paddle when you are escorting children across the roadway.

C. Raincoat

You have been issued a raincoat to help keep you visible and dry during wet weather. When you use the raincoat, your orange safety vest must be worn **over** the raincoat unless the raincoat states CROSSING GUARD on the back in reflective lettering. **Do not use an umbrella** as it may limit your line of sight and prevent you from using both hands.

D. Hat

We recommend that you wear the HISD Transportation Department hat to help protect you from the sun's ultraviolet rays. For additional protection, it is recommended that you use sunscreen. You may purchase sunscreen at any grocery store.

E. Picture ID

You have been issued a Hutto ISD Identification Card. You must have your ID clearly visible at all times while on duty as a Crossing Guard. Upon request, you are required to give any and all citizens your name, your supervisor's name, and telephone number.

## X. Dress

You are expected to dress appropriately for the activities of a crossing guard. Since most of your time will be spent outdoors, you should anticipate the work conditions associated with your assignment. You may wish to pay extra attention to local weather reports as you prepare for each shift.

A. Shoes

Tennis shoes are recommended. In any case, you should wear comfortable shoes with non-slip soles. Remember that you may be standing for lengthy periods of time. To avoid fatigue, you can shift your weight from side to side or rest one foot on a small box. Rubber non-slip soles are recommended, as precipitation can make the ground slippery. Of course, shoes that keep your feet dry will make you a lot more comfortable. Open-toe shoes are not permitted.

B. Jackets/Coats

Jackets, coats, layered clothing, layered socks, hat, and gloves are recommended for cooler temperatures. **Remember to wear your vest over your coat or jacket.**

C. Pants/Shorts/Shirts

Navy or black pants are recommended. Blue jeans, if neat and in good condition, may also be worn. On very hot days, walking shorts, knee length, are allowed. Clothing should always be clean and in good repair. Clothing should reflect the professional nature of the crossing guard's duties: skimpy or revealing clothing is not allowed.

## XI. General Safety

**You are expected to share in the responsibility of avoiding injury to yourself and others.** If you recognize a safety hazard at your post, communicate this to your supervisor so that the situation can be resolved. **If you are injured at your post, you must report this immediately to your supervisor and seek medical attention.** Worker's Compensation forms must be completed within 24 hours.

A. Work Site Safety Checklist

1. Is your post clean and orderly? Is your post free from debris and trash?
2. Are walking surfaces dry? Pavement can be slippery when it is wet and you need to be careful.
3. Is there adequate lighting?
4. Are there holes in the sidewalk or ground that could cause a trip or fall?
5. Are crosswalks adequately marked?
6. Are there any threatening or unruly pets near the work site?

B. **Universal** Crossing Guard Precautions

1. *Stay out of the street until you are ready to cross. Do not interrupt the normal flow of traffic.* Rather, take advantage of breaks in the traffic when you can position yourself safely. Then, do not remain standing in the roadway after the children have crossed.
2. *Do not let children cross the roadway without you.* Even if there is no traffic in sight, your visibility and crossing guard tools will help ensure children arrive from point "A" to point "B" safely.
3. *Avoid crossing children individually while other children are approaching.* Other children may gather while you are in the street. Wait to form a group of children as they each approach your post.
4. *Do not let children go part way across the street alone.* Always attend to children for the entire time they are crossing the roadway.
5. *Do not let children run across the street.* School Crossing Guard Training while crossing a roadway is a major responsibility of your job. A child may be injured by a fall while running in the roadway.
6. **Do not let children ride bicycles while crossing the street.** *Instruct children to walk their bicycles across the street.*
7. *Never assume children will understand unspoken directions.* Your role is to verbally instruct the children to wait on the curb until you tell them to cross in front of you.
8. *Remain alert at all times.* You are there to protect children from the hazards of crossing an intersection. Remain alert for motorists who do not obey stop signs or speed limits

through the intersection or turn while you are in the middle of an intersection. Notify your supervisor if this is a constant problem.

### C. Uncooperative Children

You should attempt to gain cooperation from all children. If a child routinely disregards your instructions, contact your supervisor.

1. **You are not to discipline children in any manner.**
2. If you feel that a particular child needs reprimanding, identify the child and his / her behavior and inform your supervisor.
3. It will be the responsibility of your supervisor to contact school officials, police or parents regarding uncooperative children.

## XII. Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency on the post, crossing guards must keep control of the situation and ensure the safety of the children. Several types of emergency situations that can occur include:

- Motor vehicle/pedestrian crash
- Motor vehicle/bicycle crash
- Motor vehicle/motor vehicle crash
- Sudden illness

The same basic rules apply to each situation:

- Stop crossing children
- Group children to maintain control and remain at your post with the children
- Point to and specifically designate two motorists to call 911 (if safety patrol is working with you then have them go ask the office to call 911)
- **DO NOT MOVE THE VICTIM**
- Use a vehicle to block crash victim from traffic if necessary
- Always notify your supervisor as soon as possible of any emergency that may have occurred at your post. Your supervisor is available by cellular phone while on duty.

