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MARCH Safety Talk

Topic: The art (and hazards) of texting while walking

Almost one in five people killed in car crashes in BC, are pedestrians! Nearly 75 percent of crashes at intersections involve pedestrians.



Statistics show that pedestrian accidents at intersections happen most often on Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Nearly 25% of those injured are 16 to 25 years old.

Of course, crashes involving pedestrians increase during dusk and poor weather.

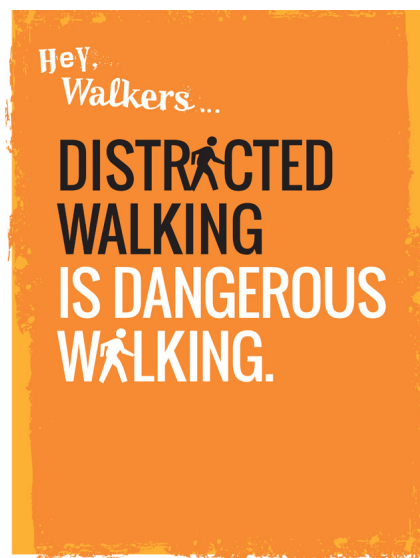
Many accidents involving pedestrians happen because the pedestrians themselves are not paying attention to what is going on around them – often because they are focused on their phones while texting, or are listening to music and can't hear the traffic approaching.

The cognitive challenges of walking while texting are well known – either by those who have walked into light poles or other people while texting, or by those who have been crashed into by a walk/texter. Strolling while talking on the phone or while texting ties up the brain's attentional resources.

Walking requires a series of coordinated actions and reactions. Researchers at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, conducted a study of 26 healthy adults. Some were merely walking; others were texting and walking; the third group was reading while walking.

Results showed that texting significantly distorted their gait and walking form. Texters took significantly shorter steps, and their pace slowed. They also deviated more from a straight line than others in the study.

When combined with the inattention to what is happening around them, there's no wonder so many pedestrians are injured.



LOOK: Always make eye contact with drivers. Never assume that a driver has seen you.

LISTEN: Focus your full attention on what's happening around you. Remove your headphones and never talk, text or use electronic devices while crossing the road.

DRESS TO BE SEEN: Wear reflective clothing or gear and use flashlights to make it easier for drivers to see you.

Be extra cautious at intersections. Watch for vehicles turning left or right through the crosswalk.

Always cross at designated crosswalks, never mid-block. Follow pedestrian signs and traffic signals and never cross once the signal has turned yellow or red.

As a Driver:

FOCUS ON THE ROAD and stay off your phone or other hand-held electronic devices while you're driving.

YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS, especially when turning in intersections and near transit stops.

LOOK TWICE for pedestrians crossing the road, particularly when visibility is poor.