

# California Crossing Guard Training: Online Course Part 1

Prepared by the Safe Routes to School  
Technical Assistance Resource Center

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# Acknowledgements

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The *California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines*, accompanying supplemental materials, and this online training, were developed with the help of existing training tools from the following:

- Colorado Department of Transportation's Crossing Guard Train-the-Trainer Program
- Florida Department of Transportation's School Crossing Guard Training Program
- National Center for Safe Routes to School's Adult School Crossing Guard Guidelines

# Overview

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This is Part 1 of 4 California Crossing Guard Training Online Courses. The following will be covered in this section:

- Introduction to the *California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines*
- Why Crossing Guards Matter
- Elements of a School Crossing Guard Program
- Special Considerations for Crossing Guards

# Introduction to the California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines

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- Training is an essential step to help ensure that School Crossing Guards (Crossing Guards) are performing properly.

# Introduction to the California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines...continued

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- The California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC), overseen by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), has compiled this training and accompanying materials to assist with local training efforts, and ultimately, to improve the safety of California's children.

# Introduction to the California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines...continued

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- This training is not mandated, but is designed to provide consistent operating standards to assist Local School Crossing Guard Programs (Local Programs) in training existing and new Crossing Guards.

# Introduction to the California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines...continued

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- Local Programs are encouraged to utilize the *California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines* and training materials to inform program practices and replace or supplement training procedures.

# Why Crossing Guards Matter

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Nationally,

- In 2009, approximately 23,000 children ages 5-15 were injured and more than 250 were killed while walking or bicycling.
- From 2000-2006, 30% of traffic deaths for children ages 5-15 occurred while walking or bicycling.

Source: Safe Routes to School National Partnership



## Why Crossing Guards Matter...continued

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In California in 2013,

- More than 3,200 children ages 5-17 years sent to the emergency room for pedestrian-related injuries.
- There were 49 pedestrian deaths among children ages 5-17, a 40% increase from 2011.

Source: EpiCenter, California Department of Public Health

## Why Crossing Guards Matter...continued

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- In a 2012 University of California, San Francisco study, parents ranked safety of intersections and crossings as the number one safety concern affecting their decision to allow their children to walk or bicycle to school.
- In the same study, parents ranked Crossing Guards as the number two reason why they would let their children walk or bicycle to school. Walking or bicycling with an adult was number one.

## Why Crossing Guards Matter...continued

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- Crossing Guards are an important part of the community and serve a vital role in the lives of children who walk or bicycle to school.
- Crossing Guards help children safely cross the street at key locations and remind drivers of the presence of pedestrians.
- Crossing Guards not only help keep children safe, but they also help children develop good pedestrian safety skills.

# Identification of Where Crossing Guards are Needed

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- Many factors contribute to the need for a Crossing Guard.
- At a location where vehicles are present, general guidance is provided by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD).
- Ultimately, local traffic engineering judgment and analysis are needed to determine when and where a Crossing Guard is needed.

# Identification of Where Crossing Guards are Needed...continued

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- Available gaps in traffic (space and time between vehicles) are a primary factor in determining the need for a Crossing Guard.
- A pedestrian needs a gap in traffic that is at least long enough to allow them time to complete their crossing.

# Identification of Where Crossing Guards are Needed...continued

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Other factors to be considered:

- **Age of Students;**
- **Road Conditions;**
- **Sight Distance;**
- **Presence or Absence of Traffic Control Devices;**
- **Vehicle Speed;**
- **Volumes of Vehicular Traffic and Pedestrians;**
- **School Route Plan;**
- **School Adjacent Land Use; and,**
- **Crash History.**

Reference Section 2a. of the *California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines* for a more complete description of each factor.

## Local Programs

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- A **Local Program** refers to the organization responsible for identifying locations where Crossing Guards are needed, hiring, training, and supervising Crossing Guards, providing uniforms and equipment to help Crossing Guards effectively perform their duties, and securing funds to manage the Local Program.
- Cities and counties may designate local law enforcement agencies, the governing board of any school district, or a county superintendent of schools to administer the Local Program.

# Prequalification of Crossing Guards

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CAMUTCD states that Crossing Guards should possess the following minimum qualifications:

- a) Average intelligence;
- b) Good physical condition, including sight, hearing, and ability to move and maneuver quickly in order to avoid danger from errant vehicles;
- c) Ability to control a STOP paddle effectively to provide approaching road users with a clear, fully direct view of the paddle's STOP message during the entire crossing movement;
- d) Ability to communicate specific instructions clearly, firmly, and courteously;
- e) Ability to recognize potentially dangerous traffic situations and warn and manage students in sufficient time to avoid injury;
- f) Mental alertness;
- g) Neat appearance;
- h) Good character;
- i) Dependability; and,
- j) An overall sense of responsibility for the safety of students.