### A. Injured Persons

1. If someone is injured at your post, you should request assistance from an adult. Have them call 911. Contact your supervisor and/or the Child Safety Program Administrative Office as soon as possible. **Do not leave your post unattended.** Send another child to the school's office for assistance, if an adult is not available.
2. Do not administer first aid unless properly qualified to do so. Your best course of action is to use whatever first aid means are available and keep the injured person warm and comfortable. Do not attempt to move an injured person. Call upon other adults to assist you in traffic control and in protecting the injured person.
3. Resume crossing the students only after receiving assistance from law enforcement to direct motorists around the crash scene. Crossing guards **are not** authorized to direct traffic. While waiting for law enforcement, group the students and talk to them to alleviate their concerns.

### B. Accidents Involving Vehicles

If an accident occurs at your post, note identification data regarding the vehicles involved as well as description of the driver(s). Request that all witnesses remain until police arrive. Do not interview witnesses.

### C. Vehicle/Person Identification For Reporting Persons

A crossing guard is not a law enforcement officer, nor is he or she assigned for the purpose of enforcing traffic laws. A crossing guard should not concern himself or herself with minor infractions, but in the event of a gross violation, the ability to describe the vehicle and license number or persons involved is very important. It's necessary for the crossing guard to be able to give accurate description of the vehicle or persons involved. **Write it down! Information required for reporting purposes:**

- Note color, body style, size, condition and model of vehicle
- Note license number
- Note features of driver
- Note time and day of incident

Report all of the above to your supervisor. Keep a small note pad and pencil in your pocket for quick access. **Information required for reporting person:**

- Gender
- Age
- Race / Ethnicity
- Clothing description
- Hair color / length
- Height / weight
- Distinguishing features (glasses, tattoos, etc.)
- Direction of travel

In the event of a traffic crash or major infraction, a crossing guard may be asked to provide information to law enforcement personnel. Talk only to law enforcement personnel. **Do not talk to media or the parties involved.** Politely refer any questions from outside parties and news media to the Hutto ISD Public Information Officer, Emily Grobe at (512)759-3771. **CALL** your supervisor immediately after post time to advise him or her of what happened at your post.

## CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR IN TRAFFIC

It is estimated that nationally each year about 30,000 young pedestrians between the ages of 5 and 14 are killed or injured. Many of these children sustain injuries that result in permanent disabilities. In addition, an untold number of traffic injuries are never recorded because victims are often taken to doctors and hospitals without police notification.

It is important to try to understand the behavior of school children in traffic.

### PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS

Statistics indicate that pedestrian accidents are the second leading cause of death for children. Pedestrian deaths peak at ages three through seven, while life crippling injuries seem to peak at ages four through eight. Children ages two to six represent just over 6% of the total population, but are involved in up to 25% of all pedestrian mishaps. The severity of pedestrian accident problems intensifies when youngsters begin attending school and play a more independent role in traffic.



## **MOST COMMON TYPES OF PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS**

The Walk Alert Program summarizes the most common types of pedestrian accidents for children aged K-6.

These include:

- Darting out or dashing across an intersection
- Crossing in front of a turning vehicle
- Crossing a multilane street
- Entering or crossing an intersection
- Playing in a roadway
- Going to or from a school bus
- Crossing behind a vehicle that is backing up

Most pedestrian accidents involving children occur on residential streets within a short distance of their home. 31% of all child pedestrian accidents occur when children dart out in front of moving vehicles. Crossing an intersection can be very complex. This maneuver can involve a complex series of actions with as many as 26 tasks needed to negotiate traffic safely.

## **CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR**

### **Introduction**

Accident prevention begins with an understanding of children's behavior. The way children think, their immature motor skills, their desire to explore their environment, and their lack of traffic experience all contribute to the high rate of pedestrian accidents involving children.

### **Behavior**

Young children cannot analyze a situation well before they act. Their thinking is a combination of reality and fantasy, knowledge and miscomprehension. This implies that merely memorizing safety rules or learning words to safety songs or poems are not successful approaches to accident prevention. Learning by doing safe behavior has repeatedly proven to have the best prospect for modifying a child's behavior.

Younger children show little or no concern when moving vehicles are near them. They simply assume that the motorist will see them and act accordingly. K-3 children often cannot focus on more than one thing at a time. They have short attention spans, are impulsive and inherently curious. Furthermore, children under six rarely understand the true nature of dangerous situations. They may run into the street to retrieve something or greet a friend with no thought of the danger from cars.

### **Developmental Reasons**

There are developmental reasons and behavioral reasons why children are in accidents. They are impulsive and they are short (a six-year-old's eye level is about 36 inches off the ground). Their peripheral vision is not developed as well as an adult's. They do not localize sound as well as adults. Studies show that 5 and 6-year-old children do not possess the developmental skills to safely and consistently cope with traffic.

Key factors in preventing pedestrian accidents among young people include continuous safety education at home and at school, protections by school safety patrol or adult cross guards at street crossings, and community awareness programs for drivers. Increased experience and maturity of children usually leads to better awareness of moving vehicles. Preventing pedestrian injuries is a complex issue for which no single intervention will be completely effective.

### **Developmental Limitations (Ages 5-9)**

There are certain developmental limitations of children ages five to nine.

Children:

- have 1/3 narrower side visions than adults
- are less able to determine direction of sound
- have trouble judging speeds and distances of moving cars
- have limited capacity for anticipation or focusing
- can overestimate their own knowledge and physical strengths
- are too small to be seen by drivers
- have parents that unknowingly place them at risk by expecting them to behave like "little adults" in traffic situations