



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*****NEWS RELEASE*****
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Step Up for Safer Streets: California Marks September as Pedestrian Safety Month

September is Pedestrian Safety Month in California. The Visalia Police Department would like to remind drivers to slow down and be alert for people walking on our roads. By always taking extra precautions, you can help protect pedestrians and reduce the risk of crashes and injuries. Walking should always be an easy and safe option for getting around any community.

According to projections from the Governors Highway Safety Association, 7,148 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes across the United States in 2024. In California alone, pedestrian deaths make up more than 24 percent of all traffic-related fatalities.

"Every step we take towards greater pedestrian safety is a step towards saving lives," Officer Steven Waymire said. "We want to remind everyone that safety begins with you, whether you're behind the wheel or on foot. Small actions, like slowing down, putting away distractions and yielding at crosswalks can make a life-saving difference."

Pedestrians do not have the same protection as drivers and passengers. A difference of just 15 MPH (20 MPH to 35 MPH) significantly increases the likelihood that a person walking will be killed if struck by a vehicle.

To promote the safety of people walking, the Visalia Police Department will conduct a traffic safety operation focused on the most dangerous driver behaviors that put the safety of pedestrians at risk. These violations include speeding, making illegal turns, failing to yield and running stop signs or signals.

The Visalia Police Department offers safe driving and walking tips, including staying off the phone when behind the wheel or walking.

Drivers

- Do not speed and slow down at intersections. Be prepared to stop for pedestrians at marked and unmarked crosswalks.
- Avoid blocking crosswalks while waiting to make a right-hand turn.
- Never drive impaired.
- Avoid distractions such as texting or eating while driving. Keep your focus on the road.



Pedestrians

- Be predictable. Use signalized crosswalks where drivers may anticipate foot traffic.
- Look both ways and make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.
- Make it easier for drivers to see you at night – consider wearing bright colors, reflective material or using a flashlight.
- Be careful crossing streets or entering crosswalks at night or on busier streets with higher speed limits.
- Keep your eyes up, and your phone down.

Visit www.gosafelyca.org for more traffic safety information.

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