# Crossing Guard Uniform and Devices

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CAMUTCD provides the following standards for the uniform and devices used by Crossing Guards:

- Retroflective safety apparel;
- A STOP paddle;
- Optional: Retroreflective traffic cones or in-crosswalk panels; and,
- Optional: A whistle (Can be used as a warning device to alert a motorist who is unresponsive to the display of the STOP paddle. More on whistles will be covered in Online Course Part 4).

# Crossing Guard Uniform and Devices...continued

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## Examples:



*Figure 1. Example of retroreflective safety apparel.*



*Figure 2. Example of STOP paddle.*

# Attendance Protocol

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## Crossing Guards should:

- Be at their station on time, properly attired, and neatly groomed;
- Notify the supervisor of a planned absence at least 24 hours in advance; and,
- Notify the supervisor as soon as possible if illness or unexpected circumstance prevents their timely appearance so that a substitute can be found.

# Personal Vehicle Parking

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- Crossing Guards should only park their vehicle in an allowed location (e.g., not on a sidewalk, not in any location where signs prohibit parking at the time).
- If parked on the street or near a crossing, a Crossing Guard's vehicle should not block the Crossing Guard's view of approaching vehicles.

## Standing While on Duty

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- The visible presence of an alert Crossing Guard can help to discourage unsafe behavior.
- Crossing Guards should not sit while on duty. Sitting down reduces an approaching driver's view of the Crossing Guard, or might suggest to drivers or arriving children that the Crossing Guard is not on duty.
- Crossing Guards need to be ready to react quickly in case of an unexpected event.

## Distractions and Unrelated Activities

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- While on duty or in uniform, Crossing Guards should not eat, smoke, use tobacco products, consume beverages, or patronize liquor establishments.
- Crossing Guards should not use a radio (other than a two-way radio for official communication), computer, mobile devices, headphones, portable audio players, or read (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers) while on duty.
- A mobile communication device may be used **only** in an emergency and never while crossing children.

# Chain of Command

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- Any request by school personnel or others outside a Crossing Guard's chain of command (e.g., to change his/her schedule or crossing procedures) should be made through the Crossing Guard's supervisor.

# Notice of Schedule Changes

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- The Crossing Guard supervisor should notify Crossing Guards of any school schedule change or special school function that would affect their work schedule.

# Emergency Response Plan

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- Crossing Guards should be briefed on emergency response plans that have been adopted by the Local Program or school, especially if it involves a special procedure for Crossing Guards.
- A Local Program should have a plan for contacting on-duty Crossing Guards in case of an emergency.

## First Aid

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- Local Programs are strongly encouraged to provide first aid and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to all Crossing Guards.
- Crossing Guards who have not received proper training should not provide first aid or CPR while on duty.
- All Crossing Guards should be prepared to take reasonable action to help an injured child or contact emergency responders.

# Incident Reporting

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- Crossing Guards should be familiar with the type of information necessary to complete an incident report (e.g., time, date, location, names of those involved, description of incident).
- Incident reports are typically used to report a crash or infraction that can endanger the lives of pedestrians.
- Crossing Guards are advised to carry a notebook and pen to write down a description of involved vehicles and/or individuals.

# Reporting Concerns

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- Crossing Guards are encouraged to be on the lookout for any potential problems or areas of concern while on duty and be prepared to report them to the appropriate individuals or supervisors.
- A process should be in place to address any problems or concerns.

## Crossing Guards' Interaction with Children

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- Crossing Guards are representatives of the community, tasked with helping to create a safe environment for children.
- Crossing Guards should not physically touch students.
- Students should never be put into a Crossing Guard's vehicle.
- Crossing Guards should never give gifts to students.

## Crossing Procedures for Inclement Weather

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- Crossing Guards need to be particularly careful during inclement weather and should ensure that they have the attention of motorists before crossing.
- Bad weather tends to make people hurry and pay less attention. In addition, visibility is reduced and stopping distances are increased as roads become slippery.
- High visibility vests should be worn outside of jackets, unless the jacket itself is high visibility with retroreflective material.

## Courtesy Crossing of Adult Pedestrians

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- Crossing Guards may perform a crossing for an adult who requests it, but this service is secondary to the purpose of crossing student pedestrians and should not be allowed to interfere with this primary purpose.



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# End of Part 1 of the 4-part California Crossing Guard Training Online Courses