



Municipal Crossing Guards



Source NJDOT

Many Connecticut municipalities utilize crossing guards to assist their school children to cross the road. Statistics from the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) show that during 2014, 4% of all pedestrian fatalities and 12% of all pedestrian injuries nationwide were to children 14 years and under. Because children see, hear, observe and react to vehicular traffic differently than adults, crossing guards represent a critical component in the safety of children who are walking or riding to school.

What is the Crossing Guard's Legal Authority?

Section 14-300f (a) of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) states, "The operator of a motor vehicle shall immediately bring the motor vehicle to a stop not less than ten feet from a location on any highway or private road where a school crossing guard is on duty

when the school crossing guard specifically directs the operator to do so.” Sections 14-300f (b) and (c) provide for a penalty of up to one thousand dollars and thirty days imprisonment for violations that are documented in a written report from a school crossing guard.

What are the Crossing Guard’s Responsibilities?

- **Crossing guards cannot direct traffic!** This is stated in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD), Section 7D.05, “Adult crossing guards shall not direct traffic in the usual law enforcement regulatory sense. In the control of traffic, they shall pick opportune times to create a sufficient gap in the traffic flow. At these times, they shall stand in the roadway to indicate that pedestrians are about to use or are using the crosswalk and that all vehicular traffic must stop.”

When Should Crossing Guards Be Used?

The MUTCD provides an option to use adult crossing guards in Section 7D.02, which states, “Adult crossing guards may be used to provide gaps in traffic at school crossings where an engineering study has shown that adequate gaps need to be created.” Some items that should be considered when determining the need for a crossing guard are:

- Age of the students.
- High volume of crossing.
- High vehicle speeds or heavy traffic volumes.
- Insufficient gaps in the traffic stream to allow safe crossing.
- Restrictive sightlines on the road caused by fixed objects, including parked cars, signs, benches, traffic signal controller boxes, trees and shrubs.
- Non-compliance with traffic control by either vehicles or pedestrians at an intersection.

What Should the Qualifications Be?

- High standards are essential!
- Good character, neat appearance, mental alertness, dependability
- Good physical condition with the ability to operate a STOP paddle and direct it’s face during the entire crossing movement and to avoid danger and errant vehicles
- Mental alertness
- Good and courteous communication skills
- Sense of responsibility

What Equipment and Attire Should Be Supplied and Worn?

- High-visibility apparel
MUTCD Section 7D.04 requires that “Law enforcement officers performing school crossing supervision and adult crossing guards shall wear high-visibility retroreflective safety apparel labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard for Class. 2.” Further explanation is provided in Section 6E.02. While Class 2 is a minimum, Class 3 vests should be considered for added visibility because guards may occasionally be working when conditions are dark.
- STOP paddle
Section 7D.05 of the MUTCD requires that a STOP paddle be the primary hand-signaling device and that the “STOP paddle (R1-1) shall be an octagonal shape. The background of the STOP face shall be red with at least 6-inch series upper-case white letters and border.” It must also be at least 18 inches in size with the word STOP on both sides and shall be retroreflectorized or illuminated when used during hours of darkness. Information is provided on how the paddle can be modified with flashing lights. If flashing lights are used, the flashes shall be at least 50 and no more than 60 flash periods per minute.
- Whistle
- Light-colored gloves

What Can Crossing Guards Do to Enhance and Promote Safety?

- Make eye contact to ensure being seen by a motor vehicle operator before stepping into the street and crossing students.
- Wear bright colored clothing such as white, yellow, orange and hot pink.
- Make sure to look left, right, left.
- Frequently scan the road and look over one’s shoulder if working in an intersection.
- Educate students in proper crossing procedures.
- Have cyclists walk bikes across.
- Provide standard hand signals to students.
- Inspect signs and markings prior to start of school term and periodically throughout year; report any deficiencies to supervisor.
- Report any changed road conditions, such as increased traffic or construction.
- Make daily inspections of anything that may be keeping pedestrians from using crosswalk, such as broken sidewalk, puddles, ice, tree branches, shrubs, unleashed dogs, or parked or standing vehicles.

- Report illegal driving.
- Recognize unsafe crossing by children, counsel them on proper crossing; report further non-compliance to supervisor.
- Report any suspicious activity.
- Manage area during adverse weather and other emergencies.
- Always ensure safety of the children.

References and Resources:

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm

<http://www.njcrossingguards.org/>

http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferjourney1/Library/countermeasures/57.htm>

http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dstc/regulations_part1.pdf

<http://www.watchformect.org/>

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